The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE TRIUNE GOD TO BE LIFE

TO THE TRIPARTITE MAN

by Witness Lee

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PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in Anaheim, California, on February 6, 1990, through June 18, 1991.

CHAPTER ONE

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE RUNNING THROUGH THE DIVINE REVELATION FROM BEGINNING TO END (1)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:11-12, 20-21, 24-27; 2:8-9, 15-17; 3:1-6, 22-24; Eph. 4:17-19; Psa. 36:8-9

INTRODUCTION

My fellowship in these messages concerning the matter of life will be in the way of a study. I will try my best to present the principles of life from the holy Word in outline form. There must first be an opening in a mine before the riches within the mine can be recovered. In the same principle, the outlines that I prepare will serve only as openers to the "mine" of life in the holy Word. You must then use the openers to dig into the depths of the holy Word in order to obtain the riches concerning life. When you dig into the holy Word concerning the matter of life, you will see that the main thing it unveils to us is that God desires to be life to man.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD BEING MAN'S LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the Triune God became incarnated for the purpose of imparting Himself as life into His believers. The Old Testament begins with the tree of life (Gen. 2:9), and the New Testament ends with the tree of life (Rev. 22:2). Thus, the thought of God being man's life runs through the entire divine revelation. In this message we will consider the thought of God being man's life in the Old Testament.

GOD'S CREATING OF LIVING THINGS INDICATING THAT GOD IS THE GOD OF LIFE

In Genesis 1 in His creating of the earth, God created many different kinds of life. These different kinds of life are in three main categories: the plant life (vv. 11-12), the aquatic life (vv. 20-21), and the animal life (vv. 24-25). The

category of the animal life includes the cattle, the creeping things, and the beasts. Ultimately, man was created (vv. 26-27) as the highest of the created lives. The plant life is on the lowest plane because it has no consciousness of life. Man is on the highest plane because man has the highest consciousness of life.

GOD'S CREATING OF MAN IN HIS IMAGE INDICATING THAT GOD WANTS MAN TO HAVE HIM AS LIFE SO THAT MAN CAN EXPRESS HIM

God's intention is to work Himself into His creatures that He may be life to His creatures. However, He cannot be life to the plants or the animals. He can be life only to the highest created life, the life that is according to His kind (vv. 26-27). This is man. Thus, man is a vessel so that God may put Himself into His creation in order to have a beautiful expression. This is God's intention, but it has not yet been completed. Today we are in the process of being mingled with God. Eventually, through this mingling God will have a complete and full expression.

GOD'S PUTTING MAN BEFORE THE TREE OF LIFE INDICATING THAT GOD DESIRES THAT MAN WOULD TAKE HIM, SIGNIFIED BY THE TREE OF LIFE, AS MAN'S LIFE

In Genesis 1 three main categories of life are unveiled, and in Genesis 2:8-9 the tree of life, signifying the divine life, is revealed. Hence, in the first two chapters of Genesis, four kinds of life are mentioned: the plant life, the animal life, the human life, and the divine life. The highest of these four lives is the divine life. God's intention is that the human life have the divine life. The plant life has the plant life, and the animal life has the animal life. But the human life should have the human life mingled with the divine life.

The human life and the divine life may be considered as lives that are similar in kind. When two plants are to be grafted together, they must be similar in kind. A peach tree and an apple tree are similar in kind to one another, but a banana tree is different in kind from a peach or apple tree. Therefore, a branch from a banana tree cannot be grafted into a peach tree.

Man and God are of the same kind. Man bears the image of God (1:26-27). We are men, but we look like God. Because man is according to God's kind, man and God can be grafted together. The product of the mingling of these two lives is a human-divine life. The unbelievers have only the human life, but we as believers have the human-divine life. Christ is the God-man, God mingled with man; we are men mingled with God.

The Created Lives Working Together for the Expression of the Divine Life

The plant life is for the existence of the animal life, the animal life is for the existence of the human life, and the human life is for the expression of the divine life. Eventually, these three lives all work together for the expression of God.

Although the plant life is food for the animal life, the plant life itself is mainly for beauty and decoration. Whenever I go sightseeing, I like to go to the mountains or to the riverside because in these places there are many kinds of trees and flowers. The beauty of the earth is in its flowers. A garden without flowers is not a garden. In God's eyes the earth is His garden, and it is His zoo as well. The plants are for beauty, and the animals are for living, for activities. The earth is full of animals, such as lions, tigers, wolves, and dogs. There are also large, tall trees, such as the pine tree, and vines full of clusters of grapes. The plants are beautiful, the animals are full of activity, and man is full of wisdom to administer everything. According to God's ordination, the whole earth is under man's direction. Man is the head, the administrator, of all creation. The earth is in a beautiful, lively, and orderly situation. The plant life lives for the animal life, the animal life exists for the human life, and the human life lives for the expression of the divine life.

SATAN'S TEMPTING OF MAN TO TAKE THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE INDICATING THAT SATAN WANTS TO KEEP MAN AWAY FROM TAKING GOD AS HIS LIFE

In Genesis 3 Satan came in the form of a serpent to tempt man (vv. 1-6). Satan's tempting of man to take the tree of knowledge indicates that Satan wants to keep man away from taking God as his life. God prepared everything

for man with the intention that man would partake of the tree of life. But before man could take of the tree of life, Satan came in to induce him to take of the tree of knowledge (vv. 1-6).

In Genesis 2 the tree of life is used to signify God as life. This is very meaningful. The tree of life indicates that we need life. Verse 9 says that the trees were "pleasant to the sight and good for food." The tree of life was beautiful, and its beauty was a matter mainly of its leaves. It was also good for food. Its being good for food was a matter of its fruit. As the tree of life is pleasant to the sight, God also is pleasant to the sight. But this is not God's main purpose. Primarily, He is good for food. In Genesis 2 the emphasis concerning the tree of life is on its leaves for beauty, but at the end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, the fruit of the tree of life is stressed (22:2). In eternity the tree of life will produce twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month. This fruit will be for food.

God Mingling with Man by Man's Eating

God mingles Himself with the human life by man's eating of Him. Food is mingled with our physical being by our eating, digesting, and assimilating. Before we eat it, the food is in front of us, but after we eat it, the food disappears within us. The food is gone, but we remain. Eventually, we become mingled with the food that we have taken in. Hence, our eating is a matter of mingling. In order for any element to nourish us, it must be mingled with our being. Every day through our eating we are mingled with our food.

After this mingling is accomplished, we express the food, which we have taken in, through our person, our image, our attributes. If you are Japanese, black, or white, you express your food through your Japanese, black, or white attributes. This is very meaningful. As saved persons who have been regenerated, transformed, and even conformed to the image of Christ, we express what we have eaten of God as our food. God as our food is expressed in our being. God is expressed, but His expression is in our being with its characteristics. Our being will not be annulled. Thus, in the New Jerusalem I will know you, and you will know me. I will still be me, and you will still be you. The mingling of God with us does not annul our being; therefore, we will be able to identify one another, even in eternity. Our being will remain forever to express God in what we are.

The Tree of Life as Man's Food Indicating Dependence

God as food to man indicates that man is dependent upon God. We cannot eat one meal and live forever. I have often thought that it would be wonderful if God had created us so that we needed to eat only one time for our entire life. If this were the case, it would spare us a great deal of trouble, because much time is spent on food. The food we eat must be purchased from the grocery store, stored, cleaned, cut or sliced, and cooked. Sometimes my wife becomes tired of cooking for me, and I sometimes become tired of eating. To sit and eat for thirty-five minutes sometimes becomes a difficult task for me. On one hand, eating is an enjoyment, but on the other hand, eating is a difficult job. God is gracious to make eating an enjoyment to us, because if it were not an enjoyment, many of us would not eat. Eating makes us very dependent. Because we must eat many times a day, and not merely one time for our entire life, we are very dependent. Eating indicates dependence. That God is our food, signified by the tree of life, means that we must depend on God continually. We must come to Him in order to feed on Him again and again. However, the tree of knowledge indicates independence. Once we learn how to use a computer in school, we do not need to go back to school to learn the same thing again. The knowledge we gain makes us independent.

In Genesis 2 the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were set up as two principles by which man could live. If we take the tree of life, we depend on God. If we take the tree of knowledge, we do not depend on God. Rather, taking the tree of knowledge makes us independent of God. In the eyes of God the greatest sin is independence. We must learn to depend on God continually. To exercise our independence is sinful. In family life and in the church life, dependence is beautiful, but independence is ugly. To exercise independence is the principle of death. To take the tree of life is life, but to take the tree of knowledge is death.

GOD'S PROHIBITING THE FALLEN MAN, BY THE CHERUBIM AND THE FLAMING SWORD, FROM TAKING THE TREE OF LIFE INDICATING THAT GOD'S GLORY, HOLINESS, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS DO NOT ALLOW THE SINFUL MAN TO ABUSE THE LIFE OF GOD

When Adam and Eve took of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they chose the principle of independence. Their choice cut them off from the tree of life (3:22-24). Through eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they were corrupted. They were no longer pure, because another source entered into them. This source was the nature and principle of Satan. This nature and principle is rebellion. Such a nature entered into man in Genesis 3. As a result, man's life was corrupted. Because of this corrupting element, God is prohibited by His glory (signified by the cherubim), holiness (signified by the flame), and righteousness (signified by the sword) from contacting fallen man. However, when the requirement of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness is fulfilled, His glory, holiness, and righteousness are satisfied. Thus, having been redeemed back to his original state before the fall, man can once again exercise his right to contact God. The tree of life, signifying God as life, was temporarily kept away from fallen man (vv. 22-24) until Christ came to accomplish redemption. His redemption satisfied God's glory, holiness, and righteousness. Therefore, through Christ's redemption the way was opened for fallen man to contact God.

Man Being Estranged from the Life of God

The significance of man's fall is that man was estranged from the life of God (Eph. 4:17-19), signified by the tree of life. When the tree of life is mentioned in Genesis 2, the emphasis is on the tree itself, not on its fruit. Verse 9 says, "Good for food...the tree of life." It does not mention the fruit of the tree of life; it simply points to the tree of life. Man's need was to eat the tree of life. Since the tree of life signifies God Himself, by eating the tree of life, man would have received God Himself as life. But by choosing the tree of knowledge, man became estranged from the life of God. Man's fall separated him from God as life, but Christ's redemption brings man back to God as life.

The term *the life of God* is used only in Ephesians 4:18. To say that we as believers have the life of God is not very accurate. Actually, what we have is not the life of God but God as life. We have God Himself as our life. We do not take something of God; we take God Himself. We must learn to take God Himself, the entire person, as our life.

THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS HAVING THE RIGHT TO PARTAKE OF GOD AS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

FOR THEIR SATISFACTION—ENJOYMENT—THROUGH THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST, AS TYPIFIED BY THE PROPITIATION ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE SACRIFICES

In the Old Testament times the redemption of Christ was not yet accomplished. It was typified by the propitiation accomplished through the animal sacrifices. Under this propitiation God was legally free to contact man, and man was repositioned to enjoy the right to take God as life. Psalm 36:8-9 is a unique portion in the Old Testament. I treasure this portion. Through these verses we can realize that the Old Testament saints entered into God through the type of propitiation. Propitiation as a type enabled them to enter into God. Psalm 36:8-9 says, "They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. / For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light." In the Old Testament the temple of God, the house of God, signified that God Himself was enterable. Through the type of redemption God's people could enter into Him and enjoy Him. Today through the reality of the redemption of Christ, we can enter into God to enjoy the fatness of His house, the flow of His life, and the light of life.

These verses mention four main points concerning our enjoyment of God as life: fatness, a river of pleasures, the fountain of life, and light. God's dwelling place, His house, has the fatness. This indicates that God's house is a matter of life. There is also a river of pleasures, a river of joy. We must learn to drink of the river of God's pleasures. There is also the fountain of life and the light. All of these four items point to one thing: God is for us to enjoy. But in order to enjoy Him, we must take Him as life and live by Him. He is the fountain of life, but we must take Him as our life. When we take Him as our life, He becomes the fatness, the river of satisfaction, and the light of life.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE RUNNING THROUGH THE DIVINE REVELATION FROM BEGINNING TO END (2)

Scripture Reading: John 1:14, 16, 4; 14:6a; 11:25a; 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12; John 10:11, 15b, 17-18a, 28a; 3:14-15; Heb. 7:16; John 19:34; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 3:16, 36a; 20:31

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The title and subject of this series of messages is "The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man." This title is very particular. In it we see that God is triune and man is tripartite. The title of the initial messages in this series, "The Thought of God to Be Man's Life Running through the Divine Revelation from Beginning to End," also is very significant. The thought of God being man's life runs through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Let us consider again the main points of the previous message.

God's Creating of Living Things Indicating that God Is the God of Life

God's creating of living things indicates that God is the God of life. The whole earth is full of living things in the water, in the air, and on the land. There is the marine life in the ocean, the birds in the air, and the cattle, beasts, and creeping things on the earth (Gen. 1:20-21, 24-25). In addition to all these things, there are grass, trees, and flowers (vv. 11-12). The living things that possess the consciousness of life, as well as those that do not possess such a consciousness, indicate that the Creator of them all must be one of life. The first thought in the Bible concerning God's being life to us is God's creating of living things on the earth.

God's Creating of Man in His Image Indicating That God Wants Man to Have God as His Life

So That Man Can Express God

God's action in creating man in His own image (vv. 26-27) indicates that God wants man to have Himself as man's life so that man can express Him. The reason God created man in His image was that man might express God. Man can express God only by having God as his life. The way God created man indicates that God wanted man to have God as his life.

God's Putting Man before the Tree of Life Indicating That God Desires That Man Would Take Him, Signified by the Tree of Life, as Man's Life

The tree of life (2:8-9) is a symbol of God as life. God is Spirit (John 4:24); as such, He is abstract, difficult for people to grasp, understand, or touch. In His wisdom God used the tree of life as a symbol of Himself. The tree of life is a particular tree. All the other different kinds of trees, such as the apple tree, the peach tree, and the banana tree, are easily understood by everyone. But not many people understand what the tree of life is. Life is mysterious and abstract. The tree of life symbolizes God as life. Therefore, when we take the tree of life, we take God into us as our life. Although this seems very simple, the tree of life is not easy to understand.

On a radio program some years ago in Los Angeles, a famous preacher and Bible teacher was asked what the tree of life is. He replied that, since the tree of life no longer existed, there was no further need for us to know about it. His answer indicated that he was short of the proper biblical knowledge. The tree of life is mentioned not only in Genesis 2 but also in Revelation 2 and 22. Revelation 2:7 says, "To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." How could the Lord give us to eat of something that no longer exists? In Revelation 22:2 the Bible concludes emphatically with the matter of the tree of life. The tree of life continues to exist, but few understand the meaning of the tree of life. Life is inexplicable, and God also is inexplicable. The tree of life in Genesis 2:9 symbolizes God. Therefore, the tree of life can also be called "the tree of God."

According to the description in Revelation 22:2, the tree of life apparently is a vine. This verse says that the tree of life grows on the two sides of the river. Hence, it grows along the river on both of its banks. A pine tree, which grows

upward, can never occupy two banks of a river, but a vine can. In John 15 the Lord Jesus said that He was the true vine (v. 1). The other vines are symbols, but the Lord Jesus is the real vine. If we put Genesis 2, John 15, and Revelation 22 together, we can see that God is the tree of life and that the tree of life is a vine. As a vine, God can reach people wherever they are.

God's Prohibiting the Fallen Man, by the Cherubim and the Flaming Sword, from Taking the Tree of Life Indicating That God's Glory, Holiness, and Righteousness —Do Not Allow the Sinful Man to Abuse the Life of God

Satan's tempting of man to take the tree of knowledge indicates that Satan wants to keep man from taking God as his life (Gen. 3:1-6). After man took of the tree of knowledge, God placed cherubim and a flaming sword (v. 24) before the tree of life in order to prevent man from taking of the tree of life also. God's prohibiting of fallen man by the cherubim and the flaming sword from taking the tree of life indicates that God's glory (signified by the cherubim), holiness (signified by the flame), and righteousness (signified by the sword) do not allow the sinful man to abuse the life of God. The sword signifies God's righteousness. In Revelation 19 the Lord is the One who judges in righteousness (v. 11) with the sharp sword that proceeds out of His mouth (v. 15). The Lord judges by the sword, and the sword is related to His righteousness. God's glory, holiness, and righteousness keep man away from taking God as his life. Fallen man has lost his position to enter into God to take God as his life.

Man Having the Right to Partake of God as the Fountain of Life through the Redemption of Christ

Christ's redemption meets the requirement of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness. The Lord Jesus died for us in order to satisfy God's requirements. Christ redeemed us back to our original position so that we can enter into God and enjoy Him as our life. Since the redemption of Christ had not yet been accomplished in the Old Testament, God used propitiation, which was accomplished with the animal sacrifices. Propitiation, or expiation, in the Old Testament typifies the redemption of Christ in the New Testament.

The blood of the sacrifice offered to God for the sins of the Israelites on the Day of Expiation was brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the cover of the Ark (Lev. 16:14-15). Within the Ark, under its cover, were the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. These commandments placed certain demands upon man before God. But the blood of the bullock covered the demands of these commandments. As a result, God could see only the covering blood and not the Ten Commandments. The troublesome situation between man and God was covered, that is, propitiated. The issue of this propitiation was peace. On the propitiatory place, the cover of the Ark, God and man were able to meet in peace. The propitiation in the Old Testament gave the saints the right to partake of God as the fountain of life for their satisfaction (Psa. 36:8-9).

The propitiation in the Old Testament pointed to the redemption of Christ, which He accomplished in the New Testament. Now, under this redemption we have the full right to enter into God and take Him as our life.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

God Coming to Be Incarnated That Man May Receive Him as Grace and Reality, Both of Which Are God Himself to Be Man's Life as Man's Eternal Portion

The first point concerning God being life to us in the New Testament is His incarnation. God came to be incarnated that man may receive Him as grace and reality (John 1:14, 16). Both grace and reality are God Himself to be man's life as man's eternal portion. God was incarnated in order that He might dispense Himself into us as life. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...full of grace and reality." For the Word to become flesh means that God became a man. Grace is God enjoyed by us, and reality is God gained by us. When God is gained by us, that is reality. If we have everything in the universe but do not have God, everything is vanity. Only God is reality. When God is gained, realized, and apprehended by us, God is reality to us.

In order for us to enjoy Him and to gain Him, God must be our life. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the

Word was God." Verse 3 says that "all things came into being through Him." Then verse 4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Joining these verses with verse 14, we can see that God as the Word became flesh to bring grace and reality to us. To have grace and reality is to have God as life.

According to New Testament usage, grace and reality are equal to life. In John 14:6 the Lord declared, "I am the way and the reality and the life." In this portion of the Word, reality and life are joined together. If we do not have the reality, how can we have the way? If we do not have the life, how can we have the reality? When we have the life, we also have the reality. When we have the reality, the reality is the way. We are human beings, but without the human life, how could we have the human reality? Without the human reality, how could we carry out human things? In order to carry out human things, we need human reality, and in order to have human reality, we must have human life. The way is the reality, and the reality is the life. Hence, John 14:6 tells us that reality and life are one thing. Grace and life also are one thing. Both 1 Corinthians 15:10 and Galatians 2:20 contain the phrase *yet not I, but*. First Corinthians 15:10 says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God," and Galatians 2:20 says, "Yet not I, but Christ" (KJV). Putting these two verses together, we can see that grace is Christ Himself. Second Corinthians 13:14 refers to "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." This too indicates that grace is just Christ. This Christ is the One who lives in us (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:10) as our life (Col. 3:4). When all these verses are put together, we can see that grace is the divine life of God becoming our portion. When the divine life of God becomes our portion, this is grace. According to popular American theology, grace is unmerited favor. To receive a good car for transportation as a gift without paying any money would be counted as grace. This kind of theology is very shallow. However, *Hymns*, #497 defines grace according to its highest definition:

Grace in its highest definition is
God in the Son to be enjoyed by us;
It is not only something done or giv'n,
But God Himself, our portion glorious.

God is incarnate in the flesh that we
Him may receive, experience ourself;
This is the grace which we receive of God,

Which comes thru Christ and which is
Christ Himself.

Paul the Apostle counted all as dung,
'Twas only God in Christ he counted grace;
'Tis by this grace—the Lord experienced—
That he surpassed the others in the race.

It is this grace—Christ as our inward strength—
Which with His all-sufficiency doth fill;
It is this grace which in our spirit is,
There energizing, working out God's will.

This grace, which is the living Christ Himself,
Is what we need and must experience;
Lord, may we know this grace and by it live,
Thyself increasingly as grace to sense.

John 1 is a marvelous chapter because in it God as the Word (v. 1) coming in incarnation is combined with grace and reality (v. 14) to be our life (v. 4). Then verse 16 says, "Of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace." All these verses indicate that God's incarnation was to bring Himself into us, that is, to dispense Himself into us, as our life. Grace and reality are God Himself. God came to be incarnated that man may receive Him as grace and reality, both of which are God Himself to be man's life as man's eternal portion. God as life is our eternal portion. Nothing is more valuable than God as life to us to be our eternal portion. As human beings, the most valuable thing to us is our human life. Clothing, a house, or a car are not as important as our life. If our human life is gone, we are finished. Life is everything. In the same way, God is our portion to be our life. This is the top blessing.

Coming as Life That Man May Have the Divine Life and Have It Abundantly

Christ came as life that man may have life and have it abundantly (14:6a; 11:25a; 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12). His coming to man was by incarnation. He did not simply descend to the earth from the heavens and declare that He was life to man. This would not have worked. He had to come through incarnation through the womb of a virgin, because He had to die for our sins. In order to

die for our sins, He had to shed His blood (Heb. 9:22); therefore, He needed a body of blood and flesh. The only way for Him to gain such a body was to be incarnated. Through incarnation He obtained a body of blood and flesh in order to accomplish redemption. However, His coming through incarnation was not only to save us from our sins but also that He might be life to us. In John 10:10b the Lord Himself said that He came that man may have life and may have it abundantly. Christ came as life and resurrection (14:6; 11:25). Thus, when He came, life came, and when we receive Him, we have life (1 John 5:11-12).

Christ Laying Down His Own Human Life for Man and Taking It Again in Order to Release His Divine Life That He May Dispense It into His Believers

The Lord Jesus laid down His own human life for man (John 10:11, 15b, 17-18a). The Lord Jesus has two lives. The life that He came to give us is the divine life (v. 28a), and the life that He laid down for us is His human life, His soulish life (v. 11). He died in the human life, but He remained alive in the divine life. For Christ to lay down His life means that He sacrificed or gave up His human life for us. The Lord laid down His own human life for sinful man and took it again (v. 18a). For the Lord to take His life again means that He rose up, resurrected, from the dead. Through death and resurrection He released His divine life that He might dispense the divine life into His believers (12:24). The divine life has been released for us to receive, and the way to receive it is just to believe into Christ as the resurrected One (3:15-16, 36).

Christ Being Lifted Up on the Cross in the Form of the Serpent So That Believers May Have God's Eternal Life—the Uncreated, Indestructible Life

Christ was lifted up on the cross in the form of the serpent (vv. 14-15). He died on the cross not only as a man but also as a serpent. Fallen men are serpents (Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33) who have been poisoned by the old serpent, Satan (Rev. 12:9). As fallen men, we have been bitten, poisoned, by Satan. The

poisonous nature of the old serpent is within us. Therefore, in God's eyes we are not merely human beings; we are serpents with a serpentine nature. Christ died for us in the form of the serpent, typified by the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness (John 3:14-15; Num. 21:8-9). In Numbers 21 many of the children of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents. In the eyes of God they had become serpents. So, Moses put a bronze serpent on a pole, and as many of the Israelites who looked on the serpent were healed. The serpent on the pole had the form of the serpent but not its poison. In the same way, the Lord Jesus had the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), the form of the flesh of sin, but He had no participation in the sin of the flesh (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21). Since the Lord Jesus was lifted up in the form of a serpent, in the eyes of God He was a serpent. To be lifted up is to be judged, exposed, and openly put to shame. Christ was judged for us that we as His believers may have God's eternal life—the uncreated, indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Because God's life is eternal, it is also indestructible. If it could be destroyed, then it would not be eternal. That it is eternal means that it exists under any kind of situation. Thus, it is everlasting. In nature and in standard God is eternal, without any limitation. This eternal life is given to us through Christ's being lifted up in the form of the serpent. He died in the form of the serpent to suffer shame openly for us before the whole universe so that His life could be released from within Him and dispensed into us. This life that is dispensed into us is eternal, uncreated, and indestructible.

Christ Accomplishing God's Redemption and Releasing His Divine Life through His Death on the Cross

Through His death on the cross, Christ accomplished God's redemption and released His divine life. These two things are signified by the shedding of His blood and by the flowing of water out of Him (John 19:34). Christ came through incarnation, and His death and resurrection were a continuation of His journey in incarnation. What was the destination of His journey? The destination of the Triune God's journey through incarnation is man's spirit. Unless the Triune God reaches our spirit, He has not arrived at His destination. In order to reach this destination, the Triune God had to pass through human living, death, and resurrection. Through death He accomplished redemption. We needed redemption because we could not meet the threefold requirement of God's glory, holiness, and righteousness. As long as God's requirements are unsatisfied, God has no way to enter into us.

Through the redemption of Christ, God's glory, holiness, and righteousness were satisfied. This is the negative side of Christ's death, signified by the shedding of His blood (v. 34).

Through His Resurrection, Christ as the Last Adam Becoming the Life-giving, Life-dispensing Spirit

Christ's death released His divine life, signified by the water flowing out of Him (v. 34). This is the positive side of Christ's death. His divine life could be released from within the shell of His humanity (12:24) only by death and resurrection. In resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As the life-giving Spirit, He is ready to enter into our spirit. When we call "O Lord Jesus," He immediately arrives at the destination of our spirit. Our spirit is the destination of His journey.

Christ has taken several steps in His journey through incarnation to be man's life. His first step was to enter into the womb of a virgin (Matt. 1:23). His second step was to come out of that womb to be a God-man. His third step was to walk on the earth in His human living. The goal of such a walk is the spirit of man. But in order to enter into the spirit of man, Christ had to die on the cross to redeem man, and He had to rise from the dead to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As the Spirit, He can enter into man. When man calls upon the name of the Lord, He arrives at His destination.

Whoever Believes into Christ Having the Eternal Divine Life

Christ's becoming the life-giving, life-dispensing Spirit is the last step of His coming to man. Now only one thing is needed: we must believe into Him in order to have eternal life (John 3:16, 36a; 20:31). The way to believe into Him is to call upon His name (Rom. 10:9, 13). When we call upon His name, He enters into us immediately. He enters into us, and we enter into Him. Our believing brings Him into our spirit (1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:10), which is the destination of His journey.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE RUNNING THROUGH THE DIVINE REVELATION FROM BEGINNING TO END (3)

Scripture Reading: John 3:5-6; 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3; John 1:12; Heb. 2:10; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:30c

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament the thought of God being man's life has six main points. First, God's creating of living things indicates that God is the God of life. Second, God's creating of man in His image indicates that God wants man to have God as his life so that man can express God. Third, God's putting man before the tree of life indicates that God desires that man would take Him, signified by the tree of life, as man's life. Fourth, Satan's tempting of man to take the tree of knowledge indicates that Satan wants to keep man from taking God as his life. Fifth, God's prohibiting of the fallen man, by the cherubim and the flaming sword, from taking the tree of life indicates that God's glory (signified by the cherubim), holiness (signified by the flame), and righteousness (signified by the sword) do not allow sinful man to abuse the life of God. Sixth, through the redemption of Christ, as typified by the propitiation accomplished with the sacrifices, the Old Testament saints had the right to partake of God as the fountain of life for their satisfaction and enjoyment. These six items are the main points in the Old Testament concerning the matter of the divine life in its relationship to us.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the thought of God being man's life begins with the incarnation. God came to be incarnated that man may receive Him as grace and reality, both of which are God Himself to be man's life as man's eternal portion (John 1:14, 16, 4). God came to reach man. His journey, His coming, to reach man includes six steps, and the destination of His journey is man's spirit. First, He came as life that man may have the divine life and have it abundantly (14:6a; 11:25a; 10:10b; 1 John 5:11-12). Second, He laid down His

own human life for man and took it again to release His divine life that He may dispense it into His believers (John 10:11, 15b, 17-18a, 28a). Christ's laying down of His life was His dying on the cross for our redemption. Christ's redemption made a way through all the obstacles, just as a tunnel provides a way through a mountain. In order to impart His divine life into our spirit, Christ died for our redemption.

In the third step of His coming, Christ was lifted up on the cross in the form of the serpent so that His believers may have God's eternal life—the uncreated, indestructible life (3:14-15; Heb. 7:16). In this aspect of His death, Christ died not only in the form of a man but also in the form of a serpent (John 3:14; Num. 21:8-9). In the eyes of God all fallen men are serpents (Matt. 12:34), because they all have the serpentine nature within them. Outwardly, we may appear to be ladies and gentlemen, but inwardly we are serpentine. Because we are serpents, Christ died on the cross in the form of the serpent. Because as fallen men we have the poison of sin within us, we are real serpents. But Christ, like the bronze serpent, had only the form of the serpent, because He did not have the poison of sin within Him (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). Christ's coming in the form of the serpent was to deal with our serpentine nature in order to impart Himself as life to us. So, His dying on the cross in the form of a serpent was a further step in God's coming to be our life.

Through His death on the cross, Christ accomplished God's redemption, signified by the shedding of His blood, and released His divine life, signified by the flowing of water out of Him (John 19:34). This is the fourth step of His coming. In the fifth step of His coming, Christ, as the last Adam, became the life-giving, life-dispensing Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) through His resurrection. Now, whoever believes into Him may have the eternal, divine life (John 3:16, 36a; 20:31). This is the sixth step of His coming.

In order for God to reach the destination of our spirit, many steps were required. The almighty God in the heavens came down from His heavenly dwelling and passed through many problems, obstacles, and hindrances in order to reach our spirit. He laid down His life in His human nature, dying in the form of a serpent in order to deal with our serpentine nature. He accomplished redemption, which solved the problems of Satan, the world, the sinful nature, the self, the old man, sin, and sins. Christ's redemption was like the construction of a modern highway. The highways in the United States were built by straightening curves, leveling hills, and bridging gaps and rivers.

Christ's redemption has bridged all the gaps, leveled all the hills, and straightened out all the curves. The shedding of Christ's blood has accomplished an eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12).

In addition to the shedding of His blood, water flowed out of Him (John 19:34). The flowing of the water out of Him indicates the release of His divine life through His death and resurrection. In resurrection Christ became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The One who was incarnated, who lived a human life on the earth, who was crucified and buried, who went into Hades, and who walked out of death and was released from death, Hades, and the grave, became a life-giving Spirit. As the life-giving Spirit, He can now enter into man.

The process of Christ's becoming the life-giving Spirit may be likened to the process whereby a melon becomes juice. Some years ago in Taiwan, I brought a large melon home for my children. In a joking way, I asked them to tell me how they could get that big melon into them. They were puzzled by my question and were unable to tell me how the big melon could get into them. Eventually, I cut the big melon into small slices. Because the melon was in small slices, my children could easily eat it. Although my children enjoyed the slices, I went further and pressed the slices until the juice of the melon came out. Everyone could then drink the juice. This made everyone very happy. Eventually, the entire melon was processed, and it soon disappeared within the stomachs of my children. After a few hours the big melon reached every part of their being.

In a similar way God has been processed in order to reach man's spirit. All the steps of God's coming are the processes needed for Him to become the "juice" for man to drink. Christ was "cut into slices" on the cross and "pressed" through death and resurrection until He became "juice." As the life-giving Spirit, He is like melon juice. Now we can drink Him. The New Testament gives a strong charge to the believers to drink Christ. In John 7:37 the Lord Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink," and in Revelation 22:17 the Spirit and the bride say, "Let him who is thirsty come...take the water of life freely." As the Spirit, the Lord is ready for all of us to drink Him. By believing in the Lord Jesus, exercising our spirit to call upon His name, He reaches our spirit. How marvelous! This is the initial step through which God becomes man's life in the New Testament.

GOD IN CHRIST AS THE SPIRIT ENTERING THE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST TO BE THEIR LIFE THROUGH REGENERATING THEM

After God came in incarnation that we may have Him as life, God in Christ as the Spirit enters the believers in Christ to be their life through regenerating them (John 3:5-6; 1:13). The phrase *God in Christ as the Spirit* indicates the Triune God. *God* refers to God the Father, *Christ* to God the Son, and *the Spirit* to God the Spirit. The Triune God enters into the believers as the Spirit because the Spirit today is the consummation of the Triune God. Thus, when the Spirit comes, all three of the Divine Trinity come. The Triune God enters the believers in Christ. In order for the Triune God to enter into us, we must be people who are in Christ. Outside of Christ, there is no possibility for God to enter into us. In Christ, we are rightly positioned and qualified for God to enter into us to be our life.

God enters into us to be our life because our first need is life. If He entered us first to be our food, this would not be right. Food is the life supply. However, our first need is life. As the embodiment of God and the life-giving Spirit, Christ enters us by regenerating us. His regenerating of us is more meaningful and significant than His being our life supply. The processed and consummated Triune God enters us to regenerate us. Thus we have a new birth. This new birth is not a small thing. Every life depends on a birth. If there is no birth, there is no beginning of life. We had a beginning in Adam, but we now have a new beginning in Christ. Our first birth, our human birth, was somewhat poor, but our second birth, our divine birth, was wonderful.

After being consummated, the Triune God comes into us to be the generating factor and element. God has regenerated us. Regeneration is more than having a new life put into us. Regeneration means that a life has come into us to germinate, to generate, in order to change our being and to give us a new start. In other words, a life has come into us that has given us a new beginning of a different kind of being. Formerly, we were one kind of being. Now through regeneration we have the beginning of a new being. This is the way God enters into us.

Through the Living Word of God

God enters into us to regenerate us through the living word of God (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18). First Peter 1:23 says that we were "regenerated not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God." When I read this verse as a young man, I was bothered because my experience of regeneration did not seem to match what it reveals. It seemed that at the time of my regeneration I did not receive any word or verse from the Bible at all. I had only heard a message concerning God based on the record in the book of Exodus. Since my regeneration, I have checked with many other believers, and only a few have had the experience of being regenerated through a particular verse from the Bible. One such person was a young man who got saved through the help of a brother who used John 3:16. The brother helped the young man to read John 3:16. First, they read it together as it was in the New Testament. Then the brother asked the young man to read it by substituting "me" for "the world." So he read, "For God so loved me." Through this kind of reading, the young man was saved. However, most of us were saved in a general way by listening to a message.

In 1 Peter 1:23 the living word of God refers to the gospel message that we heard at the time we were saved. The central thought of the gospel of God is that God became a man by the name of Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins and for us, that He resurrected from the dead, and that He became our living Savior. Hearing such a gospel, we believed and were regenerated. This gospel is the living word through which we were regenerated.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and spoke a message to more than three thousand people (Acts 2:1, 14, 41). In his message he spoke of Christ's incarnation, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. His message was the living word of God, and through it three thousand were regenerated. The center and reality of Peter's message was the resurrected Christ in all of His steps from incarnation to becoming the life-giving Spirit. That was the living word of God.

Through the Resurrection of Christ

First Peter 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." In the writings of the apostle Peter, there are many hidden riches. In 1 Peter 1:3, Peter says that we were regenerated through the resurrection of Christ. But in verse 23

of the same chapter Peter says that we were regenerated through the living word of God. It seems that there are two ways to be regenerated: through the resurrection of Christ and through the living word. Although they seem to be two different ways, they are actually one way. Christ's resurrection is conveyed in the word. The living word that regenerates us is the word that conveys the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is a fact revealed in verse 3. Through the wonderful fact of Christ's resurrection, we all were regenerated by God. We were regenerated by God through the resurrection of Christ, but how do we know the fact of Christ's resurrection? We know it through the living word of God, through the word of the gospel. In the preaching of the gospel, the main thing we must tell people is that Christ today is resurrected and that He is the Savior in resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ is the fact, and the living word of God is the description of that fact. These two things are actually one thing. Without the resurrection of Christ, the gospel has no content. But without the preaching of the gospel, the speaking of the living word that conveys the resurrection of Christ, no one would know about this resurrection. Therefore, we must go out to reach people, to speak to people, to tell them of the resurrection of Christ. The more we preach, the more people will be regenerated.

Making the Believers the Children of God— the Sons of God

Regeneration makes the believers the children of God and the sons of God (John 1:12; Heb. 2:10). Life by itself, without the action of regeneration, does not make us a child of God. Life must pass through the action of regeneration in order to make us a child of God. Regeneration by the divine life makes us a child of God. First, we become children of God; then we become sons of God (v. 10).

For the Believers to Be Partakers of the Divine Nature So That They May Be Glorified with the Divine Glory

It is for us to be partakers of the divine nature that we were made children of God and sons of God so that we may be glorified with the divine glory (2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:30c; Heb. 2:10). Every day we should partake of the divine nature. When we partake of beef, we partake of the nature of a cow. If every

day we partake of beef, not only our skin but also our clothing will eventually begin to smell like a cow. Likewise, if we eat salmon every day continually, our entire body will smell like salmon. Our partaking of the divine nature must be constant. Being partakers involves more than partaking in an occasional way. We must partake of the divine nature every minute. We must eat, drink, and even breathe the divine nature. In our human life we breathe more often than we drink, and we drink more often than we eat. In our Christian life we must breathe, drink, and eat the divine nature.

We partake constantly of the divine nature so that we may be glorified. To merely improve ourselves does not involve us with a different element. However, to be glorified, we must be involved with the element of God's glory, with the element of God's glorifying nature. When metal is heated until it becomes red hot, as in welding, it is "glorified." The element of electricity enters into the metal and makes it hot. Thus, we may say that the electricity glorifies the metal.

By partaking of God's divine nature, we are glorified with the divine glory. We were regenerated through the resurrection of Christ unto a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3). This hope is for our coming glorification. We have been justified, and we will be glorified (Rom. 8:30c). Since we are now on the way to glory, Hebrews 2:10 tells us that God is leading us, His many sons, into glory.

As a young Christian, I was taught that to be glorified is to have our physical defects removed. With this understanding, I thought that for a crippled person to be brought into the Lord's glory means that his being crippled would be removed at the Lord's coming back. I held this understanding for quite a time. Eventually, I came to realize that this is not the proper understanding of being glorified. When we received the divine life and were regenerated, we became a new being. This new being is a partaker of the divine nature. Day after day we must partake of the divine nature, and this divine nature is the glory. Eventually, this divine nature will glorify us, causing us to shine with God's element.

Regeneration includes our upcoming glorification. Thus, it is correct to say that our regeneration has not yet been completed. We have had a beginning, and now we are on the way. There is still much of our being that has not yet been regenerated. We may think that the process we undergo after our initial regeneration should be called sanctification or transformation. This is

certainly true, but in Romans 8:30 Paul mentions only justification and glorification. These are only two of the steps in the long process from regeneration to glorification. Paul seems to skip sanctification, transformation, and conformation. Actually, the steps of sanctification, transformation, and conformation are included in the ultimate step of glorification, for these steps consummate in glorification. Regeneration begins with justification and consummates in glorification.

Although we have been regenerated, we may still lose our temper. Our losing of our temper indicates that we have not yet been fully regenerated. When we lose our temper, we may wonder whether or not we have been regenerated at all. Yes, we have been regenerated but not fully. We have been regenerated, but we will not be thoroughly regenerated until we have been glorified.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THOUGHT OF GOD TO BE MAN'S LIFE RUNNING THROUGH THE DIVINE REVELATION FROM BEGINNING TO END (4)

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:4a; Gal. 2:20a; 2 Tim. 4:22; Col. 3:10-11; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4-6; 2:7, 26; 12:5; Matt. 25:34, 46b; Rev. 21:1-2, 10-11; 22:1-2, 5b; 21:24

CHRIST AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD BECOMING HIS BELIEVERS' LIFE

The first item covered in the New Testament is God's coming, beginning from His being incarnated and ending with His becoming a life-giving Spirit, in order to reach our spirit. After God's coming, God enters into us to regenerate us, to make us His children, His sons, that we may be partakers of the divine nature. This partaking will consummate in our being glorified. After our regeneration, Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God remains within us to be our life (Col. 3:4a). He not only enters into us to regenerate us, but He also remains within us to be our life. Christ is our life in three ages: the present age, the coming age, and the eternal age.

In the Present Age

Living in the Believers' Spirit for Their Daily Life

In the present age Christ lives in the believers' spirit for their daily life (Gal. 2:20a; 2 Tim. 4:22). Our daily life should not merely be a human life that we live out by ourselves; our daily life should be Christ. In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." In this portion Paul seems to say, "Christ within me is my life, and now He lives in me to be my living. He is my life within and my living without. I am living Christ. Christ is my life, and Christ is also my living. He is my daily life."

The Christ who lives in us as our life is in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). If we are going to take Christ as our life and live Him as our living, we must be a person in our spirit. We must be in our spirit, not in our mind, emotion, will, understanding, likes, or dislikes. When we dislike a person, the more we think about that person, the more disgusted we are. For example, in the training a sister may have been assigned a roommate that she considers to be troublesome. The more the sister thinks about her roommate, the more troublesome her roommate becomes to her. The solution to this kind of problem is to turn to our spirit. We must consider one another in our spirit. When we turn to our spirit, Christ as our life is there. This is our Christian life.

To Be All the Members of the New Man for the Believers' Church Life

Christ lives in us to be all the members of the new man (Col. 3:10-11). We are the members of the new man, and every member of the new man must be Christ. Christ is the element of the new man, and the very God who is in Christ is the essence of the new man. We are the outward shell, the outward components, of the new man.

Christ is all the members of the new man for the believers' church life. In the church life there are no Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Germans, or Spanish. Christ is everything in the new man. Colossians 3:10-11 says, "And have put on the new man...where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all." In the new man we all have been annulled. Now there is only Christ. Christ should be our daily life, and He should also be our church life. This is our life in the present age. If Christ were our daily life and our church life, there would be no problem in our family life and church life. The problems in our family life and church life come because we live as Chinese, as New Zealanders, or as Americans. When we live in such a way, the church life is annulled. When we live out something other than Christ, the church life is finished. Therefore, we must be annulled, and Christ should live. When we are annulled and Christ lives, we have the proper church life.

In the Coming Age

Christ's being our life in the coming age will be different from His being our life today, because the age will change from the church age to the kingdom age. Christ is life to us in one way in the church age, and He will be life to us in another way in the kingdom age.

Christ Becoming the Enlarged Kingdom of God

Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God and as life to His believers will become the enlarged kingdom of God in the coming age (Dan. 2:34-36, 44). In the present age Christ is our life (Col. 3:4a); in the coming kingdom age, the millennium, Christ as life to us will be the kingdom. Today Christ is life to us, and tomorrow He will be the kingdom to us. In this age we may receive Christ as our life free of charge, but in order to inherit Christ as the kingdom in the next age, we must pay a very high price. Although the Christ who lives in our human spirit today may seem to be very small, in the coming age of the kingdom, He will become a great mountain that fills the entire earth (Dan. 2:34-35).

In the coming age Christ will become the enlarged kingdom of God, typified by the stone cut out without human hands. Today in the church age Christ is a small stone (1 Pet. 2:4), but in the kingdom age this stone will become a great mountain that fills the whole earth. This great mountain will be the enlargement of the stone in the church age. Daniel 2:34-35 and 44 say, "You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth...And in the days of those kings the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever." According to these verses in Daniel 2, the coming kingdom is likened to a mountain. The mountain mentioned in verse 35 is the enlargement of a stone cut out without human hands. This stone is Christ, and the mountain that is the enlargement of the stone is the kingdom. The upcoming kingdom will be the enlargement of Christ.

The interpretation of the image in Daniel 2 is a prophecy concerning the human governments from the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, until the time of the coming of Christ (see ch. 2 of *The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to Be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God*). The feet of the image are partly of iron and partly of clay (vv. 33-34). The iron signifies human power in government, especially in dictatorships and autocracies. The clay signifies the people. When iron is mixed with clay, the iron is weakened. When the people rise up to call for democracy and freedom, as they have in Eastern Europe in recent days, autocracy and dictatorship are weakened. Thus, the recent events in Eastern Europe are a further fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 2. In Daniel 2 a stone cut out without human hands struck the two feet of the image and crushed them (v. 34). Thus, the entire image, the symbol of human government in the form of autocracy, was crushed. The stone that struck the image became the replacement for the image. This replacement is Christ in His enlargement. In the fulfillment of this prophecy Christ will be enlarged to cover the entire earth. This enlargement will be the kingdom, and the kingdom will be Christ Himself.

The kingdom in its reality is here today (see Hebrews 12:28, footnote 1, Recovery Version), but it has not yet been manifested. In Luke 17:20-21 the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation...For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” At that time, Jesus was already in the midst of the people as the kingdom of God. This corresponds with Mark 4:26, where the Lord said, “So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth.” The seed of life is the seed of the kingdom. This seed is Christ Himself. Christ as the seed of the kingdom has been sown into us, and this seed is growing within us.

According to Luke 19:12, the Lord Jesus as a certain man of noble birth went to a distant country (the heavens) to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. On the one hand, the Lord has traveled to a distant country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. On the other hand, He is here growing within us until the kingdom is manifested. We may wonder whether the Lord is in the heavens waiting for the time of His coming or is growing within us to be manifested. Actually, His being manifested from within us is His coming, and His coming is just His being manifested from within us. When the living saints on earth are filled with Christ, saturated with Christ, and grown into maturity in Christ, the kingdom as the great mountain will be

manifested. We as believers have received the little Jesus, but we will inherit the enlargement of Jesus, which is the kingdom.

The Overcoming Believers Inheriting the Eternal Life as a Reward

The overcoming believers in Christ will inherit the eternal life as a reward to them in the millennium (Matt. 19:28-29; Rev. 20:4-6). To have eternal life and to inherit eternal life are two different things in the New Testament. John 3:16 says that "everyone who believes into Him [the Son] would not perish, but would have eternal life." However, Matthew 19:29 says, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My name's sake shall receive a hundred times as much and shall inherit eternal life." To have eternal life is a matter in the present age; thus, in John 3:16 the Lord Jesus used the present tense of the verb *have*. However, in Matthew 19:29 the Lord used the future tense of *inherit,* because the inheriting of eternal life is something for the coming age.

We have eternal life today, and we are enjoying it today. Eternal life certainly is ours today, but we cannot yet say that we have inherited eternal life as our legal possession. To have eternal life, the only requirement is that we believe in Christ (John 3:16; 20:31). However, to inherit eternal life, we must fulfill additional conditions and requirements. One of the conditions for inheriting eternal life is that we must give up all the things of this age (Matt. 19:29).

The inheriting of eternal life in Matthew 19:29 is related to the kingdom. This is proved by the preceding verse, which says that in the restoration the twelve apostles, who followed the Lord Jesus, will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (v. 28). To sit on thrones is not something of this age; it is something for the coming kingdom age. In the kingdom age the overcoming saints will rule as kings sitting on thrones (Rev. 20:4, 6). The context of Matthew 19:29 strongly proves that the inheriting of eternal life is related to the kingdom.

The Overcoming Believers Enjoying Christ as the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God— the New Jerusalem in the Millennium

In the millennium the Paradise of God will be the New Jerusalem. The overcoming believers will enjoy Christ as the tree of life in the Paradise of God, which is the New Jerusalem in the millennium (Rev. 2:7). During the one thousand years of the kingdom, the New Jerusalem on a small scale will be a special portion, a reward, to the overcoming believers; but in the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem will be greatly enlarged as the common portion of all of God's redeemed people.

The Overcoming Believers Ruling as Kings in the Eternal Life over the Nations Who Will Remain on the Earth in the Realm of the Eternal Life

The overcoming believers will be kings to rule in the eternal life over the nations who will remain on the earth in the realm of the eternal life—the enlarged kingdom of God in the millennium (20:4, 6; 2:26; 12:5; Matt. 25:34, 46b). Matthew 25:34 says, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Verse 46 says, "And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." To have eternal life is one thing, to inherit eternal life is another thing, and to enter into eternal life is yet another thing.

The righteous in verse 46 are the sheep in verse 33. The sheep will be the good nations who will enter into the realm of eternal life in the kingdom age. When He comes back, the Lord Jesus will descend upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) and will sit on the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31). At that time all the nations will be gathered to Him (v. 32). He will then classify, or divide, the nations into two categories: the sheep and the goats. The sheep are the righteous ones, and the goats are the unrighteous ones (vv. 33, 46). The goats will be sent into the eternal punishment (v. 46a) of the lake of fire (v. 41; Rev. 20:14-15), but the sheep will enter into eternal life (Matt. 25:46b). The eternal life will be a realm into which they will enter, but the eternal life will not enter into them. They will not enter into God's kingdom today, but they will enter into it in the coming age. In the coming kingdom the sheep will be the nations, the people, the subordinates, the subjects, to be ruled by the overcoming believers, who will be the kings (Rev. 20:4, 6; 12:5). Will you as a believer be such a king in the coming kingdom? We all must exercise our faith to believe

that we can be the overcoming believers to be the kings in the coming kingdom. In order to be such kings, we must prepare ourselves today. In this present age we are a part of the new man, and we are also a part of the enlargement of Christ. This new man will become the kingdom in the next age. We are a part of the new man today, and we will be a part of the kingdom in the next age.

The church as the new man and the Body of Christ is the enlargement of Christ. The Body of Christ today will be the enlargement of Christ in the coming age. Since we are members of the Body of Christ today, we will also be a part of the enlargement of Christ in the coming kingdom. These are the facts. We are a part of the kingdom of God today (Rom. 14:17), and we will be a part of the kingdom of God in the next age. As the overcoming believers, we will be a part of the corporate kingship to rule over the righteous nations, and the nations, who will be saved but not regenerated, will enter into the realm of eternal life to be our subjects.

Our being a part of Christ, a part of the new man, and a part of the kingdom today is completely based on our having the eternal life. If the Triune God had not been processed to be our life, we could not be a part of Christ, a part of the new man, or a part of the kingdom of God today. The eternal life in the present age, in the coming age, and in the eternal age is related to the Triune God becoming our life. We have the eternal life in this age, and we will also have it in the coming age. In the coming age the eternal life will be enlarged to be the kingdom. We will not only be in the kingdom, but we will also be the kingdom as the enlargement of Christ. This enlargement will be something altogether in the eternal life.

In the Eternal Age

Christ Being Life to All of God's Redeemed, of Whom the New Jerusalem Will Be Composed, in the New Heaven and New Earth

In the eternal age, in the new heaven and new earth, Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God will be life, symbolized by the tree of life growing in the river of water of life, to all of God's redeemed (Rev. 21:1-2, 10-11; 22:1-2).

God's redeemed people include three different groups: those who were saved before the church age, such as Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham; those who were saved during the church age; and those Jews who will be saved after the Lord's return. When the Lord Jesus returns, the church age will close, and thousands of Jews, including the entire nation of Israel, will be saved. They will be saved, but they will not be in the church. The saints of the Old Testament, the New Testament saints, and the Jews saved after the Lord's return, added together, will be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth.

During the millennium, the New Jerusalem will consist of the overcomers of the Old Testament saints and the overcomers of the New Testament saints. In Matthew 8:11 the Lord Jesus said that many shall come from the east and the west and will recline at table (feast) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. Today Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others are waiting on us. They have been invited to the wedding feast, and we also have been invited. They are ready to begin the feast, but we are not yet ready. According to Hebrews 11:40, the saints of the Old Testament are not complete without us; therefore, they must wait until we are ready. When we are ready, the wedding feast will begin (Rev. 19:7-9), and the entire one thousand years of the millennium will be a wedding day feast. A wedding day lasts for only one day, but the marriage life is for the whole course of one's life. The wedding day of Christ and the church will last one thousand years. During the millennium, the enjoyment of the New Jerusalem, as a special portion for the overcomers in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, will last for one day of one thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8). After this wedding day the marriage life will begin in the new heaven and new earth for eternity in the New Jerusalem.

All of God's Redeemed Reigning in the Eternal Life over the Nations for Eternity

All of God's redeemed people, including the Old Testament saints, the New Testament saints, and the saved Jews in the millennium, will be kings reigning in the realm of the eternal life over the nations (Rev. 22:5b; 21:24) who will continue to remain in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. We as kings will eat the fruit of the tree of life, and the people, the nations, will eat the leaves of the tree of life (22:2). We have the life of the tree of life, but they

will not have that life. The tree of life will be the very processed and consummated Triune God as our life forever.

In the present age the Triune God is life to us in the way of His living within us to make us the members of the new man. In the kingdom age He will be life to us in the way of mingling Himself with us to make us a reigning body, the enlargement of Christ, to rule over the earth as kings. This will be a reward to us in the coming age. In the eternal age of the new heaven and new earth, the consummated Triune God will still be life to us, in the way of mingling Himself with His redeemed, transformed, and tripartite man in order to have the New Jerusalem. Thus, we will enjoy Him as life forever.

What we have presented in these four chapters is the thought of the Triune God to be life to the tripartite man running through the entire divine revelation, from Genesis to Revelation. These messages are an extract of the entire New Testament revelation and economy of God, from the incarnation to the New Jerusalem.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRIUNE GOD BEING PROCESSED TO BE THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT AND THE TRIPARTITE MAN BEING CREATED WITH A SPIRIT TO BE THE RECEIVER AND CONTAINER OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Scripture Reading: John 1:14; Heb. 2:14a; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3b; Heb. 2:14b; John 3:14; 12:31-33; Gal. 6:14; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a; 5:24; John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3; John 1:12; Rom. 12:5; Exo. 30:25; Rom. 8:2a; 2 Cor. 3:6b; Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27; John 3:6b; 2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:6, 4

In this chapter we will cover two main points: the Triune God being processed to be the life-giving Spirit, and the tripartite man being created with a spirit to be the receiver and container of the divine life. Hence, the subject of this chapter is the two spirits, the divine Spirit and the human spirit. The first Spirit is God Himself processed to be the life-giving Spirit. This Spirit is the consummated Triune God. The Triune God became the Spirit in order to give life to the tripartite man. This is one side. The other side is that man has been created with a spirit as the receiver and container of the divine life. On God's side there is the life-giving Spirit, and on man's side there is the human spirit. In order to have the proper experience of life, we must know these two spirits.

THE TRIUNE GOD BEING PROCESSED TO BE THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

The process of the Triune God is clearly revealed in the New Testament, but this matter has been missed by most Christians. Although such words as *process* and *Trinity* cannot be found in the Bible, the facts that these words describe are definitely revealed in the Bible. Theophilus of Antioch (A.D. 115-188), one of the early church fathers, was the first to use the

word *Trinity* in his writings. The word *triune* also began to be used at about the same time. Thus, both *Trinity* and *triune* were brought into Christian theology.

The revelation of the Triune God can be found throughout the New Testament. In Matthew 28:19 the Lord Jesus charged the disciples to baptize the nations "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In this verse *name* is singular in number, yet the one name refers to three persons. This shows that there is one name for the Divine Trinity (see footnotes 5 and 6 on Matthew 28:19 in the Recovery Version). The word *person* is often used to describe the three of the Divine Trinity, yet we must be careful in using such a term. Speaking of the term *person,* Griffith Thomas, one of the founders of Dallas Theological Seminary and a highly respected student of the Bible, said in his book *The Principles of Theology*, "Like all human language, it is liable to be accused of inadequacy and even positive error. It certainly must not be pressed too far, or it will lead to Tritheism...While we are compelled to use terms like 'substance' and 'Person,' we are not to think of them as identical with what we understand as human substance and personality" (p. 31).

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are not three separate persons or three Gods; they are one God, one reality, one person. Hence, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are denoted by one name. The name denotes the person, and the person is the reality of the name. The name of the Divine Trinity is the sum total of the Divine Being, equivalent to His person. God is triune; that is, He is three-one. In some theological writings the preposition *in* is added between *three* and *one* to make *three-in-one.* However, it is more accurate to say that God is three-one. Being three-one, He is one God, with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as His reality, His person. Thus, the name of the Triune God is Father, Son, and Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit are not three different names; they are the unique name of the Divine Trinity. Such a name is a compound title. Many of the divine titles in the Bible, such as *God the Father, the Lord Jesus,* and *the Lord Spirit* (2 Cor. 3:18), are compound titles. The compound name in Matthew 28:19 is composed of three parts—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Steps of the Triune God in Becoming a Life-giving Spirit

The Triune God took several crucial steps in being processed to be the life-giving Spirit. First, He was incarnated. As God, He entered into the womb of a human virgin and stayed within that womb for nine months. In this way He took on humanity as His shelter, His dwelling place. His incarnation surely was a process. Second, He lived and walked on the earth, passing through the long "tunnel" of human living for thirty-three and a half years. This also was a process. Third, He entered into death and passed through death, which included the grave and Hades. Fourth, after three days, He walked out of death and Hades and entered into resurrection. His death and resurrection also were a process. After His death and in resurrection, He came to visit His disciples (John 20:19; Luke 24:36). His disciples thought that they were seeing a spirit (v. 37), and they could not understand how He could come into the room without the doors being opened. Three days earlier, the Lord Jesus had taken bread with them in His body of flesh (22:19), but when He came into the room that night, He came in His resurrected body. The Lord Jesus told them to look at His hands and feet and to handle Him, saying, "A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you behold Me having" (24:39). How could these things be? In responding to such questions, it is wise to say that we do not know the answer.

After the Lord's resurrection He stayed with the disciples for forty days (Acts 1:3), during which time He made His presence both visible and invisible to them. Then He led them to Jerusalem and ascended to the third heaven from the Mount of Olives (vv. 12, 9). Through His ascension the Lord Jesus completed His process. His ascension was the final step in the consummating of the Triune God. All three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—were fully consummated in the Lord's ascension.

The word *consummation* indicates that a work or a process has been completed, or finished. This may be illustrated by the cooking of food. Before the process of cooking begins, all the groceries are raw. After cooking for two hours, the groceries are consummated into a feast. Before His incarnation God was "raw," having the divine nature but not the human nature. Through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, God was processed and consummated. Now, He is no longer the "raw" God; He is the consummated and completed Triune God with divinity, humanity, human living, the all-inclusive death, the powerful resurrection, and the transcendent ascension. All these are elements, or ingredients, in the processed and consummated Triune God.

Being Incarnated to Partake of Humanity

The Triune God was incarnated to partake of humanity (John 1:14; Heb. 2:14a). After being incarnated, God was different from what He was before His incarnation. Before being incarnated, He was merely God, but after being incarnated, He was God within a human shell. The babe who was laid in a manger at the inn in Bethlehem (Luke 2:7) was the mighty God (Isa. 9:6). Many of the Jews at that time, like many Jewish scholars today, could not believe that the little babe in the manger was Jehovah God. Yet we believe that He was the very God. After His birth He lived on the earth for a number of years. One day He told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to be crucified (Matt. 16:21). Do not think that He was simply arrested by the soldiers and the deputies of the chief priests and Pharisees. Actually, He delivered Himself to them (John 10:15, 18; 18:3-8). When they came to arrest Him, the Lord asked the soldiers to tell Him whom they were seeking. They told Him that they were seeking Jesus the Nazarene. When the Lord replied by saying, "I am," the meaning of the name Jehovah (Exo. 3:14-15), they fell backward to the ground (John 18:6). It was impossible for them to arrest Jehovah. The Lord Jesus delivered Himself to them in order that He could be processed through death and resurrection.

Being Crucified to Accomplish the All-inclusive Death for Redemption

The Lord Jesus was crucified in order to accomplish the all-inclusive death for redemption (1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3b; Heb. 2:14b; John 3:14; 12:31-33; Gal. 6:14; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20a; 5:24; John 12:24). The Lord Jesus died an all-inclusive death, and His death dealt with six main negative items: sin (including sins—1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3b), Satan (Heb. 2:14b; John 3:14), the world (12:31-33; Gal. 6:14), the old man (Rom. 6:6), the flesh (Gal. 5:24), and the "I" (2:20a), which includes our natural life. In addition, the Lord's all-inclusive death accomplished one positive thing: it released the divine life from within His humanity (John 12:24). Thus, the Lord's death was at least sevenfold in its accomplishments. The Lord Jesus' all-inclusive death became a strong factor in His consummated triune being. Through such a death, He obtained an eternal redemption for His redeemed people (Heb. 9:12).

Being Resurrected to Bring Humanity into Divinity,

Making the Believers of Christ Sons of God and Members of Christ

After He passed through death, the Triune God entered into resurrection. In resurrection He brought humanity into divinity, making the believers of Christ sons of God and members of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3; John 1:12; Rom. 12:5). To bring humanity into divinity is to bring man into God. The incarnation of the Triune God brought God into man, and His resurrection brought man into God. Through this kind of traffic a wonderful mingling takes place. Now, in His resurrection, God is mingled with man and man is mingled with God. Thus, man and God, God and man, are one. How wonderful this is! In this mingling, God made the believers of Christ sons of God. These sons of God are human and divine. God can say to His believers, "I am divine and human," and His believers can reply, "Praise You, Lord. You are divine and human, and we are human and divine." This was accomplished through His resurrection.

Whenever we live in resurrection, we bring humanity into divinity. This means that when we live in resurrection, we bring ourselves into God, and when we do not live in resurrection, we are outside of God. Thus, resurrection is still going on today. Romans 6:4-5 says that we were buried through baptism into death and were raised to walk in newness of life (v. 4), which is the likeness of Christ's resurrection (v. 5). As we are living in resurrection, we are one with God and are being brought into God.

Being Consummated to Be the Compound, All-inclusive, Indwelling Spirit

Through the steps of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, the Triune God has been consummated to be the compound, all-inclusive, indwelling Spirit (Exo. 30:25). This Spirit is the processed and consummated Triune God. In Exodus 30 an ointment was prepared, and this ointment was called a compound ointment because it was made from oil compounded with four different spices (vv. 22-25). This compound ointment is a type of the compound Spirit, who is the Triune God compounded with humanity, the all-inclusive death of Christ, the all-powerful resurrection of Christ, and the transcending ascension of Christ. This compound Spirit is the consummated Triune God.

As the Spirit of Life

As such a compound Spirit, He is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2a). The ingredients of creation, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension have been compounded together in this one Spirit. Now, this Spirit is the Spirit of life, waiting to be received and contained by the tripartite man.

Imparting the Divine Life to the Believers of Christ

The Spirit of life imparts the divine life to the believers of Christ (2 Cor. 3:6b). We receive the Spirit of life by exercising our human spirit. When we exercise our spirit, immediately the compound Spirit, who is the Spirit of life and the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), enters into our spirit, imparting the divine life into us.

THE TRIPARTITE MAN BEING CREATED WITH A SPIRIT TO BE THE RECEIVER AND CONTAINER OF THE DIVINE LIFE

The Triune God as the life-giving Spirit desires to give life to man, but if man did not have a spirit to receive and contain Him, the Triune God would be unable to give life to man. Rain may fall on a stone for many hours, but the stone will be unable to receive the water, because it does not have a proper receiver to receive the water. However, if rain falls on a sponge, after a short time the water will soak and saturate the sponge, because the sponge has a proper receiver for the water. Eventually, the sponge will be mingled with the water. This illustrates how man with his spirit is a receiver and a container for the divine life.

Life is the mingling of God as the Spirit with man in his spirit. However, many people confuse life with virtues such as humility, meekness, or gentleness. Many of the students of Confucius are very humble and meek, but their humility and meekness are a matter of outward character. Life is God processed to be a life-giving Spirit to be received by the tripartite man, who was created with a spirit as the receiver and container of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life.

Life is God as the Spirit mingling Himself with us in our spirit. In actual fact, we have such a mingling, but in our daily life we may not experience this mingling in a practical way. We may live in a way that annuls the mingling.

When we sense that the mingling has ceased, we must confess to the Lord and receive the cleansing of the blood. Then the anointing will return, and the mingling will continue. This is life. Life is the very Triune God, in whom we believe, whom we serve, whom we worship, and whom we exalt, processed to be a life-giving Spirit to be received by us, the tripartite men, who have been created with a spirit to be the receiver and container of the divine Spirit as our life. This life does not know what it is to be humble or proud, good or evil. Life does have a number of attributes, and humility is one of these attributes; however, the humility of life is not something of human conduct. When we ask, "What should I do?" we are not in life. Life is as spontaneous as breathing. If we are in life, without any intention we will simply live out the attributes of life.

Being Created with the Breath of Life, Which Became Man's Spirit

The tripartite man was created with a spirit to be the receiver and container of the divine life (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27). Genesis 2:7 says that when God created man, He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. This breath of life became man's spirit. In Proverbs 20:27 the word for *spirit* is the Hebrew word *neshamah,* the same word used in Genesis 2:7 for *breath.* The breath of life mentioned in Genesis 2:7 is the very spirit of man. Proverbs 20:27 says that the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord. When we exercised our spirit to believe in the Lord, the compound Spirit immediately entered into us. After receiving Him, we contain Him as the Spirit of life.

When I first began to travel in the United States in 1963, I spoke on the human spirit wherever I went. Many people told me that they had never heard of such a thing before. The verses I would give them to substantiate my speaking were John 4:24, John 3:6, and Romans 8:16. In each of these verses the two spirits—the divine Spirit and the human spirit—are mentioned. As I read these verses to them, many people were enlightened. In those days I was perhaps the only person in the United States who was speaking about the human spirit. Today, however, many people have picked up the truth of the human spirit and are speaking about it.

Our human spirit is like our stomach. Our physical stomach is a receiver and container for our daily food. Every day we receive food through our mouth. Our mouth is the opening for our stomach, and our stomach is the

container for the food that we take in. While the stomach contains the food, it also digests and assimilates it. Eventually, whatever the stomach assimilates is distributed to the cells. Our spirit is our spiritual stomach. Every day we must eat spiritually. The Lord Jesus said that He was eatable (John 6:35, 51, 57) and that we need to come to Him and drink (7:37). By eating and drinking, we receive the Triune God as our spiritual food.

A Spirit to Receive the Spirit of Life for Regeneration

The spirit of man was created to receive the Spirit of life for regeneration (3:6b). When we first receive the compound Spirit, who is the consummated Triune God, He regenerates us.

A Spirit to Contain the Lord Spirit as Life

From the time of our regeneration, we contain the Lord Spirit as life (2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 3:18). We contain the Spirit of life; thus, we can gain life continually.

The Human Spirit and the Consummated Divine Spirit Becoming One Spirit—the Mingled Spirit

The human spirit and the consummated divine Spirit become one spirit. This one spirit is the mingled spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).

The Believers Setting Their Mind on the Mingled Spirit to Have Life

The believers should learn to set their mind on the mingled spirit in order to have life (Rom. 8:6). We should not set our mind on our emotion, our will, or even our own thinking. We must set our mind on our mingled spirit. Within our spirit is the compound Spirit. Therefore, to set our mind on our spirit is to set our mind on the divine Spirit. When we set our mind on the mingled spirit, we receive life.

The Believers Walking according to the Mingled Spirit

The believers should walk according to the mingled spirit (Rom. 8:4). We should walk, do things, and have our being according to the mingled spirit. As a result, we will have life, enjoy life, express life, and minister life all day long. This is the way for us as believers to enjoy and experience life.

CHAPTER SIX

TO BE SAVED IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF CHRIST (1)

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10; 8:2, 6, 4; 12:2a; 6:19b, 22b; 12:2b; Col. 3:4; Rom. 12:1, 3-5; 8:29b, 11, 30c; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23; 5:17; 16:20

THE WAY OF LIFE IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

In this chapter we will see the matter of the Triune God being life to the tripartite man as shown in the book of Romans. In other words, we will see the book of Romans in the way of life. The verses listed at the beginning of this chapter are concerning the divine life in the book of Romans. We need a complete view of the book of Romans.

The title of this chapter is "To Be Saved in the Divine Life of Christ." As we come to this subject, we need to keep in mind the preceding chapters, especially chapter 5, which is entitled "The Triune God Being Processed to Be the Life-giving Spirit and the Tripartite Man Being Created with a Spirit to Be the Receiver and Container of the Divine Life." In this and other chapters, we have seen how the thought of God being man's life runs throughout the divine revelation, from Genesis to Revelation. We have also seen that the Triune God has been processed to be the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). Then we have seen how the tripartite man has been created with a spirit (Gen. 2:7; Prov. 20:27) to be the receiver and container of the divine life. God was processed to be a Spirit, and we were created with a spirit. When these two spirits come together, we have life. In the foregoing chapters we have seen many things in a general way. But with this chapter we will begin to study these things in more detail, point by point.

The first point of our more detailed study is the Triune God being life to us as revealed in the book of Romans. Most Bible expositors do not touch the matter of life in the book of Romans. Most of them mainly touch the matter of righteousness. This is because of the importance of Romans 1:17 which says, "For the righteousness of God is revealed in it [the gospel] out of faith to faith, as it is written, 'But the righteous shall have life and live by faith.'" Most of the expositors only cover the first part of this verse but neglect the end of it, which deals with having life and living by faith.

There are three crucial points in Romans 1:17: righteousness, faith, and life. The righteousness of God is unveiled out of faith to faith in order that the righteous can have life and live by faith. According to my study, I have found that other Christian writers usually stress the matters of righteousness and faith in Romans but not the matter of life. The reason for this is that they, as indicated by their theology, have not yet arrived at the matter of life.

THE PROGRESS OF THEOLOGY IN CHURCH HISTORY

The study of theology began in the second century and has been progressing from one stage to another stage. It began with the study of the Trinity and the Person of Christ. The study of the Person of Christ is called Christology.

In A.D. 325 a council at Nicaea was convened. At that time Constantine the Great was the ruler of the Roman Empire. He observed that Christianity was a great influence in his empire, and he also realized that Christianity, due to the debates among the church leaders, was being broken up and fragmented. There was no unity. This shortage of unity affected the peaceful situation of the Roman Empire. Therefore, in order to restore peace within his empire, Constantine realized that he must first unite all the different Christian parties. This was the main reason the Council of Nicaea was called. The primary outcome of this council was the formulation of a creed, which has been called the Nicene Creed. The two main subjects of this creed are the Trinity and the Person of Christ, but such items as the seven Spirits (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6) and the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) are not mentioned at all. Thus, the Nicene Creed is incomplete. Even today the Roman Catholic Church, as well as many of the Protestant denominations, recite the Nicene Creed each Sunday. The creed itself does not contain anything wrong, but the omission of the seven Spirits and of the life-giving Spirit is its shortage.

Those who studied theology were mainly occupied with the Trinity and Christology until the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church with its papal system at the end of the sixth century. Then during the Dark Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church became very prevailing, there was little progression in the study of theology. Actually, during this period of time, there was degradation.

In the Dark Ages before the Reformation, the Bible was not available for most people to read because it was locked away in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. But in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some lovers of the Lord, who also were scholars, began to unlock the Bible by translating it into the common languages. There was the need to release the divine revelation into the modern languages of the people. This translation work was a real battle. Brothers such as William Tyndale were martyred for their translations of the Bible.

At the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the study of theology progressed from the Trinity and Christology to include justification by faith. This was a great step. But after this advance there were only small discoveries for a long period of time. After Martin Luther the theologians began to see matters such as the presbytery and baptism by immersion. The Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church were each formed around these doctrines.

In the seventeenth century there was a reaction to the deadness of the reformed churches. This reaction was with some saints referred to as the mystics, who remained in the Roman Catholic Church after Luther left. The mystics were prominent, spiritual persons who advanced in the mystery of the inner life. This was an advance in the study of theology.

After the initial advance made by the mystics such as Madame Guyon and Father Fenelon, mysticism was further developed by William Law. He made mysticism practical, but his improvement of mysticism was not that complete. Then Andrew Murray continued after William Law to improve the understanding of the inner life. He made the matters of the inner life much clearer.

In the eighteenth century Count Zinzendorf and other brothers in Moravia began to experience something of the church life. They probably did not have the term *church life*, but they certainly practiced it. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Brethren were raised up. They advanced a great deal in the study of the church.

The study of theology began with the Trinity and Christology. Then it went on to justification by faith and the discoveries of the presbytery, baptism by immersion, the inner life, and the initial practice of the church life. Then the

Brethren rose up to stress the church very strongly. Although the Brethren opened up the Word to a great extent, they did not see the matter of life adequately.

The Lord raised us up in China about seventy years ago. Brother Nee was saved in 1920, and in 1922 the Lord's recovery in China began when a church meeting was established in his hometown. The Lord used Brother Nee to bring into focus the history of all the theological truths. I heard this history directly from Brother Nee. We had many personal talks. In these talks he perfected me. Then starting from 1932, Brother Nee began to see something further. From 1932 until today many truths have been discovered. If they were all listed, the list would be quite long.

From the time I was saved, I have loved the Gospel of John and the book of Romans. In my youth these were my favorite books, so I have studied them very much. Over the past fifty-five years of study my understanding of these books has always been progressive. I have written a number of footnotes on various verses in the book of Romans, but if I had time to write these footnotes today, many of them would be new. The book of Romans reveals how we are saved in the divine life.

CHRIST AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD TO BE LIFE TO US, THE TRIPARTITE PERSONS AS GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE, IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

The book of Romans is not mainly a matter of righteousness, justification, or faith. It is a matter of having life and living by it. Romans reveals Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God to be life to us, the tripartite persons as God's redeemed people. God is the Triune God, and we are the tripartite persons.

The revelation of Christ being life to us in the book of Romans can be divided into two parts. The first part consists of Romans 1:1 through 5:11 and deals with reconciliation through the death of Christ. Hence, Romans 5:10 is the crucial verse in this section. The second part of Romans consists of Romans 5:12 through 16:27 and is about being saved in the divine life of Christ.

WE, THE ENEMIES OF GOD, HAVING BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS SON, CHRIST

Romans 5:10a says, "If we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son." We, who were once enemies of God, have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son, Christ. This is a great thing. The death of Christ redeemed us and laid a foundation upon which God could justify us. Through Christ's death God also reconciled us to Himself. We were not only sinners who were forgiven and justified, but we were also enemies who were reconciled to God. We were in sin and death and in a situation of enmity toward God. We were lost to such an extent that we became God's enemies. Christ's death redeemed us back to God and reconciled us to God. We all have experienced this reconciliation. Through His death all the problems have been solved, and we are at peace.

Romans 5:1-9 describes our condition after being reconciled to God. We are standing in grace (v. 2), walking in peace (v. 1), and enjoying God in tribulation (vv. 2-3). We are in such a wonderful situation. If you are not in tribulations, you cannot enjoy God that much. Most of us would say that we prefer God and not tribulation. We may say, "I love to have God, but I do not like to have tribulations." But we must realize that God and tribulation go together. We can enjoy God in the midst of all our tribulations. This is our situation according to Romans 5:1-9.

WE, THE TRIPARTITE PERSONS AS GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE, TO BE SAVED IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF CHRIST AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

As God's redeemed people created by God as tripartite persons, we are to be saved in the divine life of Christ, who is the embodiment of the processed Triune God (v. 10b). We have been washed, redeemed, justified, and reconciled. Now our need is to be saved in His life. What we have received has brought us into grace, peace, and the enjoyment of God. This is wonderful, but there are still so many negative things within us and around us. While we are standing in grace, walking in peace, and enjoying God in tribulation, we

often say, “Hallelujah!” Then after just a short time, we may lose our temper. This is because of the law of sin.

The law of sin is a real bondage to us; therefore, we need to be saved. We need to be saved not only from the law of sin but also from the world. The department stores, the advertisements in the newspapers, and the places of entertainment promote the modern fashion of the world. The worldly entertainment is full of many contagious germs. We need to be saved from the modern age that can contaminate us.

In one sense, because of our experience of reconciliation, we do not have any problems. Yet in another sense, we still have many problems. For this reason we need to be saved in the divine life. Christ’s death has worked to the extent of reconciling us to God, but now our need is His saving life. This saving life is the divine life. The divine life is Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God. This life is saving us today.

Romans 5:12 through the end of the book of Romans covers eight items. To be saved in the divine life of Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God includes these items. First, to be saved in the divine life from the bondage, the slavery, of sin, the law of sin—is by the release of the law of the consummated Spirit (8:2). Second, to be saved in the divine life from the present age of the world is by the sanctification of the consummated Spirit (12:2a; 6:19b, 22b). Third, to be saved in the divine life from our natural being is by the transformation of the life-giving Spirit (12:2b). Fourth, to be saved in the divine life from individualism is by being built up in the Body of Christ (v. 5). Fifth, to be saved in the divine life from our self-likeness is by the conformation of the life-imparting Spirit (8:29b). Sixth, to be saved in the divine life from our body of humiliation is by the transfiguration in the virtue of the divine life (8:30c; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:11). The word *virtue* can denote excellent conduct or the excellent expression of certain attributes. It can also denote the power to carry out these excellent attributes. In this denotation virtue is a kind of life power. In Luke 8, when the woman touched the fringe of the Lord’s garment, virtue went out of Him to heal her (v. 46, KJV). That virtue was a kind of power. We will be transfigured in the virtuous power of the divine life. Seventh, to be saved in the divine life is to reign in the divine life (Rom. 5:17). We must reign in the divine life over sin, the world, Satan, the natural man, the self, and individualism in order to build up the organic

Body of Christ. Eighth, to be saved in the divine life will result in the victory over Satan (16:20).

These eight items are the contents, the full definition, of how to be saved in the divine life, beginning from Romans 5:12 and going through the end of chapter 16. These eight items together give us a bird's-eye view of this entire section.

By the Release of the Law of the Consummated Spirit, from the Bondage, the Slavery, of Sin, the Law of Sin

We are saved in the divine life of Christ by the release of the law of the consummated Spirit from the bondage, the slavery, of sin, the law of sin (8:2). *Release* means "liberation" or "being set free." We are to be liberated, released, from the bondage of sin by the law of the consummated Spirit. This consummated Spirit is the processed Triune God. Bondage, slavery, sin, and the law of sin are actually one thing.

The consummated Spirit as the processed Triune God has a law, and this law saves us. The word *law* can be understood in at least two different ways. First, a country has laws in order to regulate its citizens. The Ten Commandments in the Old Testament are examples of such laws. Second, a law can mean the principles that govern things in the universe. The science of physics is the science of matter and energy and how these two things interact. The purpose of the study of physics is to search out and discover the principles of how certain things, such as the sun and moon, exist in the universe. Different sciences discover the principles that govern the existence and activities of different things in the universe. The laws of gravity and aerodynamics are examples of laws, or principles, that operate in the universe.

In Romans 7 there are three laws. The first kind of law is the law of God, the Mosaic law, the law in letters (vv. 22, 6). Then there are the law of sin in the members of our body and the law of good in the mind (v. 23). In Romans 8 the law of the Spirit of life (v. 2) is mentioned. The law of God is outside of us; the law of sin is in the members of our body; the law of good is in our mind, our soul; and the law of the Spirit of life is in our spirit. The law of the Spirit of life is the innate, automatic function of the life of God. This function and working are innate, spontaneous, natural, and automatic.

Through Our Cooperation

by Setting Our Mind on the Mingled Spirit

The law of the Spirit of life releases, frees, and liberates us, but it needs our cooperation. The cooperation we render to this law is of two steps. First, we must set our mind on the mingled spirit (v. 6b). To set our mind on a thing is to consider that thing. You may be in a meeting, and while you are sitting in the meeting, you may be thinking about other things. Actually, this is to set your mind on the flesh. As you are thinking and considering other things, you should be reminded to turn your mind to the spirit. Think about Christ. Turn your thinking from other things to Christ. This is to set your mind on the spirit and to turn your mind from the flesh to the spirit. Romans 8:6a says, "The mind set on the flesh is death." The more you think about things other than Christ, the more you will be deadened. But the more you think about Christ, the more you will say, "Hallelujah! Amen! Praise the Lord!" The mind set on the spirit is life and peace. When you set your mind on the spirit, life gets into your mind. As a result, your mind is renewed (Eph. 4:23).

Through Our Cooperation

by Walking according to the Mingled Spirit

To set our mind on our spirit is the first step of our cooperation with the law of the consummated Spirit, which is in us to save us. The second step is to walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4). First, we must set our mind on the spirit. Then we must walk according to the spirit. The result is that we enjoy the saving law of the consummated Spirit. The law of aerodynamics governs the flight of an airplane. If the pilot cooperates with this law, the law functions and the plane flies. Today we must cooperate with the law of the consummated Spirit, which has been installed within us. We need to cooperate by turning on the "switch." If we turn on the switch by setting our mind on the spirit and by walking according to the mingled spirit, the saving law will operate to set us free from the bondage of sin. If we do not turn on the switch, the law of the Spirit of life will not work.

The law of the Spirit of life is just the Triune God Himself. The Triune God Himself has become a law. According to Romans 8, it is not a person but a law that saves us (v. 2). Yet this law is a person, and this person is the Triune God. The Triune God as a living law frees us and saves us. The more you read

Romans 8, the more you can realize that the law of the Spirit of life is the Triune God Himself. The Father (vv. 11, 15), the Son (vv. 3, 29, 32), and the Spirit (vv. 2, 9, 11, 13-14, 16, 23, 26-27) are all specifically mentioned in this chapter. Eventually, the Triune God is revealed as the law of life. It is this law that sets us free from the bondage, the slavery, of the indwelling sin and from the law of sin.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TO BE SAVED IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF CHRIST (2)

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10; 8:2, 6, 4; 12:2a; 6:19b, 22b; 12:2b; Col. 3:4; Rom. 12:1, 3-5; 8:29b, 11, 30c; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23; 5:17; 16:20

To be saved in the divine life of Christ is something that is progressive. Many times fundamental Christians will ask people, "Have you been saved?" When I was asked this question more than fifty-five years ago, I would respond very emphatically by saying, "Yes, I certainly have been saved." But if you ask me this same question today, I may say, "Well, it is hard to say. Yes, I have been saved in some areas, but there are still too many areas where I have not been saved." We have been eternally saved from eternal perdition, eternal judgment, and eternal death in the lake of fire. But in terms of being released from the law of sin, we still have not been fully saved.

In Romans 7:15, 17, and 20, Paul says, "What I work out, I do not acknowledge; for what I will, this I do not practice; but what I hate, this I do...Now then it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me...But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me." These verses indicate that the evil Paul practiced was due to the indwelling sin. Romans 7 is a matter of the indwelling sin, and Romans 8 is a matter of the indwelling Christ. Sin is the embodiment of Satan, and Christ is the embodiment of God. These two embodiments are within us. Christ as the embodiment of God is in our spirit, and sin as the embodiment of Satan is in our flesh.

Our loss of temper is an indication that we have not been released from the law of sin. We may seem to be very holy one moment, but after only a few minutes, we may lose our temper. When we lose our temper, the law of sin is operating within the members of our body. Thus, we have not been completely saved from the bondage, the slavery, of sin, the law of sin. On some occasions we experience being saved from the bondage of sin. But at other times we are defeated by the law of sin. At such times we, like Paul, may say, "Wretched man that I am!" (v. 24). When we have a more thorough knowledge of ourselves and the Lord's way of saving us, we cannot boldly say that we are saved in everything. We can only say that we have been saved in

some things. There are still many other things in which we have not yet been saved. Thus, the Christian life is a life of being saved continually.

Romans is a particular book because it contains many particular terms and subjects that are not covered in the other books of the New Testament. Justification, sanctification in life, transformation, and conformation are subjects that are unique to Paul's Epistles. These subjects are stressed very much in the book of Romans. Phrases such as *present your bodies* (12:1), *present your members as weapons* (6:13), and *crush Satan under your feet* (16:20) are also unique and are used only in the book of Romans. It is very useful in studying Romans to collect all these particular terms, subjects, and phrases and to study them.

WE, THE TRIPARTITE PERSONS AS GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE, TO BE SAVED IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF CHRIST AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

By the Release of the Law of the Consummated Spirit from the Bondage, the Slavery, of Sin, the Law of Sin

We, as God's redeemed people, are saved in the divine life of Christ by the release of the law of the consummated Spirit from the bondage, the slavery, of sin, the law of sin (8:2). The law of the consummated Spirit is the means for the release from the bondage of sin. The release from the bondage, the slavery, of sin, the law of sin, is the goal of the law of the consummated Spirit. But in order for the law of the consummated Spirit to operate, there is the need of our cooperation by setting our mind on the mingled spirit (v. 6b) and by walking according to the mingled spirit (v. 4).

By the Sanctification of the Consummated Spirit from the Present Age of the World

We also need to be saved in the divine life of Christ by the sanctification of the consummated Spirit from the present age of the world (12:2a; 6:19b, 22b). This consummated Spirit is the consummation of the processed Triune God. Through the steps of incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection, the Triune God was processed and consummated. Through the final step of

resurrection, the process was completed, and the Spirit was consummated. This consummated Spirit can bring the divine life into us to regenerate us. Before incarnation the Spirit of God had no qualification or position to impart God's life into us because our sins had not yet been dealt with according to God's righteous requirements. This dealing was accomplished by Christ's redemption. Before incarnation humanity had never been joined or mingled with divinity. Through incarnation, death, and resurrection, the Spirit of God became equipped and qualified to impart life to man and to save man in the divine life.

We need to be sanctified by the consummated Spirit, not by our strong will or mind, from the present age of this world. I may read the newspaper in order to realize something concerning the world situation. But when many of the sisters read the newspaper, they may immediately try to find information about the sales in the department stores. These sales are something of the age of this world. We need to be saved from the present age of this world. To be occupied with different department store sales annuls our being holy and promotes our being common, worldly, and modern according to the style of this world. We need to be saved from the style of this world by a holy separation.

To be sanctified is to be made holy by being separated from the present age of the world. To love the world is to love to be modern. All the department stores display the modern articles of this age. We may think that we are holy, but we must ask whether or not the way we comb our hair or the way we dress ourselves is modern.

In order to be saved, we need to be separated unto God by being sanctified by the consummated Spirit through our cooperation by not being conformed to this age (12:2a). All of us have a tendency to be modern. Therefore, we must cooperate with the Lord by not being conformed to this age. God has prepared and accomplished everything for us, but He still needs our cooperation. A hungry little child must cooperate with its mother at feeding time by opening up its mouth to receive the food. In order for us to be sanctified, we must cooperate by not being conformed to this age. We must hate any conformation to the modern age of this world.

Many times we do not have time for the things of the Lord because we give too much time to being modern. We may spend half an hour to comb our hair,

when we could comb our hair in two minutes. In Shanghai some years ago, I told the sisters that they needed to spend time in the morning to study the Bible. Many replied that they were too busy and that they did not have enough time. But I discovered that many of the sisters spent much time in front of the mirror combing their hair. Having made this discovery, I asked them to reduce their time in front of the mirror to five minutes and to give more time to the study of the Bible in morning watch.

We must be sanctified from the present age of this world. I say this not because I want to remain ignorant of the world situation. Although I know the world situation and world history, I do not want to be modern or to be conformed to the modern age. Rather, I want to be transformed by the Spirit.

We are saved in the divine life by the sanctification of the consummated Spirit through our cooperation by presenting ourselves as slaves to God and our members as slaves to righteousness (6:22b, 19b). To offer our bodies in a general way is not adequate. We have to offer our members particularly. We must offer our hands, eyes, feet, even every one of our members, as weapons to righteousness (v. 13).

By the Transformation of the Life-giving Spirit from Our Natural Being

We are saved in the divine life of Christ from our natural being by the transformation of the life-giving Spirit (12:2b). Transformation is not merely a change in outward appearance. Transformation is an inward, metabolic change, which involves something organic. Suppose I am pale in my facial color. I can put different colors on my face in order to change the color of my face. That would be a change, not a transformation, of the color of my face.

Transformation is an entirely different thing. Transformation is a metabolic change. This metabolic change includes the introduction of something organic into a living entity, thereby causing an inward change. Such a metabolic change is the addition into our being of a new substance that, on the one hand, nourishes our being with new elements and, on the other hand, discharges the old things from our being. The old things are discharged, and the new elements are mingled with our being. This causes a metabolic change. Paul uses the word *transform* in order to stress the need of an organic change. This organic change is brought about by the divine element being added into

our being to discharge the elements of our old nature and to supply us with new elements. We are transformed by the life-giving Spirit from our natural being. You may be a person who is very nice, mild, and kind by birth. Everyone may like you. But you have to realize that this is your natural being, and it must be transformed.

Transformation is by the renewing of our mind (v. 2b). Formerly, our mind was set on the flesh. Now, we must change the position of our mind by setting it on the spirit. The mind set on the spirit is life and peace (8:6). Changing the position of our mind will transform our mind.

We are transformed by the metabolism in the element of the divine life (Col. 3:4). Christ is our life. In any kind of organic life there is an organic element. Christ is the organic element that grows within us and transforms us.

By Being Built in the Body of Christ from Individualism

We are saved in the divine life of Christ from individualism by being built in the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5). Today on the earth there are very few Christians who have been built into the Body of Christ. All of us are still on the way of being built in the Body of Christ. We are still too individualistic. There is a certain percentage of individualism that still remains in us.

We are built in the Body of Christ and saved from individualism by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice (v. 1) and by not thinking more highly of ourselves than what we are (v. 3). This is not so easy. Most of the troubles in the church life mainly come from thinking more highly of ourselves than what we are.

By the Conformation of the Life-imparting Spirit from Our Self-likeness

We are saved in the divine life of Christ from self-likeness by the conformation of the life-imparting Spirit (8:29b). This is another aspect of the Spirit. Whether we are bad or good, nice or rough, we still bear our self-likeness. Therefore, we need conformation through transformation into the very image of the Son of God. This conformation is for the maturity in the divine life.

By the Transfiguration, in the Virtue of the Divine Life, from Our Body of Humiliation

The issue of our being saved in the divine life of Christ is transfiguration, in the virtue of the divine life, from our body of humiliation (v. 30c; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:11). The transfiguration of our body is the redemption of our body through the indwelling Spirit. When the indwelling Spirit saturates us thoroughly, our body will be redeemed. The saturation of our body with the Spirit will be the transfiguration of our body. A white cotton ball being saturated with red ink is a good illustration of this. When red ink is injected into the center of the ball, the ink will saturate the entire ball from within. As more ink is injected into the center of the ball, the entire ball will eventually be saturated. At that time the cotton ball will be "transfigured." The white ball of cotton will have become a red ball of cotton. In the same way our body will be transfigured and redeemed by the saturating Spirit.

The transfiguration from our body of humiliation is by the redeeming of our body through the indwelling Spirit as the firstfruits, the foretaste (v. 23). Actually, the Spirit as the firstfruits is the Spirit as the foretaste. We have the Spirit indwelling us as the foretaste of God, but this indwelling Spirit is not the full taste of God; He is just the foretaste of what God is to us. God is our portion, but in this age we can have only a foretaste. The Spirit as the firstfruits is the Spirit as our foretaste of God as our portion.

Transfiguration is not only by the redeeming of our body through the indwelling Spirit but also by the saturation of our body of humiliation with the glory, the expression of the divine splendor, of the divine life. The transfiguration of our body will not be an accident. It will be the issue of maturity, the completion of the full saturation of the indwelling Spirit.

The seed of a carnation flower has the life of a carnation within it. But if it remains on top of the soil, the life within the seed is concealed. The life is there, but the glory of its life has not been manifested. When the seed is sown into the earth, it grows and grows until blossoms appear. The blossoms are the glory of the carnation seed. That glory is the expression of the splendor of that carnation seed. The glory is the transfiguration of the carnation seed.

When He was on the earth, Christ was the seed of life. The divine life was concealed within Him. Through death and resurrection He was glorified. The

splendor of the divine life came out to be expressed. With the resurrected Christ there was the expression of the divine splendor, the expression of the divine life. That expression is the glory.

To Reign in the Divine Life

When we are saved in the divine life by being released, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and transfigured, we can reign in the divine life (5:17). The more we live and are saved in the divine life, the more we exercise the kingship and reign in the divine life. The divine life is kingly and royal. The overcomers will be co-kings with Christ in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6) because they will be saturated and swallowed up by the divine life. Because they are full of life, they become the embodiment of life, and they will also have the kingship in full. They reign because they are full of life. The matter of reigning in the divine life is referred to by John (vv. 4, 6) and is also one of the particular items stressed in Paul's writings (Rom. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:12).

For the accomplishing of the building up of the organic Body of Christ to fulfill the New Testament economy of God, we rule as kings over sin, the world, Satan, the natural man, the self, and individualism by the receiving of the abundance of grace through Christ. As one who has been laboring for the Lord for many years, I have discovered that the hardest thing to do is to build up the Body of Christ. In order to build up the Body, we must overcome sin, the world, Satan, our natural man, the self, and individualism by the divine life. When we are such persons, the Lord will then have a way through us to build up His organic Body. This building will fulfill the New Testament economy of God.

By receiving the abundance of grace, we reign in life (Rom. 5:17). Grace is the divine life for our experience and enjoyment. The abundance of grace is just the abundance of the riches of the divine life.

Resulting in the Victory over Satan

The result of all the items by which we are saved in the divine life is the victory over Satan (16:20). Satan will be crushed under our feet. Satan is crushed, and we have God as our peace and Christ as our grace. We have such a life in which we enjoy the peace of God, which is God Himself, and the grace of the Lord, which is the Lord Himself.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE THREE BASIC FACTORS IN EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE LIFE

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:23; 3:8, 18; 2 Cor. 12:9; John 3:34; Col. 3:11; Rom. 8:2, 9; Phil. 1:19; Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:27; Rev. 1:4; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:13b; Gal. 5:24

The three basic factors in experiencing the divine life are Christ, the Spirit, and the cross. These three factors may be very common in our understanding, but we need to have a deeper realization concerning each of them.

CHRIST AS THE OBJECT OF OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Christ is the object, the very substance, of our experience of the divine life. Anything that is apart from Christ—regardless of how good or scriptural it may be—is not the real experience of the divine life. The real experience of the divine life must be based upon Christ. Christ must be the factor, the base, the object of our experience of the divine life. Christ as the object of our experience of life has many aspects.

To Experience the Divine Life Being to Experience Christ the Divine Person

As the Embodiment of the Triune God

To experience the divine life is to experience Christ the divine person. Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God. Colossians 2:9 says, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are items of the divine fullness. This fullness is threefold. The Father is rich, the Son is unlimited, and the Spirit is without measure. Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, the fullness of the threefold divine person.

As the One Who Is Divine and Human

Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God is both divine and human. The New Testament clearly reveals that in resurrection Jesus is still a man. In Matthew 24:30 the Lord Jesus said that He would come back as the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. At His coming back, the Lord Jesus will still be a man. Today in the heavens Christ is still a man. *Hymns,* #132 says,

Lo! in heaven Jesus sitting,
Christ the Lord is there enthroned;
As the man by God exalted,
With God's glory He is crowned.

In Acts 7 Stephen saw the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (vv. 55-56). As the Son of Man, He is both divine and human. If He were only divine, He would be omnipotent, but He could not sympathize with us. As a man, He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15).

As the All-inclusive One

Christ as the object of our experience of the divine life is all-inclusive (Col. 3:11). He is our temple (Rev. 21:22), our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), and our feast (v. 8). He is even our real soil. We have been planted into Christ (3:6), and we have been rooted and are being built up in Him (Col. 2:7). The good land, which flowed with milk and honey (Deut. 6:3; 11:9; 26:9), typifies Christ as our good land (Col. 2:6). How wonderful Christ is!

As the All-extensive One Who Fills All in All

Christ as the divine person is all-extensive. He fills all in all (Eph. 1:23). Our solar system is in a galaxy that is one among millions of galaxies. How vast the universe is! Yet Christ fills all in all.

As the One Who Is Unlimited in His Dimensions

Christ is also unlimited in His dimensions (3:17-18). The breadth, length, height, and depth are the dimensions of the universe. In the universe these

dimensions are unlimited. Christ is the breadth, length, height, and depth. He is unlimited.

As Our God-allotted Portion

Christ as the divine embodiment, who is divine and human, all-inclusive, all-extensive, and unlimited, is our God-allotted portion (Col. 1:12). According to 1 Corinthians 1:2, Christ is the portion of all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, "theirs and ours." He is their portion, and He is our portion.

As the Reality of All the Positive Things

Christ is the reality of all the positive things (Col. 2:16-17). Colossians 2:16 mentions matters of eating, drinking, the feasts or holidays, and the Sabbaths. All of these matters are shadows; the reality of these shadows, the body, is Christ (v. 17). Christ is the reality of eating, drinking, feasts, and Sabbaths. Christ is our food and drink. Our eating of food and drinking of water are just a shadow. The substance, the reality, of our eating and drinking is Christ. Christ is our real feast and our real Sabbath. He is our real rest (Matt. 11:28).

As All the Divine Attributes and All the Human Virtues

Christ is all the divine attributes and all the human virtues. Whatever God is in His being is an attribute. God is holy, and God is righteous; therefore, holiness and righteousness are two of His divine attributes. He is love, light, life, redemption, salvation, power, and strength. All of these items are divine attributes. Attributes are different from virtues. Attributes are the things that belong to us as our possession; virtues are the things we possess that are expressed for others' appreciation. God is love. When love is expressed for others' appreciation, it becomes a virtue. According to 1 Peter 2:9, we are a royal priesthood to tell out the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Christ is all the divine attributes and the human virtues.

As the One Who Is Unsearchable and Untraceable in His Riches

Christ is rich and His riches are unsearchable and untraceable (Eph. 3:8), indicating that He Himself is unsearchable and untraceable.

As the One Who Is Sufficient in His Grace

He is also sufficient in His grace (2 Cor. 12:9). The grace of Christ is sufficient. This grace is the processed Triune God given to us for our enjoyment and supply. In such a grace Christ is sufficient to meet our various kinds of need.

As the One Who Gives the Spirit Not by Measure

Because Christ is unsearchable, He gives the Spirit not by measure (John 3:34). This means that the Spirit given by Him is also unsearchable as He is.

As the Life-giving Spirit—the Spirit

Christ is the life-giving Spirit—the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17). Christ is not only the Son embodied to be a man but has also become the Spirit in His resurrection; hence, He is the Spirit, the pneumatic Christ.

As Our Life

Christ is our life (Col. 3:4a). He is the divine life (John 11:25; 14:6) coming into us to be our life; hence, we live by Him (v. 19).

As the One Who Abides in Our Spirit to Live in Us, Operate in Us, Empower Us, and Strengthen Us

As our life, Christ abides in our spirit (15:5; 2 Tim. 4:22) to live in us in our daily life (Gal. 2:20), operate in us in our labor for Him (Col. 1:29), empower us in spiritual fighting (Eph. 6:10), and strengthen us in spiritual living (Phil. 4:13).

As the One Who Is One with Our Spirit

As the Spirit, Christ is one with our spirit (1 Cor. 6:17) to mingle Himself with us that we may be one with Him, even one with the Triune God.

As the Head and the Body and

the One Who Is All the Members and in All the Members of the New Man

Christ is the Head and the Body (Col. 1:18a; 1 Cor. 12:12), and He is all the members of the new man and in all the members of the new man (Col. 3:11). He is all in all. Whatever we experience in the experience of the divine life must be Christ. Eventually, our experience of the divine life will issue in the new man.

To Experience Christ as the All-inclusive Person Needing Us to Take the Following Actions

Since Christ is such an all-inclusive, excellent, and marvelous person in so many aspects, we need, for experiencing Him, to believe in Him (John 3:15), love Him (21:15), eat and drink Him (6:57b; 1 Cor. 12:13b), enjoy Him (1 Pet. 2:3), and live and magnify Him (Phil. 1:20-21a). In 1958 I began to see the matter of eating Jesus. During that year, I held four conferences in Taipei within a six-week period of time, and the subject of each conference was eating Jesus. The Lord Himself said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57b). We must eat the Lord.

We also must learn to enjoy the Lord. First Peter 2:3 says, "If you have tasted that the Lord is good." To taste is to enjoy. Through the milk of the word (v. 2), we taste the Lord; that is, we enjoy the Lord.

To experience Christ, we must also live and magnify Him (Phil. 1:20-21a). To magnify Christ is to make Christ larger. Paul's desire in Philippians 1:20 was to make Christ larger. Paul said that he wanted to magnify Christ in his body, whether through life or through death. When he said this, he was in prison, but he still wanted to magnify Christ. Paul magnified, enlarged, extolled, and exalted Christ. This may have been the reason that some of Caesar's household became saints (4:22).

The Lord wants us to eat and drink Him and to live and magnify Him. In John 4 the Lord Jesus answered the Samaritan woman's question concerning worship. The proper worship is to drink the living water by contacting God the Spirit with our spirit (vv. 14, 23-24). By eating and drinking Him, we live

and magnify Him. When we are eating Him and drinking Him, we render real worship to the Father. This makes Him happy. This is the experience of Christ as our life.

THE SPIRIT AS THE REALIZATION OF CHRIST AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD IN OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE LIFE

To Experience the Divine Life Being to Experience Christ in the Holy Spirit

Christ is the embodiment of God, and the Spirit is the realization of Christ. Christ is realized as the Spirit. To experience the divine life is to experience Christ in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9a), the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7), the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), and the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). *The Spirit of God* refers to God, and *the Spirit of Jesus* refers to Jesus as a man. *The Spirit of Christ* refers to Christ as the resurrected man. *The Spirit of Jesus Christ* refers to the Spirit of God with divinity after the Lord's resurrection, compounded with the Lord's incarnation (humanity), human living under the cross, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The Holy Spirit is also the realization of Christ as the embodiment of the processed Triune God (John 14:16-20). Such a One is the witness of Christ (1 John 5:6-8; John 16:13-15). He is also the Spirit compounded with God as the oil and with Christ in His humanity, death, and resurrection, as the compound ointment to anoint us, seal us, and be a pledge to us (Exo. 30:23-25; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit as the firstfruits—the foretaste of God as our heritage (Rom. 8:23). God is our portion, yet God being our portion is very abstract and mysterious. The Spirit in us is the pledge, the guarantee, of God being our portion (Eph. 1:14). The Spirit also seals (v. 13) and anoints us (1 John 2:20, 27) with whatever God is and has. The Spirit is also the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God (Matt. 28:19; Rev. 22:17). In Matthew 28:19 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned. The Father is the source; the Son is the course, the flowing out of the source; and the Spirit is the consummation of the Father and the Son to

reach us. The Spirit reaches us with the reality of God in order for us to contact, receive, enjoy, and experience God. This Spirit is the realization of Christ. When we enjoy and experience the Spirit, we enjoy Christ in a practical and direct way.

Such a Spirit is the all-inclusive, indwelling, life-giving, inscribing, freeing, strengthening, and leading Spirit to us, with us, and in us (Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 3:6b; Eph. 3:16; Rom. 8:14). He is also the Comforter and the Advocate (John 14:16; 1 John 2:1). The word *Comforter* in Greek is *paracletos*. It means one who is at your side taking care of you. If you feel bad, he comforts you. If you need something, he serves you with whatever you need. He is always with you, going along with you, standing by you, taking care of you, and looking after you. This is the Spirit as the Comforter. *Paracletos* also has the meaning of an advocate as in a court of law. The Spirit is our attorney, our advocate, in the heavenly court.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) who imparts the divine life into us. He is the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal. 4:6). He is not only the Spirit of God the Father (Matt. 10:20) but also the Spirit of God the Son. He enters into us, making us God's sons. By such a Spirit we cry, "Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit mingled with our spirit as one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), making us one with the processed Triune God.

The Spirit is the seven Spirits—the sevenfold intensified Spirit to meet the need of all the degraded churches in their seven stages (Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). The churches in Revelation 2 and 3 not only represent seven actual churches but also represent the progress of the church in seven stages. The church in Ephesus represents the church in its initial stage at the end of the first century, Smyrna represents the stage of persecution, Pergamos represents the stage of the marriage of the church with the world, Thyatira represents the stage of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, Sardis represents the stage of the Protestant Reformation, Philadelphia represents the stage of the recovered church, and Laodicea represents the stage of the degraded recovered church. For all these stages, God has prepared and provided the sevenfold Spirit to meet the need.

To Participate in the Spirit as the Realization of the All-inclusive Christ Needing Us to Practice the Following Items

In order to participate in such a Spirit, we must set our mind on the spirit (Rom. 8:6b), walk according to the spirit (v. 4), have our being by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25), and grieve not the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). We must have our being by the Spirit in all things. We also should not grieve the Spirit. Rather, we should make the Spirit happy. Our happiness is a sign that He is happy.

THE CROSS AS THE WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LIFE

Christ is the embodiment of God, and the Spirit is the realization of Christ. Christ is the object of our experience of the divine life, and the Spirit is the reality of the experience of the divine life. But the way to experience the divine life is through the death of the cross.

The Crucifixion, the Killing, the Death, of Christ Going with the Resurrection of Christ

The crucifixion, the killing, the death, of Christ goes along with the resurrection of Christ. Philippians 3:10 says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." A good hymn concerning the death of Christ going along with the resurrection of Christ is *Hymns*, #631. The first stanza of this hymn says,

If I'd know Christ's risen power,
I must ever love the Cross;
Life from death alone arises;
There's no gain except by loss.

The killing element of the death of Christ is in the compounded Spirit (Exo. 30:23a). Antibiotics contain certain elements which kill germs. The killing elements in antibiotics are like the element of the death of Christ being compounded in the Spirit. This killing element in the compound Spirit is applied to all negative persons, things, and matters related to us in our daily life, church life, and work and is in the anointing of the Spirit as the anointing ointment (1 John 2:20, 27; Rom. 8:13b; Gal. 5:24). The anointing within us is the move of the compound Spirit as the compound ointment. In this anointing a killing element is applied to kill all negative things in our life.

The killing element in the compounded Spirit, applied to all the negative persons, things, and matters in our life, is for us to live a crucified life by the power of Christ's resurrection life (Phil. 3:10). *Hymns,* #631 and #481 both refer to the resurrection power for us to live a crucified life. The second stanza of *Hymns,* #481, written by A. B. Simpson, says,

'Tis not hard to die with Christ
When His risen life we know;
'Tis not hard to share His suff'rings
When our hearts with joy o'erflow.
In His resurrection power
He has come to dwell in me,
And my heart is gladly going
All the way to Calvary.

The Steps to Take the Way of the Cross for the Experience of the Divine Life

To take the way of the cross, to apply the cross of Christ to us, for experiencing the divine life, we need to abide in the anointing of the Spirit (1 John 2:27b). The anointing never ceases in us. Our need as believers is to abide in this anointing. As we abide in this anointing, we must learn also not to reject the killing that is exercised on us in this anointing. We should happily say Amen whenever the Spirit wants to kill some negative things in us. The cross and the Spirit, the death of Christ and the Spirit, both go together. If we have the cross, we have the Spirit. If we have the Spirit, we have the death of Christ. To experience the divine life, we need to experience Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, the Spirit as the realization of Christ, and the cross of Christ, the death of Christ, as the way.

CHAPTER NINE

LIVING WITH CHRIST AS EMMANUEL AND WALKING BY CHRIST AS THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Matt. 1:20-23; 18:20; 28:20; John 14:16-20; 2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 5:25a; 2:20; 5:16; Phil. 1:20-21; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 2:14; Gal. 5:25b; 1 Cor. 14:3-5; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 John 2:15, 17; Rom. 12:2; Matt. 16:24; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:23; Gal. 6:15; Phil. 3:12-16; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Rev. 22:17a

The entire Bible reveals God being life to His chosen people. In the Old Testament His chosen people were Israel, but in the New Testament His chosen people are the believers. As believers, we were chosen to be holy that we may have His nature, and we were predestinated to be His sons that we may have His life (Eph. 1:4-5). God's intention is to impart Himself into us as our life and as our nature. After imparting Himself into us, He begins to dispense Himself into our being in a very fine way. In order for us to experience the dispensing of the Triune God as life into our being, we need to be those who are living with Christ as Emmanuel.

LIVING WITH CHRIST AS EMMANUEL

The Bringing Forth of Emmanuel—the Triune God's Incarnation

If we get into the depths of the Bible, we can see that in order for the Triune God to be life to the tripartite man, He needed to pass through two main processes. The first was incarnation, and the second was resurrection. In these two processes He became two things. Through incarnation He became a man (John 1:1, 14). In resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b).

Incarnation was the bringing forth of Emmanuel (Matt. 1:20-23). This was the first process our Triune God passed through in order to become life to

man. Through incarnation He branched Himself out, in His divinity, into humanity as the Shoot of Jehovah (Isa. 4:2). He became a God-man with both divinity and humanity. The unbelieving Jews have God, but the God they have is merely divine. The God the Christians have is not only divine but also human. He is Jesus, Jehovah the Savior (Matt. 1:21). Jesus was the name given by God, and Emmanuel, which means "God with us," was the name called by man (v. 23). His name was Jesus, but those who experienced Him called His name Emmanuel. Now Jesus, our Emmanuel, is the Triune God with the tripartite man.

The Presence of Jesus Being Emmanuel

The entire book of Matthew deals with the Triune God being with the tripartite man. It reveals that the presence of Jesus is Emmanuel (1:21, 23; 18:20; 28:20). In chapter 1 two names are revealed—Jesus and Emmanuel. Matthew 18:20 says, "Where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." To which of these two names does *My name* refer? According to chapter 1, the name given by God was Jesus, but those who experienced Him called His name Emmanuel. From God's view the name into which we are gathered is Jesus, but from our view the name is Emmanuel. We should be gathered into the name of Emmanuel.

Not many realize that the name into which we are gathered is Emmanuel. Most would say that we are gathered into the name of Jesus. To say that *My name* in verse 20 refers to Jesus does not require any vision or revelation, but to say that the name mentioned here is Emmanuel requires vision, revelation, and experience. Emmanuel is something new. Today in our experience, the very Jesus into whose name we are gathered is Emmanuel. In Matthew 28:20 the Lord said, "I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age." The One who is with us all the days is Emmanuel. Emmanuel is the presence of Jesus.

The Practical Emmanuel Being the Spirit of Reality

Matthew is a book on Emmanuel—God incarnated to be with us. The practical Emmanuel is the Spirit of reality (John 14:16-20). When Peter and the other disciples heard the Lord's word in Matthew 18:20 and 28:20, they may have wondered how the Lord would be with them. They may have thought that the Lord would be with them in the same way that He was with

them before His death and resurrection. They may have considered that the Lord would continue to be with them physically, and this may have made them quite happy. But in John 14 the Lord Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever” (v. 16). Then in verses 17 and 18 the Lord indicated that He would become this Comforter.

In John 14 the Lord was helping His disciples to realize the Divine Trinity. The Divine Trinity is embodied in the Son (Col. 2:9). As the embodiment of the Triune God, the Son was a Comforter to all of His disciples. But because of His coming death, the disciples may have thought that they would lose the Lord as their Comforter. For this reason, the Lord prepared His disciples by telling them that He would ask the Father to give them another Comforter. The second Comforter would be the first Comforter in another form (John 14:16-20).

In Matthew 28:20 the “I” is Emmanuel. In John 14 the “I” who will come in verse 18 is the Spirit of reality in verse 17. There is a progression in the divine revelation from the Gospel of Matthew to the Gospel of John. Today the Spirit of reality is Emmanuel. In Acts and the Epistles, the Spirit of reality is the very presence of the consummated Triune God in our spirit. He, the Triune God, is with us, the tripartite man, mainly in an inward way. The Triune God cannot complete His intention to dispense Himself into our being outside of us. Therefore, His being with us must be inward.

The Divine Presence Being in Our Spirit

The Triune God passed through the processes of incarnation and resurrection in order to dispense Himself into us. Through incarnation He could be Emmanuel outside of His believers, but this would fulfill only part of His intention in being with us. His being with us outwardly does not fulfill His purpose to dispense Himself into our being, so He had to go through another process. The second process was His death and resurrection. In resurrection His physical form became a spiritual form. Through death and resurrection, He as the last Adam became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As the life-giving Spirit, He is Emmanuel, the presence of the Divine Trinity. This presence is always with us in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), not only day by day but also moment by moment.

Our Need to Be in the Divine Presence in Order to Live with Christ

To live with Christ, we need to be in His divine presence (Gal. 5:25a). The divine presence is the life-giving Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God. This presence is Emmanuel, who is the real, practical Jesus, the Triune God with the tripartite man.

We live with Christ as Emmanuel and walk by Christ as the life-giving Spirit. In order to walk by Christ as the life-giving Spirit, we must live with Christ as a person, who is Emmanuel. Today Emmanuel is the very life-giving Spirit, who is the consummated Triune God as His presence with us moment by moment. We have to realize that all day long we have another One with us. He is not only with us outwardly but also with us inwardly in our spirit every minute of the day. We do and say things one way when we are alone, but when we have someone else with us, we do and say things differently. We must ask ourselves, "Are we doing things in our own way, or are we doing things in another way because we realize that another One is with us?" If we realize that another One is with us, everything we do, such as shopping, will change.

There are very few Christians who walk, live, speak, and do things with Emmanuel as another One with them. We have the doctrine of Emmanuel, but we have very little experience of Emmanuel. If we had more experience of Emmanuel, we would not do many of the things we do today, such as gossip. On some occasions, while I am walking, I may see two sisters or two brothers talking together. Often as I approach them, they stop their conversation. They would not continue their conversation because another person was there. My presence changed their speaking. In like manner, the presence of the Lord changes our life. We all must have the realization and sensation that the Lord Jesus, who is our Savior, is also Emmanuel. He is the Triune God with us, the tripartite men. We should not say or do anything in ourselves or by ourselves. We need to experience Emmanuel.

Living with Christ Being Not I Living Alone but with Christ Living in Me

Living with Christ is not I living alone but with Christ living in me (2:20). If you live every day and every moment by yourself, you are defeated. You must realize that you are no longer living alone, but Christ is living with you and in you. When you have this sensation, it will revolutionize your entire life.

I Still Living, yet Not by Myself Alone but by Christ Living with Me as Emmanuel

To live with Christ, we still live, yet not by ourselves alone but by Christ living with us as Emmanuel. The name Emmanuel is first mentioned in Isaiah (7:14; 8:8). Many Christians address the Lord as Jesus and Christ, but few address the Lord as Emmanuel. We must learn to call our Lord "Emmanuel."

Emmanuel as My Life and Person, and I as His Organ, Living Together as One Person

Emmanuel is our life and person, and we are His organ. As His organ, we live together with Him as one person. The Triune God lives together with the tripartite man. Our victory depends upon Emmanuel, the presence of Jesus. If we lose His presence, we are defeated, but if we have His presence, we have the victory.

THE REVELATION OF EMMANUEL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the past we did not see the distinction between living with Christ and walking by Christ. The Christ with whom we are living is Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God with us," God with man. This is revealed in Matthew, the first book of the New Testament (1:23; 18:20; 28:20). Chapter 1 introduces the matter of Christ's presence with us as Emmanuel (v. 23); chapter 18 further indicates that we should be gathered into His presence (v. 20); and chapter 28 stresses that Christ's presence will be with us unto the consummation of the age (v. 20).

Christ was constituted to be Emmanuel by first being incarnated to be a man. Matthew 1:23, a quotation from Isaiah 7:14, says, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel." The Son born to the virgin was God with her. He was a child born with the human nature, and a son given with the divine nature (Isa. 9:6). His incarnation was the initial step for God to be with us. Then He lived on

the earth and came out to minister at the age of thirty. After three and a half years of ministry, He passed through death and entered into resurrection. In resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). His becoming the life-giving Spirit was the second step for God to be with us as Emmanuel.

THE TWO BECOMINGS OF CHRIST

In the New Testament the word *became* is used twice concerning Christ. First, the Word who is God became flesh (John 1:1, 14). The eternal God, Jehovah, the Triune God, the Creator and Upholder of the entire universe, became flesh. He became Emmanuel, God with man. Second, after thirty-three and a half years, He passed through death and resurrection and became a life-giving Spirit. He became flesh, and then He became the life-giving Spirit. These two "becomings" are great in significance.

CHRIST BEING BOTH DIVINE AND HUMAN AS THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH AND THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH

The Shoot of Jehovah and the fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2) convey to us a wonderful and marvelous picture concerning Christ in His divinity and humanity. In eternity God existed in His divinity. He remained merely in His divinity until He became flesh through incarnation. Just as a shoot of any plant indicates a new start, a new development, Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah was a new start, a new development, a branching out of divinity into humanity.

God created man in His image and according to His likeness with the intention that one day He Himself would become a man. But He did not come into man right away. He waited four thousand years after His creation of man to become a man. This shows that our God is really a God of patience. God promised Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3). From the day of that promise, God continued to be patient for another two thousand years until the angel of the Lord, Gabriel, came to Mary and said, "Rejoice, you who have been graced! The Lord is with you...Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:28-31). First, God created man. Two thousand years later He

made a promise to Abraham. Then another two thousand years later He became a man through incarnation.

God came from His divinity and with His divinity to enter into humanity. The birth of Jesus was the spreading of God, the Shoot of the eternal and unlimited God. He was a new development, a new start, the branching out of the divine person into humanity. At the time of the Lord's birth, men did not understand its significance; but the angels understood and celebrated (2:13-14). God had entered into another realm. The eternal God in His divinity entered into humanity. He became a person with two natures, two statuses. He was divine in eternity past, but in time He became a man to be human. He was no longer merely God; He became a God-man.

His incarnation to become the God-man was the initiation of the process for Him to be life to man. The consummation of the process was when this wonderful person, the God-man, walked out of death and entered into the realm of resurrection. He had lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years; He then voluntarily went into the unpleasant realm of death, stayed there for three days, and walked out of death, entering into resurrection. With this step He finished the process. In resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit. Now our Savior God is both Emmanuel and the life-giving Spirit to us. As Emmanuel, we have to live with Him. He is with us, and we have to be with Him.

FIVE ITEMS BEING THE BASIC FACTORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION

The Gospel of John shows that Emmanuel went through a process to become the life-giving Spirit. We live by Him as the life-giving Spirit. Today some Christian teachers oppose the fact that Christ became a life-giving Spirit. But the Bible clearly reveals that Christ became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). Thank the Lord that He has opened up this matter to us. Two thousand years ago God became incarnated, and then through death and resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. For the first four thousand years of human history, no one knew the purpose of God. But today the Lord has revealed Himself as Emmanuel and the life-giving Spirit. He has also shown us His incarnation, His death, and His resurrection.

Five items have been constituted into our being: Christ as Emmanuel, Christ as the life-giving Spirit, and His incarnation, death, and resurrection. These five items are the basic factors of the constitution of the New Testament revelation. If you take away Christ as Emmanuel and as the life-giving Spirit, and if you take away His incarnation, death, and resurrection from the New Testament, what remains? The New Testament is a will containing these five things as its main bequests. In this divine will we inherit Emmanuel, the life-giving Spirit, incarnation, death, and resurrection. Today we have to live with Christ as Emmanuel. Our living is always with another person, Emmanuel, God with us. We also have to walk by Him, not as Emmanuel but as the life-giving Spirit.

WALKING BY CHRIST AS THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Two Aspects of the Christian Walk

The Christian walk is of two aspects. The first aspect of our Christian walk is a walk for our daily life (Gal. 5:16), and the second aspect of our Christian walk is a walk for fulfilling God's purpose (v. 25b).

The Walk for our Daily Life

The walk for our daily life is so that we may live an overcoming life to express Christ (Phil. 1:20-21) in such things as those listed in Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:5-8, and Philippians 2:14. To be spiritual or fleshly, heavenly or earthly, humble or proud, rejoicing or murmuring and reasoning are all matters concerning our daily living. This is the first aspect of our Christian walk.

The Walk for Fulfilling God's Purpose

Most Christians understand the first aspect of our Christian walk, but few Christians understand or have any idea that the Christian walk has a second aspect. The second aspect of the Christian walk is for fulfilling God's purpose (Gal. 5:25b). As Christians, we not only live to express Christ; we also live to accomplish a definite purpose.

The people who live in the world also have a walk with two aspects. A good father should behave properly. He should be loving, patient, and humble. He should also be a servant in his family, not a king. This is the first aspect of the

father's walk. This kind of behavior is good, but this behavior alone would not provide the means for his family to be supported. Eventually, the father has to have a job, profession, or business in order to make money. To build up a business or to have a job in a certain firm or company in order to maintain his family is the second aspect of the father's walk. This second walk has the purpose of taking care of his family. It is good to be nice and humble, but these things alone do not accomplish the purpose of taking care of his family. He must have two aspects to his walk.

That We May Accomplish God's Economy in the Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ

As Christians, we should have two aspects to our walk. We should live Christ. To live Christ is for our daily life. This is the first aspect of our Christian life. There must also be another aspect to our Christian life. We must walk in order to fulfill God's purpose in accomplishing His economy in the building up of the church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:3-5; Eph. 4:12). This should be our goal, our purpose, our career, and our achievement.

Steps in the Walk for Fulfilling God's Purpose

In order to achieve the goal of the building up of the Body of Christ, we must take a number of steps. First, we must not love the world (1 John 2:15, 17). If we love the world, we are finished in fulfilling God's purpose in building up the Body of Christ. Second, we must not be conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). Third, we must deny the self, bear the cross, and follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24). Fourth, we should take the step of putting on the new man, that is, living in the Body of Christ—the church (Eph. 4:24; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 1:23). To put on the new man is to put on the church life, because the new man is the church. To put on the church life is to live in the Body of Christ. Fifth, we should live the new creation (Gal. 6:15). We are not here just to live a humble, patient, and good life. We are here to live the new creation. We must learn to take Christ not only as our Savior and Redeemer but also as the new creation. Sixth, we must pursue Christ (Phil. 3:12-16). Seventh, we must be perfected (Eph. 4:11-12). To be trained is to be perfected. The purpose of college is to perfect people in a profession so that they can fulfill their purpose in human life. We also must be perfected in order to fulfill God's purpose. Eighth, each of us must grow into Christ and function in His Body in each one's measure for the direct

building up of the Body of Christ (vv. 15-16). The foregoing steps are for the walk in the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.

Walking by the Life-giving Spirit

The Life-giving Spirit Being Christ in Resurrection

Our God is the eternal Triune God. In Exodus 3 He unveiled Himself as Jehovah, the One who was, who is, and who always shall be (v. 14). The eternal Triune God, Jehovah, had to be processed through several steps to be a life-giving Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is Christ in resurrection, the pneumatic Christ, the Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God transformed in resurrection to be the consummated Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the Triune God (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Rev. 22:17a). Two thousand years ago, before incarnation and resurrection, the Triune God had not yet been consummated. He had only divinity, but He did not have humanity. In order to be a God of both divinity and humanity, He had to go through incarnation, death, and resurrection. Through these three major steps of Christ, the Triune God was consummated. The life-giving Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God. Today we have the eternal Triune God, who is Jehovah, as our Emmanuel to be with us. He is the life-giving Spirit for us to walk by, not only to express Him and live Him but also to accomplish His eternal plan, His eternal economy.

Walking by the Life-giving Spirit Being Not to Walk by Any Power, nor by Any Means, but by the Consummated Spirit

To walk by the life-giving Spirit is not to walk by any power, nor by any means, but by the consummated Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the Triune God, a divine person, who is both God and man, having the divine nature and the human nature as well, and living with us in our spirit a life of God mingled with man (2 Tim. 4:22). This consummated Spirit is the Lord, the pneumatic Christ, the Christ in resurrection, who was the complete God as a perfect man, passing through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit in order to live in our spirit, not only as a power or a means to strengthen us, to support us, and to help us

but also as a complete person of divinity and humanity to be our life so that we may live God's divine life mingled with our human life.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: John 1:1, 14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 11:24; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24

THE NEW CREATION BEING GOD'S GOAL IN THE OLD CREATION

In His economy God has two creations, the old creation and the new creation. Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis are a record of the old creation. According to the New Testament, God's intention in the old creation was to obtain the new creation. There is a great difference between these two creations. The old creation came out of the creating hand of God, but the new creation has God's essence and element within it. God did not get into the old creation with His nature, element, and essence; rather, Satan, God's enemy, worked himself into that creation through man's fall. That creation became his expression. God, however, wants an expression through His new creation.

THE BRANCHING OUT OF GOD, IN HIS DIVINITY, INTO HUMANITY

God's intention was to gain the new creation for His expression, but to gain this was not easy. God finished the further creation and restoration of the old creation in six days, but to make the new creation from the old creation is much more difficult. In order to complete the work of the new creation, God had to act in His Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In eternity past there was a conference, a council, among the three of the Godhead (Gen. 1:26; Acts 2:23). In that conference it was decided that the Son, the second of the Godhead, should be the centrality and universality of the new creation. In order to accomplish this, the Triune God had to pass through a unique process. The first step of this process was the Son as the embodiment of the Divine Trinity becoming a man through incarnation. Through this step divinity got into humanity. In eternity past the Triune God was merely in divinity, but through incarnation He branched out from His divinity and with His divinity into humanity. He became a particular man

with both the divine nature and the human nature. The descendants of Adam had only the human nature, and God in eternity had only the divine nature. God was in His divinity, and we, the descendants of Adam, were in our humanity. God was in His territory of divinity, and we were in our territory of humanity. Before Christ's incarnation these two territories had nothing to do with one another. But approximately two thousand years ago, four thousand years after His creation of man, God branched out from and with His divinity into humanity.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST BEING THE TERMINATION OF THE OLD CREATION

After branching Himself into humanity through incarnation, God did many things, but His main achievement was the cross. Through the cross of Christ the old creation was terminated. The old creation terminated by the cross of Christ included sin, Satan, the world, the old man, "I," the self, the flesh, and the natural life. This termination was achieved by the death of Christ.

The wonderful Triune God took two steps in order to reach us. First, the Triune God became a man (John 1:1, 14), a God-man, the complete God and the perfect man. Second, as the God-man, He mainly achieved one thing—the cross. The achievement of the cross issued in a transformation—the God-man becoming the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). Through the steps of incarnation and the cross, the Triune God became the God-man and the life-giving Spirit.

THE SPIRIT AS THE ESSENCE AND THE SPIRIT AS THE PERSON

John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit." The word *Spirit* in this verse refers to the essence of God, not His person. The essence of a stand made of wood is wood. Likewise, the essence of God is Spirit. The life-giving Spirit includes the essence of God mentioned in John 4, but He also contains much more. The Bible reveals not only that God is Spirit but also that the Spirit, the third of the Godhead, is a person. In John 4:24 the Spirit is the essence, but in the divine title—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—the Spirit is the person (Matt. 28:19).

In the Divine Trinity, the Spirit is the outflow and the completion of the Triune God. There are not three Gods but one God. He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Spirit as the third of the Godhead is the totality of the Godhead. When you have the Spirit, you also have the Son and the Father. When you approach God, you first contact the Spirit; then you have the Son and the Father.

In John 14 the term *another Comforter* (v. 16) is used. This *another Comforter* is the reality of the Triune God, the Spirit of reality. Second Corinthians 3:17 also says that the Lord is the Spirit, and in verse 18 the compound title *Lord Spirit* is used. First Corinthians 15:45 says that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. The life-giving Spirit came into existence through Christ as the God-man passing through the cross and entering into resurrection.

THE GOD-MAN, THE CROSS, AND THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Today we are blessed because we are in the age of the God-man, the cross, and the life-giving Spirit. Between the God-man and the life-giving Spirit is the cross, the greatest matter in the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose. Christ is the God-man and the life-giving Spirit. He is the centrality and universality of God's economy, and the cross is the centrality and universality of the way to accomplish God's economy.

The words *centrality* and *universality* were first used by T. Austin-Sparks. He used these two terms in reference to the cross of Christ but not to Christ Himself. We received much help from Brother Austin-Sparks concerning the cross of Christ being the centrality and universality of the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose. Christ is the person of the divine economy, and the cross is the way to carry out God's economy. Thus, the cross is the greatest work achieved by Christ. Today we have Christ as the God-man and the life-giving Spirit, and we also have the cross.

THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST— THE GERMINATION OF THE NEW CREATION ACHIEVED BY THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

God's intention in His economy is to make the new creation from His old creation. The way He does this is to work Himself into a part of the old creation. The part of the old creation into which God works Himself is His chosen people. Not everyone born into Adam was chosen. We were chosen (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:1-2) out of millions of human beings to become His new creation. Through Christ's resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, we, the chosen ones of God, were germinated to be the new creation (v. 3). The life-giving Spirit in the resurrection of Christ was the germination of the new creation achieved by the resurrection of Christ. By working Himself as a new element into us, He made us His new creation. Second Corinthians 5:17, the first mention of the new creation, says, "So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new."

THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT BEING THE COMPOUND SPIRIT

In order to work Himself into His creation, God had to go through a process. Before His incarnation God was merely the Triune God in His divinity. After going through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The life-giving Spirit has humanity as well as divinity. He also has the element of human living within Him. All the elements of God's process have been compounded into the life-giving Spirit. This compound Spirit is typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:23-25. In Exodus 30 the anointing oil was a compound of five elements: myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil. These five elements denote the divinity, humanity, death, and resurrection of Christ. The hin of olive oil signifies the unique God as the base of the compound Spirit. The four spices signify the humanity of Christ. Myrrh typifies the precious death of Christ. Cinnamon typifies the sweetness and effectiveness of Christ's death. Calamus signifies the precious resurrection of Christ, and cassia signifies the power of Christ's resurrection (For further reading, see *Life-study of Exodus*, msgs. 157—166.) These four spices were added into the olive oil, signifying that the elements of Christ's humanity, death, and resurrection were added into the Spirit of God. Eventually, Christ as the last Adam, the God-man, became the life-giving Spirit with all the elements of His divinity and humanity. This Spirit is the consummation of the processed Triune God. Thus, when we say the life-giving Spirit, we must

remember all the elements that have been compounded into this Spirit—His divinity, humanity, human living, death, and resurrection. The life-giving Spirit is such an all-inclusive person as the totality of the processed Triune God.

THREE BEQUESTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT— CHRIST AS THE GOD-MAN, THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST, AND CHRIST AS THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Christ as the God-man, the achievement of His cross, and Christ as the life-giving Spirit are three bequests in the New Testament. These have been bequeathed by Him to us through His death and resurrection. Today Christ in resurrection is these three items. We were chosen by God in eternity, and we were called by God in time. Now through His choosing and calling, we have become believers and members of Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, who was processed through incarnation, death, and resurrection. In Him we have divinity, the proper humanity, the cross accomplished by His all-inclusive death, and resurrection. He is the life-giving Spirit and we are His members. His divinity, humanity, all-inclusive death, and the riches of resurrection are all with us. These riches are the totality of what He is as the life-giving Spirit.

THE WAY TO ENJOY CHRIST—THE CROSS

We have been joined to Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). Our need is to enjoy what He is as the consummated Spirit, the consummation of the Triune God. The way for us to enjoy Him is to bear the cross. In my youth as a devoted Christian, I spoke a lot about bearing the cross, but like most Christians, my understanding concerning bearing the cross was mainly that of suffering. We need to see the real significance of the cross. The cross is the centrality and universality of Christ's redemptive work. Christ in His redemptive work first brought us all with Him to the cross to terminate us. He terminated us with the whole old creation for the purpose of germinating us with Himself as the life-giving Spirit in resurrection. His death was for His resurrection. Christ's death was not the goal. It was the means to reach the goal of resurrection. His death was the termination of the old creation for the germination of the new creation in resurrection.

He is the life-giving Spirit within us in resurrection making us the new creation. The turning point of His making the old creation into the new creation is the cross. If we are going to live a life in the new creation, we must bear the cross. In other words, we must be under the termination of the cross all day long. The termination of the cross is a lifelong matter. Our crucifixion with Christ was accomplished once and for all at the cross, but the experience of His cross is lifelong. When we experience the cross terminating us in a daily way, we are eventually led to live not an exchanged life but a grafted life.

LIVING A GRAFTED LIFE BY THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CROSS

The life that we live together with Christ is a grafted life (Rom. 11:24; 6:5). We are joined with Christ and live together with Christ. When we live by Christ, Christ's element is added into us. This element is the life-giving Spirit. We live a life that is actually Christ living through us. God has no intention of asking us to do anything for Him. We have been terminated. In the past our teaching concerning the cross stopped with termination. For this reason our teaching was incomplete. Termination is not the end. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). In Galatians Paul says that he lived a life not by himself alone but by Christ as his partner. Paul lived a life by Christ who was with him. Christ was living in him and through him. The turning point in Paul's experience was the cross of Christ.

Sixty years ago I read some books concerning the cross. I was helped to know that I had died, that I was finished, and that I should not do anything. As a result of this understanding, I determined not to do anything. Eventually, I realized that my understanding concerning the cross was wrong. To say that I have been crucified with Christ is certainly right, but I also must live. I still live and do things, but I no longer do them by myself; I do them with Christ who lives within me. In this way I live a grafted life.

In our experience the turning point in living a life with Christ is the cross. Without the cross we live, but not Christ. With the cross we still live, but we no longer live by ourselves; Christ now lives with us. When I prepare to speak a message, I check with myself as to whether I am going to speak by myself or with Christ. I realize that if I do not go through the cross, whatever I speak has nothing to do with Christ. We must always realize that we have been

crucified and that we should no longer live by ourselves but by Christ who lives within us. Death terminates the old creation; resurrection germinates the new creation. The cross is the turning point. When we reckon ourselves as being on the cross, we are terminated. We die in the old creation, and we now live in the new creation. In resurrection we no longer live alone. We now live in the new creation with Christ living with us. We and Christ live together a grafted life.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST BEING THE GOAL OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION— CHRIST'S MANGER POINTING TO HIS CROSS

The cross of Christ was the goal of Christ's incarnation. His manger pointed to His cross. He was born to be crucified, but when we were reborn, we were already crucified (Gal. 2:20a). His story is one of going to the cross to be crucified, and our story is one of being crucified already. Now we live a crucified life (2 Cor. 4:10-12). This crucified life is the application of Christ's crucifixion, issuing in the manifestation of His resurrection life.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST BRINGING FORTH THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

The cross of Christ is not the goal but the means to reach the goal. The goal is to bring forth the life-giving Spirit in resurrection. So where the cross is, the resurrection follows, and in the resurrection is the life-giving Spirit. This is the way for us to experience and participate in the life-giving Spirit. The way is to take the cross, and the issue is the life-giving Spirit in resurrection.

OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE BEING A CYCLE OF THE CROSS AND THE SPIRIT— NO DEATH, NO SPIRIT; MORE SPIRIT, MORE DEATH

Our spiritual experience is a cycle of the cross and the Spirit. If we do not experience death, we do not experience the Spirit. But the more we experience death, the more Spirit we enjoy. Then the more Spirit we enjoy, the more death we experience.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE PRACTICAL WAY TO BEAR THE CROSS

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:20a; Rom. 6:6a; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13b; 2 Cor. 4:10; 1 Cor. 6:7b

INCARNATION, CRUCIFIXION, AND RESURRECTION BEING LANDMARKS IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

In God's New Testament economy, Christ accomplished three new things that remain as landmarks in the universe. These landmarks in the accomplishment of God's New Testament economy are incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. First, He accomplished incarnation in order to produce Himself as Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23). Then He accomplished crucifixion, which issued in His becoming the life-giving Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45b). Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah (Isa. 4:2) was the branching out of divinity into humanity to be our Emmanuel. Incarnation took place two thousand years ago, but according to God's reckoning of time, it was only two days ago (2 Pet. 3:8). Before incarnation God remained in His divinity for an undeterminable amount of time. After His creation of man, God still remained merely in divinity for approximately four thousand more years. Then through incarnation God branched Himself into humanity. Incarnation was something new; it is one of the landmarks of the ages. Before incarnation God was merely in divinity, but in His incarnation a God-man was produced. This was a new thing. Today we are in the age of incarnation, and we are enjoying Emmanuel as the result, the consummation, of incarnation.

The second accomplishment of Christ in God's New Testament economy was crucifixion. According to the Old Testament, the Jewish death penalty was carried out by stoning (Lev. 20:2, 27; 24:23; Deut. 13:10; 17:5), not by crucifixion. Crucifixion was a heathen practice (Ezra 6:11) adopted by the Roman Empire for the execution of slaves and heinous criminals only. Christ's crucifixion was foreshadowed in Deuteronomy 21. Verses 22 through 23 predict that a man found worthy of death would be hanged on a tree. *Tree* in these verses typifies the cross of Christ (1 Pet 2:24). Paul strongly

confirms this understanding in Galatians 3 when he says, "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, 'Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree'" (v. 13). The cross of Christ is also typified by the way in which the passover lamb was slaughtered. According to tradition, the passover lamb was tied to a cross of wood and slaughtered. Thus, the crucifixion of Christ was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy 21:23 and of the type in Exodus 12.

Incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection are landmarks in the accomplishment of God's New Testament economy. What a great blessing it is to live in the age of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection! Many prophets and righteous men, including Abraham, desired to see and hear the things of this age and did not perceive them (Matt. 13:17). In the history of the universe incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection are of the highest significance. In resurrection Christ germinated the new creation by imparting Himself into the old creation. The One who became Emmanuel through incarnation became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection. Of these three landmarks, Paul esteemed the crucifixion of Christ to the uttermost (Rom. 6:6a; Gal. 2:20; 6:14; 1 Cor. 1:23-24; 2:2).

THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF BEING CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Our Being Crucified with Christ

In our experience we must learn to enjoy Christ as Emmanuel through the life-giving Spirit, and we must also learn to apply the cross. Seventy years ago many crucial, deeper spiritual truths were brought to China through some of the European missionaries, including Sister M. E. Barber. Brother Watchman Nee picked up these deeper truths, such as the subjective death of Christ and the life principles of Christ in resurrection, and propagated them throughout China. About this same time I got saved and began to read many of his writings. I received a great deal of blessing through reading these publications. Although I received much blessing from those writings, my eyes were still not very open at that time. But today I thank the Lord that He has opened my eyes concerning the experience of the cross of Christ.

When some in China began to hear the deeper truths concerning the crucifixion of Christ, they began to say that they wanted to crucify themselves.

Brother Nee corrected this improper understanding by saying that no one could crucify himself. He said that people could commit suicide by many different methods, but crucifixion is not one of them. Crucifixion requires the help of another person. He pointed out that Paul did not say in Galatians 2 that he crucified himself. Paul said that he had been crucified with Christ (v. 20). Another person crucified him. Through Brother Nee's correction I learned a great deal.

Crucifying the Flesh Being Our Responsibility

Later, I discovered that there was another side to the experience of crucifixion. Galatians 5:24 says, "They who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts." This verse indicates that we must crucify our flesh with its passions and lusts. We cannot crucify "ourselves," but we must crucify our "flesh." To crucify ourselves is one thing, but to crucify our flesh with its passions and its lusts is another thing. Our self, our person, was crucified with Christ on the cross by God. We have been crucified, but we still live. While we are living, our flesh is very active. The flesh of the young people may be more active and aggressive than the flesh of the older saints, and the flesh of the older people may be more subtle than the flesh of the young people. But regardless of our age, the flesh must be crucified.

The Cross and the Spirit Being One in Our Experience

The cross is wherever the life-giving Spirit is. Actually, in our experience the Spirit includes the cross. When you are filled with the Spirit, you are also filled with the cross. The Spirit is always crucifying (Rom. 8:13). He is the carrier of crucifixion because with Him is the reality of the cross. If there is no Spirit, there is no cross. Likewise, if there is no cross, there is no Spirit. After Christ was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14), He bore the cross. The Spirit and the crucifixion of Christ can never be separated. These two are one.

The Spirit includes the cross, and the Spirit is also the reality of resurrection. If you are full of the Spirit, you are in resurrection, and you are also under the death of Christ. Today both Christ's death and His resurrection are with the Spirit in our experience. If you have the Spirit, you have Emmanuel and the life-giving Spirit in resurrection through the cross.

THE PRACTICAL WAY TO BEAR THE CROSS

To Realize That We Have Been Crucified with Christ

In order to bear the cross in a practical way, we must first realize that we have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20a; Rom. 6:6a). Two thousand years ago, before we were born, we were crucified on a mount called Golgotha outside of Jerusalem (Matt. 27:33).

To Crucify, by Ourselves, Our Flesh with Its Passions and Its Lusts

We were crucified two thousand years ago, but we are still living today. Therefore, we must crucify, by ourselves, our flesh with its passions and its lusts (Gal. 5:24). Christ's death on the cross laid the foundation so that we could crucify our flesh. Upon that foundation we must crucify our members which are on the earth (Col. 3:5). The totality, the aggregate, of our members is called the flesh with its passions and its lusts. Every moment we have to crucify our flesh.

If a brother says something that glorifies you or that offends you, immediately you will have a reaction or response. A word that glorifies you may cause you to glorify yourself, or a word that offends you may cause you to be angry or unhappy. You must learn to kill your flesh whenever you hear something about you—good or bad. The proper experience of the cross would cause you to have no response when you hear something good or bad about you. In Galatians 5:24 Paul indicates that a real Christian should crucify his flesh. Every minute the cross must be applied to our flesh with its passions and its lusts.

To Put to Death, by the Spirit, the Practices of Our Body

To bear the cross in a practical way is to put to death, by the Spirit, the practices of the body (Rom. 8:13b). To put to death the practices of the body is not only to put to death the bad things but also the good things. You must put to death not only the flesh with its passions and its lusts but also the body with its practices. You must put to death the activity of your body all the time.

To Bear About in Our Body the Putting to Death of Jesus

To crucify your activity is to bear about in the body the putting to death of Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10). The real significance of bearing the cross is contained in Galatians 5:24, Romans 8:13b, and 2 Corinthians 4:10. To bear the cross means that you recognize that you have been crucified with Christ. Based on this fact you have to crucify your flesh, putting to death the practices of your body.

Willing to Be Wronged and Willing to Be Defrauded

Bearing the cross is expressed in being willing to be wronged or defrauded (1 Cor. 6:7b). In all things and with all kinds of people, including our wives, husbands, parents, children, relatives, brothers, sisters, and roommates, we must be willing to be wronged or defrauded. A willingness to be wronged or defrauded is a willingness to suffer loss, to learn the lesson of the cross, to keep the virtue of Christ at some cost. Our common experience is to react when we are wronged by others, especially when others make mistakes at our expense.

In May 1935 several co-workers stayed together with Brother Nee in order to study the Song of Songs. I stayed in a room with another brother with whom I was very familiar. The room in which we stayed did not have a bathroom, so we had to bring water into the room from outside in order to wash ourselves. Every time I brought a basin of water into the room, I had to pass by his bed in order to get to my bed. The passageway by his bed was narrow and each time I passed by with water, I would spill a few drops of water onto his bed. After spilling some water on his bed, I did not feel peaceful, so I apologized to him. Because I often spilled water throughout the day, I would apologize to him once, twice, and frequently three times a day. One time when I began to apologize to him, he said, “The worst thing is to make a mistake and not apologize. It is good to apologize when one makes a mistake. But the best thing is not to make a mistake at all.” This word caused me to feel very ashamed, but it also indicated that my roommate was unwilling to bear the cross. He reacted to my repeated apologies because he was unwilling to be wronged. We need to apply the principle of not reacting but living under the shadow of the cross.

In 1 Corinthians 6:7b Paul applies the cross by asking two questions. “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” If you are unwilling to be wronged or defrauded, this means that you are unwilling to bear the cross.

Your unwillingness to be wronged or defrauded in small things is an indication that you are unwilling to bear the cross. We Christians should behave not merely by the standard of morality but by the standard of crucifixion. I may be absolutely right according to the standard of morality, but I may also be a person who is very much in the flesh without any experience of crucifixion.

Being paid less than what someone owes you can be used as an illustration of being defrauded. Someone may owe you $27.25. But if he only pays you $26.25, you have been defrauded of one dollar. If you react, this reaction indicates that you are unwilling to be defrauded. After receiving $26.25, you may wait for a day or two, expecting the payment of the dollar. When the dollar does not come, you may go to the person and demand payment. According to the standard of morality, you are right. But according to the standard of crucifixion, you lose everything because you are unwilling to be crucified. If I am a person who is willing to be crucified, I would never think about the dollar. I would not expect the payment of the dollar, not by exercising my patience but by putting myself with my flesh on the cross. As a result, I would not remember the dollar or mention this incident to anyone. This shows that the standard of our virtues as Christians is much higher than the standard of people in general. This is an example of bearing the cross in a very fine way.

To Walk under the Shadow of the Death of the Cross

To bear the cross in a fine way is to "live within the Cross's shadow." The second stanza of *Hymns,* #631 expresses this experience:

If I'd have Christ formed within me,
I must breathe my final breath,
Live within the Cross's shadow,
Put my soul-life e'er to death.

If no death, no life,
If no death, no life;
Life from death alone arises;
If no death, no life.

EXPERIENCING THE CROSS OF CHRIST

BY CONTACTING THE LORD AND BEING FILLED WITH HIM

In God's New Testament economy, Christ has accomplished incarnation to become Emmanuel. He also accomplished crucifixion to terminate us and resurrection to germinate us. In resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. Today we should experience Him as Emmanuel through the life-giving Spirit by putting everything concerning us to death. This is to experience the cross in a fine way.

Having seen this vision of the experience of the cross, we can realize that the church life among us is still very short. No one is able to do this in themselves. This is the reason that we must contact the Lord and have fellowship with Him, being revived every morning in our spirit. We must touch the Lord and be filled with Him. Then He Himself as Emmanuel and as the life-giving Spirit will be experienced by us as the reality of the cross and resurrection. The Spirit will become our experience of the cross and resurrection. Actually, in our experience there is no distance between the cross and the Spirit. The cross goes with the Spirit, and the Spirit carries the cross. Receiving the Spirit consummates in the cross. In order to experience this, however, we must be persons who contact the Lord all the time in resurrection.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LIVING TO DIE AND DYING TO LIVE

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:18, 22-24; 2:2; 15:21-22; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:10-11

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul says, "The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Then in verses 22 through 24 he says, "For indeed Jews require signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." These verses indicate the centrality and universality of Christ's death and resurrection in God's economy. For this reason in 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul says, "I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified."

THE CROSS OF CHRIST BEING THE CENTRALITY AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE WAY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The cross of Christ is the centrality and universality of the way of the Christian life (1:18, 22-24; 2:2). The way of the Christian life is the way of the cross. Christ's cross is the centrality and universality of our way to live the Christian life. The way to live the Christian life is composed of and constituted with Christ's death.

All the descendants of Adam are living to die. Eventually, everyone enters into a tomb. The unbelievers die and enter into a physical tomb, but the believers die by entering the cross. The cross is the "tomb" of the believers. The unbelievers die just to die, but we believers die to be resurrected. The physical tomb into which the unbelievers enter has only one opening, an entrance. But the tomb of the cross into which the believers enter has two openings, an entrance and an exit. We enter through one opening and leave through another opening. Hence, the cross is a place of transit between our place of origin and our destination. If someone were to travel by plane from

Los Angeles to Taipei, he may have a stop in Hawaii on his trip. Hawaii would be a place of transit between Los Angeles and Taipei. The passenger on the plane who made a stop in Hawaii would be called a passenger in transit. We believers are "passengers in transit." We enter into the tomb of the cross by death and go out into resurrection. The cross is our place of transit. To enter the tomb of the cross is to die, and to get out of the tomb of the cross is to be resurrected. Hence, the cross, which is the death of Christ, is the centrality and universality of the way for us to live the Christian life.

ADAM'S DEATH BEING THE WAY TO DEATH AND CHRIST'S DEATH BEING THE WAY TO LIFE

Adam's death is the way to death; Christ's death is the way to life (15:21-22). If you die in Adam, you go into death, but if you die with Christ, you go into life. There are two kinds of death among mankind. One is the death of Adam, and the other is the death of Christ. Because we were in Adam, our destiny was to die. But by believing in the Lord Jesus, we received a transfer out of Adam and into Christ. Today we have nothing to do with Adam, because we are now in Christ. Christ's death is now our transit through which we enter into resurrection.

Today we are living to die. To die is to enter into the cross, but the cross is not our destination. The cross is just a transit for us to enter into resurrection. A believer lives to die; that is, he lives to enter into the death of Christ, which is the cross. Then the cross becomes a transit to enter into the realm of resurrection. The cross is the center. On one side of the cross, we live to die. On the other side of the cross, we die to live. This is the Christian life, and all our work in the gospel is a part of our living unto death.

The cross of Christ is central and universal. It is the centrality of the way to live the Christian life. We need to live under the cross from the beginning of our Christian life to the end. This is what it means to live to die. After being crucified, we die to live. Morning to evening, all day long, day after day, throughout our Christian life, we live to die and we die to live.

WE CHRISTIANS HAVING BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST THAT WE MAY LIVE BY HIM, IN HIM, AND WITH HIM

We Christians have been crucified with Christ that we may live by Him, in Him, and with Him (Gal. 2:19-20). We were crucified about two thousand years ago with Christ, but we are also being crucified today. Whenever we have a problem with other brothers or sisters, we must realize at that moment that we are crucified with Christ. Then we are living to die. When we have the realization that we have been crucified, the outcome is that we live by Him, in Him, and with Him. First, we go into His death through the cross of Christ. Second, we go out of His death into His resurrection. When we live in resurrection, we die to live but we still live to die. Then as we die in the death of Christ, we enter into resurrection once again that we may live by Him, in Him, and with Him. Thus, there is a cycle. We live to die, and we die to live.

WE CHRISTIANS LIVING TO DIE THAT WE MAY LIVE CHRIST

We Christians live to die that we may live Christ (2 Cor. 4:10-11). To live to die means that we have been crucified with Christ. Since we have been crucified with Christ, we now live to die that we may live by Him, in Him, and with Him. To live by Him, in Him, and with Him simply means to live Him. To live Christ means to live by Him, not by yourself. You still live, but you no longer live by yourself but by another One. You live in Him and with Him. You are in the transit of His death and resurrection. You live, yet not by yourself but by Him. You live, yet not in yourself but in Him. You live, yet not with yourself but with Him. This is what it means to live Christ.

WE CHRISTIANS LIVING IN RESURRECTION, NOT BY OURSELVES BUT BY CHRIST REPLACING US

We live in resurrection, not by ourselves but by Christ replacing us. We have been "fired"; that is, we have been removed from our former post and replaced by Christ. We are in the transit of Christ's death and resurrection. We are always in transit from death to resurrection; we are living to die. To live to die is to go through death. To die to live is to remain in resurrection. Then while remaining in resurrection, we live to die. The secret to this experience of living to die and dying to live is the cross.

God's economy according to the divine revelation in the holy Word is to get the new creation out of the old creation. The way God gains the new creation

is to first put the old creation to death, that is, to terminate the old creation. Then God injects Himself into this terminated old creation in order to gain the new creation. Without the injection of the divine element into God's creation, God has no way to get the new creation out of the old creation. As Christians, we are God's new creation (5:17). On one side of the cross, we were the old creation, but on the other side of the cross, we are the new creation. On one side of the cross, the old creation was terminated. On the other side of the cross, the divine element has come in to enliven the old creation, making it the new creation. The old creation, after being terminated and injected with the divine element, came out of death into resurrection as the new creation with the divine element within it. The old creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation, the believers born again of God, does (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). The new creation is in a new condition with the divine element within it.

The point of transit is the cross of Christ. Christ's death together with His resurrection is a big place of transit. Today we are still in the transit of Christ's death and resurrection. All day long we are dying to live and living to die. The cross is the center of our daily life. Every day, every moment, we have to go to the cross and remain on the cross. Often we leave the place of transit, but we have to come back again and again. We are living to die and dying to live. Living to die is to enter into death, and dying to live is to leave death to enter into resurrection.

As a part of God's old creation, we have been crucified. Now as Christians, we are in the transit of Christ's death. Thus, we live to die in Christ's death. But Christ's death does not leave us in death; His death brings us into resurrection. Hence, we die to live. We are brought into a cycle of living to die and of dying to live. In Christ's death we live to die, and in His resurrection we die to live. Christ Himself was born to die. Then He came forth from death in resurrection. He died in order to live. As Christians, we follow the same course. We were regenerated to die, and this death brings us into resurrection. Thus, we live to die and we die to live.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DYING TO SELF AND LIVING TO GOD

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:24; Rom. 7:17-18, 11, 13; 1 Pet. 2:24m; Gal. 2:19; Rom. 16:26; Psa. 36:9a; Col. 2:9; 2 Cor. 3:17-18, 6b; Phil. 1:19b, 20b-21a; 4:8

Many Christians consider that the Bible tells us that men should be good to one another and that men must learn to fear God, please God, and behave before God. Although this is a common concept concerning the Bible, it is not completely accurate. When I was young, I also held this concept. But gradually, year by year, as I have read and studied the Bible, I have come to realize that the Bible is a book that unveils God's economy. The Greek word for *economy* is *oikonomia*. *Oikonomia* refers to the plan, the arrangement, for the accomplishment of a certain purpose. In the Bible God's economy is His household administration to carry out His purpose.

The central point of God's administration is the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is the centrality and universality of the way of the Christian life. The Christian life is a life that can accomplish God's economy. On the earth today it is difficult to find a man who considers that he should live a life for the carrying out of God's purpose and economy. We must live a life that comes up to the standard of accomplishing God's economy. This is what God desires. The kind of life that accomplishes God's economy is a life that is always dying to self and living to God.

Christians may speak about doing God's will, but most consider God's will only in relation to minor things. The Pharisees were concerned with such things. They condemned John the Baptist as having a demon because he did not eat bread or drink wine. They also condemned the Lord Jesus as a gluttonous man and a drunkard because He did eat and drink (Luke 7:33-34). Such talks are merely religious and have nothing to do with what kind of person we should be for the accomplishment of God's purpose. In order to live for the accomplishment of God's purpose, we need to die to self and live to God.

DYING TO SELF

In Matthew 16:24 the Lord spoke of our need to deny ourselves. To deny ourselves is to die to self. Our very being is the self.

The self is expressed and manifested in our natural life and flesh. There is a distinction between the words *expressed* and *manifested*. To express ourselves is a matter of behavior, but to manifest ourselves is a matter of what we are. In the full-time training the way the trainees appear in the meetings is very good. This is their expression. But when the trainees go home, they may live in an altogether different manner. This is their manifestation. Every Christian has two faces. In the meeting we express ourselves in one way, and in our room or at home we are manifested in another way. We must exercise until we are the same in the meeting as we are at home.

The self is expressed and manifested in our natural life and flesh, and our flesh is the embodiment of sin (Rom. 7:17-18). When you do not restrict or behave yourself, you manifest yourself in the flesh. To manifest yourself in the flesh is sin, and sin is one with Satan. According to Romans 7, sin deceives and kills (v. 11). These are the things that Satan did in Genesis 3. Satan deceived Eve (2 Cor. 11:3), and through partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were deadened (Gen. 2:17). Apparently, it is sin that deceives and kills. Actually, it is Satan who deceives and kills. Sin and Satan are one; sin and Satan are synonymous.

Our being, our self, our natural life, our flesh, sin, and Satan are all one entity. They are like many eggs in one nest. In a nest a mother bird may have a cluster of eggs. When these eggs are hatched, they will form one family, one entity. Our being, our self, our natural life, our flesh, sin, and Satan are like one family in a nest. To die to self means to die to the entire family.

For this reason the Lord said in Matthew 16, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (v. 24). To deny the self is to die to self. The first two lines of a hymn translated by Brother Nee express this same thought: "To the foe my word is always, 'No,' / To the Father it is 'Yes'" (*Hymns,* #880). To say no to Satan is to die to self. When we die to self, our natural life, our flesh, sin, and Satan are finished. When we die to self, Satan is defeated. This is why Satan is afraid of the cross.

Dying to self is dying to our natural life, our flesh, sin, and Satan through the cross (1 Pet. 2:24m). The cross puts us to death. It ends our self. The cross is the centrality and universality of our way to live the Christian life in order to fulfill God's purpose. When we die to self, we die to everything in the universe but God.

LIVING TO GOD

First, we are living to die; then we are dying to live. If we die to ourselves, we will surely live to God. Dying to self is dying in order to live to God. In the past I shared with the saints that to live to the Lord is a deeper experience than to live for the Lord. In order to live to God, we must first die to our self. Dying to self issues in living to God.

God is eternal, perfect, and complete as the source of life with all its organic attributes (Rom. 16:26; Psa. 36:9a). He is rich with such organic attributes as love, kindness, and mercy. This eternal God is embodied in Christ (Col. 2:9). God Himself is the substance, Christ is the embodiment of this substance, and the Spirit is the realization of this substance. The three are one. The Spirit imparts the eternal life of God to us and lives in our spirit as our life (2 Cor. 3:6b). God as the divine substance, Christ as the embodiment of this substance, the Spirit as the realization and consummation of this substance, and we as the receivers of the divine life are one. Now we and the Triune God are one.

Living to God is living to the processed Triune God as the consummated Spirit with all His organic attributes, which will become our virtues to express Christ as our living in resurrection (Phil. 1:19b, 20b-21a; 4:8). Dying to self is the cross, and living to God is resurrection. Dying to self is the death of Christ, and living to God is the resurrection of Christ. The death of Christ leads to His resurrection. He died with the intention of being resurrected. His death was the entrance into His resurrection. Our dying to self is also the entrance that leads us into His resurrection. When we enter into His resurrection, we live to God. We live to God who is embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God to impart the Triune God as life to us and to live in us as our life to express Christ as our living in resurrection.

The consummated Spirit is the reality of dying to self and living to God. This experience is altogether wrapped up with the consummated Spirit. This

is the reason that we have to pray. To pray is to contact God and to breathe in God. To pray is to take God into us as our air for our spiritual breathing. By prayer we breathe in the consummated Spirit. When the consummated Spirit is breathed into us, He is the reality of dying to self, and He is also the reality of living to God. This means that He is the reality of the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT ARE YOU OF? AND DO YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:55; Matt. 5:3, 8; Isa. 66:2; Psa. 51:12; 1 Cor. 7:40b; Heb. 1:9; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17; Isa. 11:2-3

WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT ARE YOU OF?

In Luke 9 James and John asked the Lord whether or not they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume the village of the Samaritans who had rejected Him (v. 54). But the Lord rebuked James and John, saying, "You do not know of what kind of spirit you are" (v. 55, see footnote, Recovery Version). This indicates that whenever we are about to do anything, we should ask ourselves, "What kind of spirit are we of?"

In October of 1933 I was led of the Lord to drop my job and serve Him full time. I also was led of the Lord to go to Shanghai to meet with Brother Nee. On the way to Shanghai from Chefoo, I stayed briefly in a brother's home in north China. While I was there, we read a letter from Brother Nee to a certain person. In that letter Brother Nee said that a person should not only do the right thing but also do the right thing in the right way and in the right spirit. The thing one does may be right, but the spirit by which he does the right thing may be wrong. He must do the right thing in the right way and in the right spirit. That word from Brother Nee has helped me very much throughout the past fifty-eight years. To do the right thing alone is inadequate. You must do the right thing in the right way and in the right spirit. If we do the right thing, but our spirit is wrong, our conduct will neither edify the saints nor build up the church. For our conduct to be constructive, edifying, and useful in building up the Body of Christ, we must be right in the thing that we do, right in our way, and right in our spirit. Often we may claim that what we are doing is right. This may be true, but our way, our attitude, or our spirit may offend people. At such a time we have to ask ourselves, "What kind of spirit are we of?"

A Seeking Saint Being
Poor in Spirit and Pure in Heart

A seeking saint should be poor in spirit and pure in heart (Matt. 5:3, 8; Isa. 66:2). A Christian should always be poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit means that you are humble, acknowledging that you have nothing, know nothing, can do nothing, and are nothing. Without Christ, without the life-giving Spirit, you are nothing. Being poor in spirit must also be matched with being pure in heart. To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble but also to be emptied in your spirit, in the depth of your being. To be pure in heart is a matter of motive; it is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31).

A Repentant Believer
Having a Willing Spirit

In Psalm 51:12 David said to the Lord, "Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit." As a believer we should always have a willing spirit for the things of the Lord and for the things of the church. Often, however, we are not willing in the things regarding the Lord's interest. We must be poor in spirit and willing in the things of the Lord's interest.

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul expresses a number of points concerning marriage. Then in verse 40 he says, "But I think that I also have the Spirit of God." The Spirit of God here is the indwelling Spirit.

A Normal Believer
Having the Spirit of Joy

A normal believer should have the Spirit of joy (Heb. 1:9; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17). We should have the Spirit of God in a joyful way. The Spirit of God is the oil of joy (Isa. 61:1; Heb. 1:9). Therefore, we must be happy people, joyful all day long. We should be able to give thanks to God in everything (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

A God-fearing Person Having the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of the Knowledge and Fear of God

A God-fearing person should have the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of God (Isa. 11:2-3). If you have the Spirit of God, you must realize that the Spirit has many aspects. The Spirit is full of wisdom and understanding, full of counsel and might. *Counsel* refers to the way to do the right thing, and *might* refers to the strength to do the right thing.

The Spirit is also the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of God. Isaiah joins the knowledge and the fear of the Lord together. Only the fear of God keeps us from being lawless. We must have the fear of the Lord and knowledge. The more knowledge we have, the more fear of God we should have.

If you are a person who has the Spirit of God, you will be wise, full of understanding, and full of instruction. You will also be a person who always has the proper way and the strength to carry things out. As a person who has the Spirit of God, you will not be a foolish or careless person, not fearing God. Instead, you will be very knowledgeable yet full of the fear of God.

PRACTICING THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY

We need to have a willing spirit and be filled with the Spirit of God in order to practice the God-ordained way to meet and to serve. In the past in the recovery, we paid attention to many crucial things, but we did not pay attention to the New Testament way to meet and to serve. Brother Nee found out by his study of the New Testament that prophesying by all the attendants of the meetings according to 1 Corinthians 14 should be recovered. But at the time that Brother Nee saw this, we did not have a way to practice it.

In 1984 I sacrificed a number of things regarding the work in the United States in order to find out the way to meet and to serve according to the New Testament. The first three years, from 1984 to 1987, were years of investigating because we were not that clear concerning the practice of the new way. Thus, there was much experimentation and many changes. But

today the steps of the new way have been clearly defined. From 1988 until today, the churches have become very clear about the new way, and they have welcomed it. However, to welcome the new way is one thing, but to practice it is another thing.

The first step in the practice of the new way is to gain sinners for Christ. This is the step of begetting. To beget new believers fulfills our service as priests serving in the priesthood of the gospel (Rom. 15:16). If we do not beget sinners to become believers, we are not exercising our priesthood. In the New Testament priesthood of the gospel, the first item is to "tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Our goal is to bring sinners out of their darkness into His marvelous light. Once they are saved, they become members of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), children of light (Eph. 5:8), and living stones (1 Pet. 2:5).

The second step in the practice of the new way is to feed the new ones. By feeding the young ones, we raise them up. The third step is to perfect the new ones in the group meetings. In the group meetings the saints have fellowship, intercession, mutual care, and mutual shepherding. In the group meetings the Body of Christ is built up directly by all the perfected members, not just by the gifted persons. This is the fulfillment of Ephesians 4:11-16.

The fourth step is to build up all the saints to prophesy. We must train all the saints not only to function as apostles sent by God to bring His good news to others but also to function as prophets to teach others by prophesying. It is not sufficient to prophesy only on the Lord's Day morning in the church meetings. We must prophesy all day long and in every place. To prophesy is to speak for the Lord. It is not mainly a matter of predicting. We must speak for God to our fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins, in-laws, neighbors, classmates, and colleagues. We all should endeavor to prophesy, to speak for the Lord, to all kinds of people.

There are four steps in the practice of the new way: begetting, nourishing, perfecting, and building up. Every proper believer should always have two or three new believers under his care year-round. These two or three new believers would come from your visiting people with the gospel. To "knock on doors" means that you go to contact people or that you get people to contact you. To make a telephone call for the gospel is to knock on doors. To ask your cousin to give you the name, address, and telephone number of one of his

friends or relatives is also an aspect of knocking on doors. To contact people is to knock on doors. Through knocking on doors, you are able to gain some new believers. Gradually, as you take care of two or three of these believers, one will be raised up and brought into the church life. If you lose these two or three under your care, you should go out again to gain another group of two or three. If some of the saints practice this way year-round, I have the assurance that they will bring two remaining fruit into the church life every year.

I have also encouraged the elders to take the lead in caring for people, leaving the direct care of the business affairs of the churches to others. To not bear fruit for four or five years is abnormal. To be "spiritual" and not bear fruit is abnormal. Some elders have not borne fruit in ten years. Some would take the excuse that they are busy with the business affairs of the church and do not have time to care for people. This is not the proper attitude. The first thing in our Christian life should be begetting. On the average, one new believer should be begotten of you, by you, through you, and with you every year. If we are not begetting new believers, we have to ask ourselves, "What kind of spirit are we of?" and "Do we think that we have the Spirit of God?"

The new way, the God-ordained way, has been welcomed by most of the saints since 1988, but there are not many who really practice it. Most saints consider that they are too busy and do not have enough time to practice it. For this reason I have encouraged the saints to budget their time, spending at least two or three hours a week for the preaching of the gospel. We should not waste our time during the week with long and unnecessary telephone calls. Often when we have long telephone conversations, it is hard to avoid gossip. We do not have the intention of gossiping, but when our conversation continues for a long time, we may be tempted to gossip. Whenever you waste time, you have the wrong spirit, and you do not have the Spirit of God. According to Ephesians 5, redeeming the time (v. 16) goes together with being filled in spirit (v. 18). Redeeming the time is closely related to having the Spirit of God. Therefore, we need to learn to ask ourselves, "What kind of spirit are you of?" and "Do you think that you have the Spirit of God?"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE SPIRIT OF REALITY

Scripture Reading: John 14:16-20; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 7:39; Matt. 28:19b; Phil. 1:19; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 8:17b

The study of the Divine Trinity and the Person of Christ began in the second century. This study led to many endless debates and arguments. In this chapter I have no intention to lead you into these debates. Rather, I want to point out to you the vital place that the Spirit of reality has in our relationship with God.

THE COEXISTENCE AND COINHERENCE OF THE DIVINE TRINITY

According to the Bible, God is uniquely one (Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:6), yet He is also the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19b). This is difficult for the human mind to reconcile or explain, but this is the revelation in the Bible. Any attempt to reconcile these two aspects will result only in confusion. We should simply say that God is one and He is also three. He is the unique God, and He is the Father, Son, and Spirit. The three of the Divine Trinity are distinct but not separate. They are distinctly three, yet they are also one.

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit coexist with one another (3:16-17; Eph. 3:14-17), and They also coinhere. To coexist means to exist together at the same time. To understand the coexistence of the three of the Divine Trinity is not difficult, but to understand how the three of the Divine Trinity coinhere is very difficult. To coinhere means that the three of the Divine Trinity exist within one another, abide in each other (John 14:10-11; 17:21). The three of the Divine Trinity from eternity past have been and still are coexisting and coinhering with one another.

One day the second of the Divine Trinity, the Son, came to be a man through incarnation. He came from the Father, with the Father, and in the Father's name (8:29; 16:28a, 32b; 10:25). His coming with the Father was also by the Spirit (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; 4:1). This shows the coexistence of the three of the Divine Trinity in the incarnation. In John 14 the Son said that

He was in the Father and the Father was in Him and that the words He spoke were not His own words but the Father's words (vv. 10, 24). This chapter also reveals that the Spirit of reality comes as the Son with the Father (vv. 16-20, 23, 26). This indicates the coinherence of the three of the Divine Trinity. The Son lives in the Father, and the Father lives in the Son; the Son's speaking is the Father's work.

Another portion of the Word that reveals the coinherence of the Divine Trinity is Isaiah 9:6. In this verse the Son is called the Eternal Father. The child born, who is also the Son given, is called the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace. The child who is the only begotten Son (John 3:16) is called the Mighty God. The Son who is given is called the Eternal Father. Although we cannot fully understand these portions of the Word, we have to accept the clear word of the Scriptures.

The three of the Divine Trinity are distinctly three and yet one. The Father is distinct from the Son, the Son is distinct from the Spirit, and the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son. Yet the Son is the Father (Isa. 9:6; John 14:9-10), and the Son is also the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). The Son became flesh (John 1:1, 14) and was called the last Adam. This last Adam through death and resurrection became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The Son given is called the Eternal Father, and after His death and resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. Therefore, the Son is both the Father and the Spirit.

THE ESSENTIAL AND ECONOMICAL TRINITY

In church history certain terms were invented in order to describe the relationship between the three of the Divine Trinity. The term *essential Trinity* describes the oneness that exists among the three of the Divine Trinity. The term *economical Trinity* describes the distinction between the three of the Divine Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are absolutely one in essence. This is the essential Trinity. But in God's economy to carry out His purpose of dispensing Himself into His chosen people, He is three. This is the economical Trinity. In His economy the Divine Trinity is distinctly the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father planned, the Son redeemed through His vicarious death, and the Spirit seals the redeemed ones (Eph. 1:4-14).

AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST,

THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE THIRD OF THE DIVINE TRINITY, BECOMING THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

After the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of God, the third of the Divine Trinity, has become the life-giving Spirit as the aggregate of the Divine Trinity, the consummated, compound Spirit of the processed Triune God, even the consummation of the processed God (1 Cor. 15:45b; John 7:39; Matt. 28:19b; Phil. 1:19b; Rev. 22:17). The life-giving Spirit is too great. He is the aggregate, the totality, of the Divine Trinity. The aggregate of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is the life-giving Spirit. He is the consummated, compound Spirit of the processed Triune God.

The life-giving Spirit as the compound Spirit is composed of a number of elements compounded together. This compound Spirit is typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:23-25. A hin of olive oil, which was the base of the ointment, was compounded together with the spices of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia. The oil typifies the Holy Spirit, and the four spices typify Christ's humanity and divinity with His death and resurrection. The life-giving Spirit includes many elements, just as many modern medicines are compounded with different elements in order to heal certain illnesses. The life-giving Spirit has been compounded with the Holy Spirit as the base and with the humanity, divinity, death, and resurrection of Christ as the elements.

Today the Holy Spirit, the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is the consummation of the processed Triune God. If we would experience God today as the consummated God, we have to experience the Spirit. Day by day, morning until evening, our Christian life, our Christian walk, and our Christian experience are all a matter of enjoying the consummation of the processed Triune God, who is the life-giving Spirit. From the day that I saw this, my whole Christian life was revolutionized.

In Genesis 1 the Divine Trinity is indicated (vv. 1, 26), but the Bible does not give a clear word concerning the Trinity until the resurrection is consummated. In resurrection the Triune God was fully processed. As the consummated Triune God, He is available for people to be baptized into Him (Matt. 28:19). As the life-giving Spirit, He is also the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). Today the Spirit of Christ is the bountiful supply of the divine-human person of Christ, the cross of Christ, and the

resurrection of Christ. Eventually, the Bible closes with a declaration from the consummation of the processed Triune God, the Spirit, and from the perfection of the transformed tripartite man, the bride (Rev. 22:17). The consummated Triune God and the perfected tripartite man are married. They become the unique couple in the universe.

THE CONSUMMATED SPIRIT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD BEING THE REALITY OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

The consummated Spirit of the processed Triune God is the reality of the processed Triune God. The phrase *consummated Spirit* indicates that some processes have taken place. The processes that the Triune God passed through include incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection. Before incarnation He was only divine, not human. Through incarnation He became both human and divine. He was further processed through human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. Through all these processes the Triune God was consummated. Today the consummated Spirit is the reality of the processed Triune God. If we want to have God or Christ, we must have the Spirit. God and Christ are mere terms to us if we do not have the Spirit. Without the Spirit, Jesus would be merely a historical person to us. The reality of Christ and of God is the Spirit. For this reason John 14:17 calls the Spirit "the Spirit of reality."

THE SPIRIT AS THE AGGREGATE OF THE DIVINE TRINITY BEING THE REALITY OF CHRIST

The Spirit as the aggregate of the Divine Trinity is the reality of Christ (vv. 16-20).

THE CONSUMMATED SPIRIT AS THE COMPOUND SPIRIT COMPOUNDED WITH CHRIST'S PERSON AND DEATH BEING THE REALITY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The consummated Spirit as the compound Spirit compounded with Christ's person and death is the reality of the death of Christ (Rom. 8:13b). If you do

not have the Spirit, you do not have the reality of the death of Christ. The death of Christ is fully unveiled in Romans 6, and the Spirit of Christ is unveiled in Romans 8. It is in the Spirit of Christ that you find the death of Christ. Brother Nee once said that you can never experience Romans 6 without the experience of the Spirit in Romans 8. The life-giving Spirit is the reality of the death of Christ.

THE CONSUMMATED SPIRIT AS THE COMPOUND SPIRIT COMPOUNDED WITH CHRIST'S PERSON AND RESURRECTION BEING THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The consummated Spirit as the compound Spirit compounded with Christ's person and resurrection is the reality of the resurrection of Christ. Today's modern antibiotics contain elements which kill certain germs and supply certain nutrients. The Spirit today is like an all-inclusive dose. The Spirit is the reality of God, the reality of Christ, the reality of Christ's death, and the reality of Christ's resurrection. The reality of God, Christ, and the death and resurrection of Christ is the Spirit. This Spirit is the compound Spirit, the consummated Spirit as the aggregate of the processed Triune God, the reality of the processed Triune God.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE THREE PARTICULAR CAPACITIES OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:2-3, 5-7; John 1:4; Eph. 4:18-19

In this chapter we want to see the three particular capacities of the divine life: the fellowship of life, the light of life, and the sense of life.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE

Every life has a nature, and in the nature of every life there are particular capacities, or abilities. A dog has the capacity, the ability, to bark. The ability to bark is in the nature of the dog. As human beings, we can speak, hear, see, and understand. These are some of the innate capacities of human life. These capacities are in the nature of the human life.

The divine life also has many capacities. These capacities are the abilities that exist in the nature of the divine life. Of these many capacities the fellowship of life, the light of life, and the sense of life are very particular and basic. The fellowship of life and the light of life are covered in the writings of John (1 John 1:3, 5; John 8:12). First John 1:1-2 says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us)." The Word of life in verse 1 is the Son of God, who is the eternal life in verse 2.

The apostles ministered the eternal life to the believers. This eternal life is the Son of God. The believers then received this life and were brought into the fellowship of life. Fellowship comes with the divine life because fellowship is one of the capacities in the nature of the divine life. From the time that we believed into the Lord Jesus and were regenerated, the divine life entered into our being. This divine life is God, Christ, and the Spirit. Within this divine life is a capacity called fellowship. This fellowship is both in a vertical direction, from God to us, and in a horizontal direction, from believer to believer. The fellowship of life is one of the first capacities of the divine life. After receiving

Christ and being regenerated, a believer likes to see other Christians. Whenever a Christian finds other Christians, he is happy to talk with them. This experience is an example of the capacity of fellowship in the divine life.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND THE SENSE OF LIFE

According to 1 John 1:5-7, the fellowship of life brings us into the presence of God. I have many experiences of this. On some occasions when I am talking with my wife about various things, I have a sense that I should go to my study, contact the Lord, and have fellowship with Him. When I follow this sense, I am brought into the presence of the Lord. On other occasions I may be with my relatives. Since I have a large family, my wife and I are often engaged in polite talks with our relatives who have come to visit us. After about ten minutes of this kind of conversation, I ask my relatives to continue their talk with my wife, but I excuse myself and go away into my study. Upon entering my study, I first sit down, remain quiet for a period of time, and then begin to pray in order to be brought into the presence of the Lord. This is fellowship.

The fellowship immediately brings me into the light, because the One whom I contact is light (v. 5). Because He is light, His presence is also light. If I were to remain with my relatives apart from Him, I would not be enlightened. For this reason I go away to meet the Lord by having a little time with Him. When I do this, right away I am enlightened. In one recent experience I saw in the light that the words I had spoken to my wife the night before were not in the Spirit. My attitude and the tone of my voice were not in the Spirit; therefore, I was wrong.

This kind of experience spontaneously produced a feeling within me that I had to apologize to the Lord. I prayed, "Lord, forgive me. I have often prayed that I want to walk, live, and do everything in the Spirit and according to the Spirit. But last night I said something to my wife that I now feel deeply was not in the Spirit. Lord, forgive me." I then had a further feeling that I should apologize to my wife and ask for her forgiveness. Sometimes I have argued with this feeling and have tried to excuse my behavior, but the feeling persists until I apologize.

Chapter 1 of 1 John points out the following three crucial things: the divine life (v. 2), fellowship (v. 3), and light (vv. 5-7). Verse 7 says, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." Actually, the

light is very close to the inner feeling. We walk in the light by the inner feeling of life.

Ephesians 4:18-19 says, "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness." Two very important phrases in these verses are *alienated from the life of God* (v. 18) and *being past feeling* (v. 19). The feeling mentioned in verse 19 is the feeling of the conscience, which is the feeling in our spirit. This feeling in our spirit is strengthened by the presence of the divine life. To be alienated from the life of God is to stop paying attention to the inner feeling. Our following of the inner feeling becomes our walk. The feeling itself is basic, and the walk is secondary. But our obedience to the feeling becomes our walk. When I felt that I was not in the Spirit when I spoke with my wife, my confession to the Lord and my apology to my wife was my walk. My walk came out of the feeling of life, the sense of life.

DEALING WITH OUR CHARACTER ACCORDING TO THE INNER REGULATION OF THE DIVINE LIFE

We do not always live by the divine life, in the fellowship of life, and in the light of life. In our daily life we may respond merely to outward regulations or to others who are observing us, but we have to realize that the Lord is observing us more closely than anyone. Throughout the years I have been learning to adjust my character according to the inner regulation of the divine life. To some extent I have been trained in my character so that it is now very difficult for me to be disorderly. Thirty percent of our character is what we have received by birth, and seventy percent of our character is by habit. Hence, character is composed of our nature and our habit. If you were to take a Chinese boy of Chinese parents, put him into an American family's home, and raise him in that family for a number of years, he would grow up with an American character.

Over the years I have noticed that many people have a part of their character in which they exaggerate in their speaking. One time in Shanghai many years ago, a sister came to me and reported that the rain was leaking into the meeting hall through a large hole. I asked the sister two or three times how large the hole was. Each time I asked, the size of the hole became

smaller and smaller. Finally, it was determined that the "large" hole was actually a small hole. This sister's first report concerning the hole in the meeting hall was inaccurate and exaggerated.

Our character can spoil, destroy, and kill our usefulness to the Lord. In 1965 I visited the Philippines and took along with me an American brother, who at that time was one of my co-workers. Upon my arrival I introduced this brother to the saints as one of my young co-workers. As a result of my word, they respected him very much. The saints gave him a very good room next to my room. On one of the mornings of our stay, some sisters went into his room in order to clean it. They found that one of the brother's socks was in a cup on a piece of furniture and that the other sock was on top of his pillow. When they told me this, I went into the room and found it exactly as the sisters had said. This brother's usefulness to the Lord was annulled by his character.

BEING RESTRICTED IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF LIFE, THE LIGHT OF LIFE, AND THE SENSE OF LIFE

I love America very much, but there is one big defect in American society: males and females do not have the proper knowledge and feeling concerning their masculinity and femininity. This is the reason that there is a great deal of fornication in this country. Deuteronomy 22:5 prohibits a woman from putting on men's clothing and a man from putting on women's clothing. For this reason I do not like to see sisters wearing pants. For a woman to wear a man's clothing and for a man to put on a woman's garment are an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. As females, the sisters should be feminine in their attitude, voice, and greeting of others. They should also keep a proper distance between themselves and the brothers. In the same way the brothers should keep a proper distance between themselves and the sisters. Whenever a sister comes up to me after a meeting, I practice to keep a little distance between us. I am always mindful that we are still in the flesh and that I must behave myself in a proper way.

If you live a life according to the divine life with the fellowship of life, the light of life, and the sense of life, you will realize the restrictions in the divine life. If you live in the fellowship of life, it will bring you into the light. In this light, you will see that you need to be adjusted. You may have to change your way of caring for your hair. Your hair may be too short if you are a female or too long if you are a male. The divine life will correct you in everything. You

must learn how to live in the divine life—in the fellowship of life, in the light of life, and in the sense of life.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ASPECTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Scripture Reading: 1 John 1:2-3, 6-7; 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1-2

The fellowship of the divine life revealed in the New Testament is abstract, mysterious, and very difficult to define. The Greek word rendered "fellowship" in 1 John 1:3 is *koinonia*, which means "joint participation" or "common participation." According to this verse, the divine fellowship is not only with the Father but also with the Son. In 2 Corinthians 13:14 this divine fellowship is called "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit," in Acts 2:42 it is "the fellowship of the apostles," and in Philippians 2:1 it is the "fellowship of spirit." From these portions of the Word, we can see that the divine fellowship belongs to the Father, the Son, the Spirit, the apostles, and all the believers. They are all involved in this fellowship. This divine fellowship involves many persons; hence, it is mutual. It is impossible for just one person by himself to have this fellowship. The fellowship is one, but it involves many persons.

One of the best illustrations of fellowship is electricity. Electricity is mysterious yet very real. Electricity is manifested in light bulbs or fluorescent lamps when the current of electricity flows through them. If the bulbs or lamps remain intact, and the current of electricity flows, the electricity appears. But if the bulbs or lamps are broken, the electricity disappears. The bulbs and lamps are connected by the current of electricity. In a community or city, all the homes are joined together by the current of electricity that flows into each of the homes. This current of electricity is an example of fellowship. The fellowship is the flow of the eternal life within all the believers who have received and possess the divine life. By the flow of electricity all the homes are kept in oneness. Similarly, by the flow of the eternal life, the fellowship, all the believers are kept in oneness.

THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP AND ITS TWO ASPECTS

First John 1:2-3 and 6-7 reveal that the fellowship of the divine life has both a vertical aspect and a horizontal aspect. The vertical aspect of fellowship

refers to our fellowship with the Triune God. The horizontal aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another.

First John 1:2-3 says, "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The vertical aspect of fellowship was initially established with the first apostles. The apostles then reported to sinners the eternal life in order that they might have fellowship with the apostles. Before the apostles reported the eternal life to them, the apostles themselves already had the vertical fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (v. 3). The initial experience of the apostles was vertical, but when the apostles reported the eternal life to others, they experienced the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship.

Verses 6 and 7 of 1 John 1 also indicate the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship. Verse 6 says, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth." This is the vertical aspect of fellowship. Verse 7 says, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." This is the horizontal aspect of fellowship. Both aspects of the divine fellowship are closely related; therefore, it is difficult to say which aspect comes first. If you do not have the proper fellowship with the Lord, it is difficult to have fellowship with your fellow believers. In the same way, if you do not have the proper fellowship with your fellow believers, it is difficult to have fellowship with the Lord.

EXPERIENCING THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ASPECTS OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

The reality of the divine fellowship is one of the most neglected things among the believers. It is hard to find many who are in the reality of fellowship. Positionally we all are in this fellowship, but in our daily living very few of us are in the reality of fellowship. We may have the matter of fellowship in name, but we may not have it in practicality. I have tried to practice this fellowship, but I have to admit that I have not been completely

successful in maintaining this fellowship hour after hour throughout the day. When we are not in this fellowship in a practical way, we are out of the Spirit, out of the Triune God, and out of the divine life.

Before we were saved, we were sinners living in sin and dead in sin. We were not involved in the fellowship of life. One day someone reported to us the eternal life (v. 2), and we believed in the Lord Jesus. From that moment we were brought into the divine fellowship. Two things are very striking about our initial experience of the divine fellowship. First, it is difficult to find one person who believed in the Lord directly by himself without the help of someone who preached the gospel to him. Nearly everyone heard a report first and then believed. Second, there is almost always a deep relationship between the one who reported or preached the gospel and the one who received the report and got saved.

Many years ago in mainland China, I preached the gospel a number of times to large congregations, and many people were saved through me. Because I preached the gospel to them and they were saved through my preaching, many of them felt intimately related to me, even though I never talked with them personally. My point in relating this experience is that there is almost always an intimate feeling between the person who gets saved and the one through whom he gets saved. I cannot forget the female evangelist through whom I was saved. She will always be so dear and precious to me because through her I was brought into the divine fellowship. Her preaching of the gospel to me was related to the horizontal aspect of the fellowship of the divine life. After receiving her word, I went to the Lord and was brought into the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ASPECTS OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

There is a close relationship between the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship. Our vertical fellowship with the Lord is affected by our horizontal fellowship with others. If we do not have a proper relationship with those around us, it is difficult to have a good fellowship with the Lord vertically. The reason for this is that the divine fellowship is one fellowship. Each day we should be in the divine fellowship, vertically and horizontally.

Most of us may think that we daily start this fellowship according to its vertical aspect, followed by its horizontal aspect. Most of the time, however, this is not our experience. Since most of us have spouses, other family members, or roommates living with us, our fellowship usually begins in a horizontal manner. If we have a quarrel with our wife, husband, or roommate in the evening, we will find it difficult to start our vertical fellowship with the Lord in the morning. We must maintain both the vertical and horizontal aspects of the fellowship in order to be healthy spiritually.

In Ephesians 4:25 the apostle Paul says, "Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." In this verse the word *neighbor* refers to the brothers and sisters. We must be right with our fellow believers in order to be kept in the divine fellowship. In our experience we often cannot have vertical fellowship with the Lord without first having horizontal fellowship with other believers.

A saint who has a proper living and who is victorious is one who is always in the divine fellowship, vertically and horizontally, all day long. We must learn to fellowship with the Lord more, and we must also learn to fellowship with the saints more. We must thank the Lord for those around us, and we must endeavor to have fellowship with them. The brothers and sisters should have thorough fellowship with one another, even concerning practical things related to their daily living. We should have fellowship with one another to such an extent. When we fellowship in such a way, we receive the benefit.

We may feel that we should fellowship with those around us only about the messages we have read or some other spiritual activity. Of course, our fellowship should include this. However, our fellowship should also include many practical things. I have discovered that the biggest shortage among us is fellowship. Our problem is that we do not have the habit to fellowship, and many of us do not like to fellowship. We must realize that when we fellowship, the Lord is involved. When we turn away from fellowship or stop our fellowship with our fellow believers, the Lord is kept away.

We should try to have fellowship with our fellow believers as much as possible. This divine fellowship not only corrects us; it also molds us and even reconstitutes us. This fellowship brings the divine constituent into our spiritual being, causing a change in our being.

THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BEING THE REALITY OF LIVING IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

The divine fellowship is the reality of living in the Body of Christ. The Lord has been frustrated throughout the centuries because of the lack of fellowship. In Revelation 22:20 the Lord Jesus said, "I come quickly," but it has been nearly two thousand years, and the Lord is still not back. The reason is that the believers are individualistic, independent, opinionated, and divisive. The Roman Catholic Church controlled people by its organization, but those who broke away from Catholicism brought in division after division. The believers seem to be like horses without bridles. Today nothing seems to control them. Actually, the divine fellowship should control the believers.

The one thing that should rule us is the divine fellowship. We are restricted in this fellowship. By being restricted in this fellowship, the Body of Christ is kept in oneness, and the work of the ministry continues to go on. When we are out of fellowship, everything is finished. The thing that makes everything alive is fellowship. If we learn to fellowship, we will receive many benefits, especially in the Lord's work.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BY THE TWO SPIRITS

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22; Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10

Hymns, #737 speaks of the fellowship of life and its relationship to the Spirit and the cross. Stanzas 1 and 6 of this hymn say,

Life eternal brings us
Fellowship of life,
Fellowship in Spirit,
Saving us from strife.

Fellowship is deepened
Thru the cross of death;
Fellowship is lifted
By the Spirit's breath.

We also need to see that our human spirit is related to the fellowship. With the divine fellowship of God's life, three things are involved: the Spirit of God, our human spirit, and the cross. In this chapter we want to see the two aspects of the divine fellowship by the two spirits.

THE VERTICAL ASPECT OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The divine fellowship has two aspects: the vertical aspect between God and us and the horizontal aspect among the believers. The horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship is by the human spirit. The vertical aspect of the divine fellowship is by the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22). The word *by* is actually not strong enough to express what we mean. The Spirit is not merely involved, wrapped up, or mingled with the fellowship. The Spirit Himself is the fellowship because the fellowship is the flow, the current, of the Spirit. This is like saying that the current of electricity is just the electricity itself. The current of electricity is electricity in motion. When the

electricity stops, the current of electricity also stops. In the same way the fellowship of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Spirit moving. The grace of Christ is Christ Himself enjoyed by us, the love of God is God Himself tasted by us, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself moving within us. The divine fellowship is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Without the divine Spirit there is no fellowship. The Spirit is the very element of the fellowship. When a stand is made of wood, wood is the element of the stand. Likewise, if a stand is made of steel, steel is the element of the stand. If you take away the element, the stand ceases to exist. It is the same with the divine fellowship. If you take away the Spirit, the divine fellowship disappears.

There is a great lack of the experience of the divine fellowship in today's Christianity. For this reason, hardly anything is spoken concerning the fellowship of the divine life. Mostly, people preach the gospel by telling people that when they are saved, they will go to heaven after they die. The word about going to heaven after one dies, however, is completely inaccurate. When a person dies, he does not go to heaven but to Hades (Luke 16:22-23; Acts 2:27, 31). The believers will go to the pleasant section of Hades called Paradise, and the unbelievers will go to the unpleasant section of Hades (2 Cor. 12:4; Luke 23:43; 16:22-23, 25-26).

According to the Bible, the saints do not go to heaven after death but to Paradise. The thought that the saints go to heaven after death is part of the leaven added to the three measures of meal by the woman in Matthew 13:33. This woman is the Roman Catholic Church, which took many pagan practices, heretical doctrines, and evil matters and mixed them with the teachings concerning Christ to leaven the whole content of Christianity. Today most of Christianity preaches a gospel that has been fully leavened.

Today as believers we have been redeemed, but the effect of death still remains with us. Physical death causes our spirit and soul to be separated from our body. This separation is the effect of death. The spirits and souls of the dead believers are in Paradise waiting for the day of resurrection (John 5:29a), the day in which their bodies will be redeemed and transfigured (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51-52). By resurrection and in resurrection the spirit, soul, and body of each of the dead believers will no longer be separated.

Today the apostle Paul still remains separated from his body. His body is probably buried somewhere around Rome, the place of his martyrdom, but his spirit and soul are in Paradise. This effect of death will be erased by resurrection at the Lord's coming. The Lord will exercise His marvelous, sovereign, mighty power to raise up Paul's dead body from the earth, to change it, and to reunite Paul with his transfigured body. This erases the effect of death. Only resurrection life can conquer the effect of death (vv. 54-55).

In Philippians 1:23 Paul says, "I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for this is far better." To be with Christ is a matter of degree, not place. While Paul was desiring to be with Christ in a higher degree, he was already with Him continually. Through his physical death he would be in Paradise with Christ to a fuller extent than he enjoyed in this earthly life. Even with this realization, Paul preferred to remain on the earth for the sake of the Philippian believers (vv. 24-25).

I would prefer not to leave my body through death. I would rather have my body transfigured, having it conformed to the body of His glory (3:21), at the time of the Lord's coming back. At the resurrection of the dead saints or the transfiguration of the living ones, the corruptible and mortal body will put on incorruption and immortality (1 Cor. 15:52-53). At that time death will be swallowed up unto victory (v. 54).

The proper teaching concerning the rapture of the saints is missing in Christianity. The proper teaching concerning the divine fellowship is also missing. The Lord needs a full recovery of all the unleavened divine truths.

THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT OF THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BY THE HUMAN SPIRIT

We need to enter into the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship by the human spirit (Phil. 2:1; Rev. 1:10). If we are going to have real fellowship horizontally with one another, we need to exercise our spirit. If we exercise our spirit, we will never talk in a worldly manner or speak negatively about the saints or the churches. A local church can be severely damaged if many of the saints in that locality spend time speaking negative things about other saints and other churches. Such discussions spread gossip and death among the saints. This kind of contact between the saints is not the fellowship of

spirit that Paul speaks about in Philippians 2. In Philippians 2:1-2 Paul says, "If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, make my joy full." Paul seems to be saying, "Brothers, if you have any fellowship with me in spirit, your fellowship will be my encouragement and consolation. Then you will make my joy full."

Real fellowship is by our spirit. When we exercise our spirit, we are unable to talk about worldly amusements and entertainment. When we exercise our spirit, the nature of our conversation will change because our spirit is holy (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6). If there are problems in a certain church, we may have a desire to merely talk about the situation, but our spirit within will urge us to pray. Our spirit will not allow us to gossip about others' mistakes and failures. The only way to have the reality of horizontal fellowship is by exercising our spirit.

The two aspects of the divine fellowship require us to be in the two spirits, the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. These two spirits eventually become one (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). When Paul charges us to walk according to the spirit in Romans 8:4, he is speaking of the mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled with our human spirit. When we exercise our spirit to carry out the divine fellowship, we are fully sanctified, rescued, and saved from everything other than Christ. To be victorious, overcoming, sanctified, and transformed, we must exercise our spirit to carry out the two aspects of the divine fellowship.

THE INTERWOVEN FELLOWSHIP INCLUDING THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ASPECTS

The horizontal and vertical aspects of the divine fellowship are very closely related. We can see this from our experience. Sometimes we may talk about other saints under the pretense of having fellowship about their situation, but our conversation is actually gossip. Afterward, we often cannot pray because our praying spirit is quenched by our gossip. But when we fellowship in a genuine way by exercising our spirit, we are eager to pray and contact the Lord. This shows how close the relationship is between the vertical and horizontal aspects of fellowship. The horizontal fellowship ushers us into the vertical fellowship. If two brothers exercise their spirit to have genuine, proper, horizontal fellowship, they will eventually be ushered into a very honest and sincere intercession. When they pray together, the two aspects of

the divine fellowship are interwoven. The horizontal fellowship is interwoven with the vertical fellowship. This interwoven fellowship is the real fellowship.

Fellowship cannot have just one aspect alone. You cannot have the vertical fellowship without the horizontal fellowship. If you have a good time with the Lord in vertical fellowship, you will be eager to see the other saints in order to have fellowship with them. Once you have fellowship with the saints through prayer, you are brought into vertical fellowship with the Lord again. Your horizontal fellowship with the saints brings you into vertical fellowship with the Lord. Then your fellowship with the Lord brings you into horizontal fellowship with the saints. Thus, these two aspects are always interwoven; that is, they are always crisscrossing each other.

When we have the proper view of the divine fellowship with its two aspects, we will thank the Lord that we have the opportunity to fellowship with other saints. Every day as we fellowship with the Lord, we are ushered into fellowship with other saints. The more we have this kind of fellowship, the more we will sing and praise the Lord together. There is not much singing and praising among us because we are short of the divine fellowship.

THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP BEING EVERYTHING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Just as the current of electricity is the electricity itself, the fellowship of the divine life, the flow of the divine life, is the divine life itself. We can say that electrical appliances live an "electrical life," a life of the current of electricity. Similarly, our Christian life is a life of the fellowship of the divine life. The New Testament reveals that the Christian meeting, the Christian married life, and the Christian work are just the divine fellowship. The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life. Those who were saved in Acts 2 were brought into and continued steadfastly in the apostles' fellowship (v. 42). Later in the New Testament, the divine fellowship is called the fellowship of the Father and of His Son (1 John 1:3), the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14), and the fellowship of spirit (Phil. 2:1).

In John's first Epistle, he speaks of the divine fellowship. First John 1:2-3 says, "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and heard we report also to you that you also may

have fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The apostles wanted to have fellowship with the believers; this is horizontal fellowship. Then the apostles stated that their fellowship was with the Triune God; this is vertical fellowship. The vertical fellowship brings us into the horizontal fellowship. The horizontal fellowship then brings us into the vertical fellowship on a larger scale. This larger scale of fellowship is the meetings.

Today we stress the new way, the God-ordained way, to meet and to serve. We must realize that the new way will issue in a different kind of meeting than we presently have. In meetings according to the new way, everyone will be full of the enjoyment of Christ, participating in the vertical and horizontal aspects of the divine fellowship. The meeting itself will be a fellowship. Today, however, our meetings are not like this. They have not come up to the standard of the vision we have seen concerning the proper meetings.

All the functioning in the meetings should be an expression of the divine fellowship. To prophesy is an expression of this fellowship. To testify is also a part of this fellowship. To read a verse from the Bible to the saints in the Lord's table may also be a small part of this fellowship. The entire meeting should be a fellowship. We should be vertically fellowshipping with the Lord and, at the same time, be horizontally fellowshipping with one another.

Eventually, in this divine fellowship God is interwoven with us. This interweaving is the mingling of God with man. All the meetings should be an interwoven fellowship with both the vertical and horizontal aspects. Our married life should also be an interwoven fellowship. The husband and the wife should be interwoven not only with each other but also with the Lord. The real Christian marriage should be the divine fellowship. Our coordination and work together should also be the divine fellowship.

We must realize that when fellowship disappears, God also disappears. God comes as the fellowship. Today our meetings, our married life, the coordination among the co-workers, and the fellowship among the local churches are abnormal because we are short of this fellowship. Today there is not enough fellowship among the local churches, and the churches are not absolutely one in the fellowship.

The divine fellowship is everything in the Christian life. The apostle Paul lived in this fellowship. When we live in the divine fellowship, our Christian life becomes very living, active, and full of impact. We need to fully enter into the experience of the divine fellowship in its two aspects by the two spirits.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE CROSS AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TWO SPIRITS

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; Lev. 14:6-10, 14-18; Gal. 2:20a; Acts 16:6-10; 1 Cor. 1:18, 24-25; 2:2

Hymns: #279, #631

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TWO SPIRITS

In this chapter we want to see how the cross is related to the divine fellowship, the fellowship of the two spirits. The divine fellowship is a particular capacity of the divine life. This fellowship has two aspects—the vertical aspect by the Holy Spirit between us and the Triune God and the horizontal aspect by the human spirit among us believers.

Second Corinthians 13:14 is a verse that shows the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship by the Spirit. This verse speaks of the grace of Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The Triune God is referred to in this verse—Christ, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, three things are covered—grace, love, and fellowship. Just as the Spirit is the consummation of the Divine Trinity, fellowship is the consummation of love and grace. Love is the source, grace is the course, and fellowship is the application. The application is the consummation of the flow of the Divine Trinity.

In the Divine Trinity the Father is the source, the Son is the course, and the Spirit is the application of what the Triune God is to us. This application is the consummation. If we have the Spirit, we have the Son and the Father because the Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God. With this Spirit there is the particular capacity of the divine fellowship. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the vertical aspect of the divine fellowship.

Philippians 2:1 speaks of the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship, the "fellowship of spirit." This refers to the regenerated human spirit of the

believers. The divine Spirit regenerated our human spirit with the divine life (John 3:6b), and now our human spirit is mingled with the divine Spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). The divine Spirit is for vertical fellowship, and the human spirit is for horizontal fellowship. These two aspects of the divine fellowship are inseparable. If we have the vertical aspect with God, it will bring us to the horizontal aspect with our fellow believers. If we are in the horizontal aspect of the divine fellowship, we are also in the vertical aspect. These two aspects of the divine fellowship are woven together.

OUR FELLOWSHIP BEING DEEPENED THROUGH THE CROSS

In our experience, however, there are always frustrations and obstacles between us and God. There are many obstacles to the divine fellowship in its vertical and horizontal aspects. What is needed to deal with these obstacles? In the whole universe there is only one thing that takes away all the obstacles between us and God—the cross. Stanza 6 of *Hymns,* #737 says,

Fellowship is deepened
Thru the cross of death;
Fellowship is lifted
By the Spirit's breath.

This stanza says that our fellowship is deepened through the cross. Without the cross our fellowship is superficial. The cross of death deepens our fellowship, and the Spirit's breath as the resurrection uplifts our fellowship. Fellowship frees us from our sinful self through the cross. Without the cross there is no release, freedom, or liberty from the self. In the previous chapter we pointed out that *Hymns,* #737 speaks of the divine fellowship and its relationship with the Spirit and the cross. Without the Spirit and the cross, we cannot have real fellowship.

FIRST THE BLOOD AND THEN THE OINTMENT

I would like to call our attention to two hymns—*Hymns,* #279 and #631. The word *fellowship* is not mentioned in these hymns, but both of them touch the Spirit and the cross. The first line of *Hymns,* #279 says, "First the blood, and then the ointment." The blood is a strong sign of the cross, and the ointment is a type of the all-inclusive, compound Spirit. These two elements

are mentioned in Leviticus 14:6-10, 14-18. In this portion of the Word, we are told that a leper is to be cleansed first by the blood. The blood is the base. Then upon the base of the blood, the oil—the ointment—is applied. The blood and the ointment are applied to the lobe of the leper's right ear, to the thumb of his right hand, and to the big toe of his right foot. The ear signifies our hearing, the hand signifies our working, and the foot signifies our walking. Our hearing is a big problem. We are troubled because we listen to many negative things. Because this is sinful, our ear, our hearing, needs the blood. In a sense it is good for us to be "deaf" to many things. Our working and walking also need the cleansing of the blood.

Spiritually speaking, leprosy is composed of the wrong hearing, the wrong working, and the wrong walking. Because we are wrong in our hearing, working, and walking, we are lepers. Because we are lepers, we need to first be cleansed by Christ's redeeming blood. Then upon the blood we need the anointing oil. The anointing oil with the blood consummates our cleansing. Consummately, our cleansing is by the divine fellowship of the Spirit based upon the cleansing blood of Christ.

THE ONENESS BEING THE FELLOWSHIP

The divine fellowship is the dispensing of the Triune God into us, the tripartite men, making us and God one. Actually, this oneness is the fellowship. The Greek word for *fellowship, koinonia,* means "joint participation," and this joint participation issues in oneness. When a husband participates in his wife and his wife participates in him, they are one. Actually, fellowship is just oneness. When God is fellowshipping with us and when we are fellowshipping with God, that makes God and us one. In the whole universe there is a big oneness, and this big oneness is the divine fellowship. We, the tripartite men, are one with the Triune God. In John 17 the Lord prayed, "That they may be one, even as We are one" (v. 22b). The Lord's desire is to make us all one like the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one. The church's oneness is a part of the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity. Eventually, the church and the Divine Trinity are one in fellowship.

THE SPIRIT BEING THE FELLOWSHIP

For this fellowship there is the desperate need of the Spirit. Actually, the Spirit Himself is the fellowship. *The grace of Christ* means that Christ is

grace, *the love of God* means that God is love, and *the fellowship of the Spirit* means that the Spirit is the fellowship. We need the fellowship, the Spirit, but there are obstacles between us and God and between us and one another.

EXPERIENCING THE CROSS IN ORDER TO BE THOROUGHLY IN THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

I am concerned that some among us are not thoroughly in this divine fellowship. In the training I may have to speak a frank, faithful word to the trainees, but my frank speaking may bother them. That bothering may become an obstacle within them. If I were to always speak highly of the trainees, there would surely be no obstacle among us, but if I speak frankly to them, that may create an obstacle within them. Because there is an obstacle within you toward another brother, your fellowship with him is not that thorough. We may avoid contact with certain saints because of the obstacles within us to the divine fellowship. Our fellowship is not thorough, and obstacles remain within us because we do not have the cross in our experience.

We may feel that we should exercise our patience and endurance with the saints to bear with them, but this kind of exercise is according to the teaching of Confucius. This is not the Bible's teaching. The Bible tells us to take the cross. Paul says in Galatians 2:20a, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." This is the way of the cross. Because "it is no longer I," I do not have any feeling about someone's criticism of me. This does not mean that I exercise my patience, my endurance, and my long-suffering. This kind of exercise is in the ethical field, the field of the teaching of Confucius.

We need to see what patience is. Brother Watchman Nee helped me to see this. When I worked with him in Shanghai, we had many times of personal fellowship together. One day in 1933 he said to me, "Witness, what is patience?" I replied that patience is something exercised to bear and to endure ill treatment or persecution from others. He said that this is not patience. When he said this, I asked him to tell me what patience is. He would not tell me right away. Eventually, he said, "Patience is Christ." From that day my eyes were opened to see that Christ is our real ethics. The apostle Paul experienced Christ as his endurance and Christ as his patience. In order for us

to have the patience of which Confucius speaks, we do not need Christ. However, for us to have the biblical patience, we need Christ, because He is our patience.

The cross brings Christ to us. I have been crucified with Christ; and I no longer live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This is the cross. Christ lives in me as patience. He lives in me as all the human virtues, which are considered by others as ethics. We need Christ, but without the experience of the cross we cannot experience Christ. *Hymns,* #631 says, "If no death, no life." This means, "If no cross, no Christ." Furthermore, "If no Christ, no Spirit, and if no Spirit, no fellowship." This is why the cross is needed. In Matthew 16:24 the Lord said, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." The Lord used the words *his cross.* There is a particular portion of the cross for each one of us to cross each one of us out.

The young sisters among us need to experience the cross. For a sister to contact a brother in a loose and careless way is behavior without the cross. The top virtue of a female is her feeling or sense of being a female. The way a sister dresses should be appropriate to her position in the Lord as a female. This is why it is not scriptural for the sisters to wear pants. This annuls the difference between male and female and leads to many sinful things. Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "A woman shall not put on a man's clothing, nor shall a man wear a woman's garment; for everyone who does these things is an abomination to Jehovah your God." I appreciate the environment of freedom in which the children of America are raised, but this freedom can lead to looseness. A female should have the proper sense of her position in the Lord as a female.

A number of the young Chinese sisters among us are in the self in another way. Generally speaking, the Chinese educate their daughters to be somewhat quiet and hidden, and this has molded many of the young sisters. As a result, they are not so frank or open in their speaking. Whenever they speak, they speak in a way that is begging for pity from others. They always want the sympathy of others. A person who is begging for sympathy will eventually be offended. A person who does not expect anyone to regard him, to respect him, or to give him sympathy cannot be easily offended. An object like a chair cannot be offended no matter how I treat it, because it is senseless. We are so easily offended by others because we are so sensitive to ourselves.

When the saints stand up to speak, they may desire to see how the leading brothers will respond. If the brothers say Amen, they will be very happy. If the brothers do not respond much, they may be offended. This shows that there may be a kind of begging and expectation within us for others to regard us.

Much of our criticism of others is because we are too sensitive to ourselves and too conscious of ourselves. If we did not have such a strong self, we would not be offended by others. Many times we criticize others because we have been offended. We are offended because we are so sensitive to ourselves. We expect everyone to treat us right according to our opinion. If someone does not treat us right according to our opinion, we are offended. Then, sooner or later, criticism will come out of our mouth.

I would like to mention another point in helping us to be useful in the hand of the Lord. If we expect the Lord to use us more, we have to learn to speak for the Lord in the meeting with a proper tone, a proper sound. Some do not speak in such a proper way because they are so sensitive to themselves. Such ones cannot be used by the Lord in their speaking. They speak in the meetings in a self-pitying way. They love themselves, uplift themselves, and preserve themselves. In their speaking, they display that they are full of self-pity.

The cross is mainly for dealing with ourselves. The Lord said that if we desire to follow Him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. Actually, to bear the cross is to deny the self, to put the self to death, to apply the cross of Christ to the self all the time. If we have a strong self and are offended by everything and by everyone, we cannot have real fellowship. In order for us to have the horizontal fellowship, we need to deny ourselves. To deny ourselves means to be senseless about ourselves. Then we can never be offended. We need the experience of the cross to deepen our experience of the divine fellowship.