TO BE SAVED IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

AS REVEALED IN ROMANS

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PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in the full-time training in Anaheim, California, in May and June 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

TO BE SAVED BY REIGNING IN LIFE AND BY THE DISPOSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION OF THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:17, 15:16, 6:18-20

AN OPENING WORD

The full salvation of God to us is revealed in the book of Romans in two sections. The first section is God's redemption through the death of Christ, and the second is God's saving in the life of Christ. Hence, 5:10 says, "If we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled." The main significance of what is covered in Romans 1 through 4 is the redemption of Christ (including reconciliation) in God's full salvation, and the main significance of what is covered in Romans 5 through 16 is the saving of Christ in God's full salvation. In this book we will see only the main significance of the second section of Romans, that is, how Christ saves us in His divine life.

SAVED BY REIGNING IN LIFE

Many readers of the book of Romans appreciate chapter 5 because it contains many wonderful matters, such as justification, peace, joy, boasting, and glory (vv. 1-5). But few have paid attention to the matter of reigning in life in verse 17. Romans 5:17 says, "If, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." In this verse the abundance of two things is mentioned: the abundance of grace and the abundance of the gift of righteousness. Grace has been given, and out of the abundance of grace, the gift of righteousness has also been given. The righteousness of God has been given to us as a gift. This gift of righteousness is one of the highest gifts that God gives to us. Many of us may have realized that God has given us His Son, His eternal life, and the Holy Spirit as precious gifts. But very few of us may have realized that God has also given us His righteousness as a crucial gift.

Paul's presentation of the righteousness of God in the book of Romans is very strong, clear, and irrefutable. He presents the righteousness of God as the base of our faith and shows that this righteousness of God is based upon God Himself. This righteousness of God is the foundation of God's salvation in the book of Romans.

God's salvation in the book of Romans is a matter mainly in life. But His salvation has a base. In the Gospel of John the base of God's salvation is love (3:16). In the book of Ephesians the base of God's salvation is grace (2:5, 8). In Romans God's love (5:5) and grace (vv. 2, 15, 17, 20-21) are mentioned, but the base of His salvation in Romans is righteousness (1:17). The base of righteousness is God Himself. Without God, there is no righteousness. God Himself is the base of His righteousness, and His righteousness is the base of His salvation. His salvation has the solid foundation of His righteousness, and upon this foundation of righteousness we are saved. Only God's righteousness, not man's righteousness, including the Jew's righteousness, can be counted on.

God's righteousness is the very foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14; 97:2). God's throne is standing on His righteousness. If you were to take away the righteousness of God, everything in the universe would collapse. Concerning His righteousness, God is tested, examined, and judged (Rom. 3:4). In this testing, examination, and judgment, He has already won the victory, and no one is able to defy God in His righteousness.

Due to the problem of man's fall, the redemption of Christ was needed. Therefore, after presenting the fact of man's fall (Rom. 1:21—3:20), Paul presents Christ's redemption (3:21-26). Christ came as our Redeemer in order to accomplish redemption. God can justify us based upon Christ's redemption (v. 24) because all of God's righteous requirements have been fulfilled by Christ's death on the cross. Because of Christ's redemption, He has a strong base according to His righteousness to justify us and to declare that we are approved by Him. His justification is not merely a matter of love; it is a matter of righteousness. The justification that God has given to us is based upon the fulfillment of His righteous requirements by Christ's all-inclusive death. Hence, God's justifying us is a matter of His righteousness, and His righteousness never changes.

God's gift of His righteousness matches His grace. First, God's grace is given; then out of God's grace, there is God's gift. This gift is the righteousness of God. Because we have received the abundance of grace and the abundance of the gift of righteousness, we can reign in life. After we have been justified, we should reign in life.

The crown of our enjoyment of all the items in chapter 5 is reigning in life. We are kings enjoying the kingship, but our kingship is not one of authority or power. Our enjoyment of the kingship is in life. Life should be the crown of our enjoyment of God's salvation. Our enjoyment of God's salvation should come up to the standard that we are kings reigning in life.

By reigning in the divine life of Christ, we are saved from all kinds of insubordination. To be saved in life causes us to reign as kings. According to Romans 5:17, those who receive the abundance of grace and the abundance of the gift of righteousness, those who are justified, will reign in life. A justified person should reign because he has the divine life, a kingly life, with which to reign. Without the kingly life, no one can reign. When we were redeemed by Christ, forgiven of our sins, and washed by the blood of Christ, we were justified. In addition, we were regenerated with a divine, spiritual, heavenly, kingly, and royal life. Thus, we are now able to reign in life as kings.

The gospel that is commonly preached today does not include the matter of reigning in life. We may have heard only that we were sinners and that if we believed in the Lord Jesus, God would forgive us; then we would be redeemed and regenerated in order to have the divine life. This is right, but according to Paul's word in Romans, there is much more. Paul tells us that we were saved with a life that is not only divine but also royal and kingly. It is a life that is able to reign (5:17). We have received a life that not only gives us the ability to be spiritual, heavenly, and divine but also gives us the ability to reign. In this life we reign over all the negative things.

SAVED FROM ALL KINDS OF INSUBORDINATION

When we were saved, we were put into the position of a king in order to reign in life. We may have been saved for a number of years, and yet we may have never experienced reigning over anything. In a family, if the parents are away from home, an older sister who is thirteen years of age may exercise to reign over the younger brothers and sisters who are only five and six years of

age. Sometimes the husbands like to reign over their wives. A brother may say to his wife, "Don't you know that I am the head?" This means that the brother is exercising to reign over his wife. These are examples of reigning in a natural way, but are we experiencing reigning in life? We need a revelation of what it means to reign in life.

Reigning in Life over Sin, the World, Satan, the Natural Man, the Self, and Individualism for the Accomplishing of the Building Up of the Organic Body of Christ in Fulfilling the New Testament Economy of God

Reigning in the divine life of Christ saves us from all kinds of insubordination (v. 17). It saves us from many kinds of negative things. We reign over sin, the world, Satan, the natural man, self, and individualism for the accomplishing of the building up of the organic Body of Christ in fulfilling the New Testament economy of God.

To reign in life is to reign over such things as sin, the world, Satan, the natural man, the self, and individualism. These things are all part of today's rebellion. Everything is in rebellion. Sin is rebellion within us, and the world is rebellion outside of us. Satan is in rebellion, being the top rebel. Our natural man and the self are also very rebellious. Even within the church, the natural man rebels. Individualism is the rebellion of our natural man. Our natural man is altogether rebellious. As long as we live in our natural man, we would not agree with our wife, our husband, our parents, or the other members of our family. In our natural man we would not be one with the brothers and sisters in the church life. Our natural man always rebels. When we behave ourselves in Christ, in the status and position of saints, we are nice and agreeable with everyone in nearly everything. But when we are outside of Christ, especially when we lose our temper, we forget our status and position as saints. In such a condition we are unhappy with everyone, and nothing is agreeable to us. If we are living with other brothers and sisters, we may think that the arrangement of the dining table with its chairs is wrong, that the kitchen is wrong, and that all the saints with whom we are living are also wrong. This kind of experience indicates that our natural life is one of rebellion. In order to reign in life over our temper, we must exercise our spirit

to say, “Satan, stop your activity. You must be under me. I am the one ruling and reigning here.” When we say this, we are actually speaking to ourselves.

We must learn to exercise our kingship. We all have been crowned to be kings in life to reign in life. We must learn not to say any word that expresses anything of rebellion. This means that we are learning to reign. Many times something of sin or of the world rises up within us. When this happens, often the best way to reign over this thing is to say to sin or the world, “Stop! Don’t go any further.” Some may say that this does not work. But according to my experience, this really works. Simply to pray concerning the negative things in order to rule over them is not very effective. When your temper is rising up, you may pray, “Lord, I don’t like to lose my temper. Lord, help me to not lose my temper.” I prayed this kind of prayer in the early days of my Christian life. But I discovered that this kind of prayer does not work very well. Today, when I feel my temper rising, I say, “Stop! Temper, you are not the king. I am the king. Don’t try to overcome or overrun me. I am ruling over you. Don’t go any further.” To speak a word of command to your temper really works. When you give such a command, sin stops not only within you but also within your wife and your children. Sin stops because you rule over it.

Reigning in Life by Receiving the Abundance of Grace through Christ and by Receiving the Abundance of the Gift of Righteousness

We have received the abundance of grace and the abundance of the gift of righteousness in order to reign in life. We have been crowned by God as kings in life. But it is not easy to know this experience. In Acts 3 Peter said to the lame man, “Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I have, this I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene rise up and walk” (v. 6). We should learn of Peter. He did not have silver and gold, but he had the name of Jesus. Peter did not spend silver and gold; he spent the name of the Lord Jesus. In the matter of reigning in life, we should not exercise any kind of authority over our wife or husband. Rather, we should spend the divine life as Peter did. We have the divine life, and we are kings in the divine life to reign in life. When there is a time of turmoil or rebellion in the church life, we should just tell the turmoil or rebellion that we do not agree with it. This is to reign in life.

Reigning in Life by Being Obedient and Submissive

to the Lord, Our Master

To reign in life over so many rebellious things, we must first be obedient and submissive to the Lord. If we are not submissive to the Lord, who is our Master and our God, no one will be submissive to us. If we are going to reign, we must first be under someone. When we are submissive to the Lord, taking the position of one who is submissive to the Lord, immediately we have the deep sensation of grace within us. When we have the serious consideration that we are submissive to the Lord who is our Master, we feel the abundance of grace within us. When we have this sense of abundant grace, this is a sign that we are submissive to the Lord. At such a time, we reign in life. The way for us to receive the abundance of grace is to be submissive.

In Numbers 16 when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rose up against Moses and Aaron, Moses fell on his face (v. 4). In falling upon his face, Moses submitted himself to Jehovah. Because of his submission, Jehovah was able to come in to deal with the situation (vv. 23-24, 31-35). It seemed that Moses was ruling and reigning. Actually, Jehovah was reigning. Jehovah's reigning came out of Moses' submission. Surely Moses enjoyed the abundance of grace, in figure, when he submitted himself to God. The abundance of grace is just the fullness of the enjoyment of Christ. Our submission to our Master will cause the Master to come in to rule over the rebellious ones. To the rebellious ones, it is a kind of ruling, but to the submissive ones, it is the enjoyment of the abundance of grace.

Your rising temper is actually a "rebel." As you submit to the Lord, all the "rebels" are subdued. You should tell the Lord, "Lord, I am submissive to You. I don't agree with my rising temper, which is just a rebel. I am submissive to You." In this way you rule over your temper.

Christ's Redemption Being a Matter of Grace, and God's Justification Being a Matter of Righteousness

Our experience of the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness corresponds to Christ's redemption and God's application of Christ's redemption in justifying us. Christ's redemption is a matter of grace. God's justification is a matter of the gift of righteousness. In Christ's redemption we receive grace. In God's justification we receive the gift of righteousness. The issue of these two things is eternal life (Rom. 5:17, 21). Eventually, eternal life

becomes the means, sphere, and element of our kingship. We are kings in the eternal life. This eternal life comes from the abundance of grace in Christ's redemption and the abundance of the gift of righteousness in God's justification.

Whenever there is a turmoil or rebellion surrounding you, you should not deal with it or confront it directly. Rather, you should stay in the grace of the redeeming Christ and in the gift of righteousness of the justifying God. Thus, you can say, "Lord, my Master and my God, I submit myself to You. Lord, You know the entire situation. The entire turmoil is before Your eyes. I don't like this kind of situation, and I surely do not agree with this situation. Lord, I like to submit myself to You." When you say this to the Lord with a serious consideration, you have the definite and rich feeling that you are full of the abundance of the grace of Christ and the abundance of the gift of righteousness of the justifying God. At such a time, the Master, the very Lord and the very God, goes out to deal with the situation. He is ruling and reigning. His ruling and reigning will be accounted to you as your ruling and reigning. This is the way to reign in life.

BY THE DISPOSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION OF THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

We also are saved in the divine life of Christ by the dispositional sanctification of the indwelling Spirit. Sanctification in the New Testament has two aspects: positional sanctification and dispositional sanctification. Positional sanctification also has two aspects: before and after we were saved. Before we repented and believed, the Holy Spirit came to us to sanctify us, to separate us from sin and the world (1 Pet. 1:2). Our repentance came from the positional sanctification of the Spirit before we repented. Then, after we repented and believed, we were sanctified positionally (Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:2; cf. Matt. 23:17, 19; 1 Tim. 4:3-5) with a view to dispositional sanctification. Then the Spirit continues to sanctify us dispositionally, day after day. This sanctification is to transform our being. Positional sanctification is objective, outside of us, but dispositional sanctification is subjective, within us (Rom. 15:16; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 1:30).

According to Romans 15:16, Paul, as a laboring priest of the gospel of God, offered to God the nations who had been sanctified in the Holy Spirit. Paul offered to God only that which had been sanctified, wholly separated, unto

God. He would not offer anything common to God. His offering had to be something that was separated wholly unto God, something that was not only holy in position but also holy in disposition. The offering of the nations is in three steps. First, those who preach the gospel offer the newly saved ones to God as spiritual sacrifices (v. 16; 1 Pet. 2:5). After the new believers grow and begin to understand what it is to be a believer in Christ, they are encouraged to offer themselves to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). This is the second step of offering. Then, as the believers continue to grow unto maturity, those who labor on the believers present them full-grown in Christ (Col. 1:28).

Dispositional sanctification is to prepare us to be an adequate offering, or sacrifice, to God. This sanctification is to save us from our disposition, which has been soaked with the element of the world. We love the world because our disposition has been soaked with the element of the world. There is not one person on this earth who does not love the world. Everyone loves the world. All the modern things of this world can easily be sold because the things of the world fit in with the inner disposition of human beings, which has been soaked with the element of the world.

Thus, after we are saved, we need to be sanctified. Sanctification implies separation from the world. It also indicates that something is to be made holy, not common. God is holy. He has nothing to do with the world; He is altogether separate from the world. But we are very common, very worldly. Therefore, we need to be sanctified. We need to be sanctified not only in our behavior and living outwardly but also in our disposition inwardly. We need outward, positional sanctification because our outward living is altogether worldly. We also need dispositional sanctification because our disposition has been soaked with the element of the world. Even young boys and girls know how to choose the worldly things. This is because worldliness has already saturated their disposition since the time they were born.

Sin is in our nature, and the element of the world is in our disposition. For this reason all men love the world and want to be modern according to the current fashion of the world. This is because the world has saturated our disposition since the time we were born. Thus, we all need to be dispositionally sanctified. Our nature is contaminated by sin, and our disposition is contaminated by the world. The only thing that can save us from the contamination of the world is the dispositional sanctification by the indwelling Spirit.

Through Our Cooperation by Presenting Ourselves as Slaves to Righteousness

This dispositional sanctification by the indwelling Spirit takes place through our cooperation by presenting ourselves as slaves to righteousness (Rom. 6:18). In order to be sanctified, we must be righteous. God can never sanctify anyone who is unrighteous. God sanctifies only the redeemed and justified ones; therefore, first, we must be redeemed and justified in order to be righteous. Then we are able to be sanctified. Sanctification is based upon righteousness. Thus, if we want to be sanctified dispositionally, we must present ourselves as slaves to righteousness.

Through Our Cooperation by Presenting our Members as Slaves to Righteousness

We are dispositionally sanctified through our cooperation by presenting our members as slaves to righteousness (v. 19b). In order to participate in gambling, we must first give our members, our hands, to play the game. But if we have presented our hands as slaves to righteousness, we cannot gamble, because it is not righteous. We need to present each one of our members, not just ourselves as a whole, as slaves to righteousness.

When we present our members as slaves to righteousness, we are able to overcome many things. Many of the saints cannot overcome the practice of "window-shopping" at the department stores. Often, not having any extra money in the bank saves some from shopping. Although they have very little money in the bank, they still would go window-shopping. Apparently, window-shopping is not unrighteous. But because many items within the department stores are sinful and worldly, window-shopping is actually not righteous. As we walk through the department stores, many items attract us and cause us to present our eyes to these unrighteous things. In order to be sanctified, we need to pray, "Lord, I present my eyes as slaves to righteousness." Then as we present our eyes as slaves to righteousness, the indwelling Spirit prevails to sanctify our eyes. In Romans 6 Paul is very detailed. He not only tells us to present ourselves as a whole but also tells us to present every member of our body to righteousness. We need to present our whole being, our entire body, and each member of our body, not only to God as the divine person but also to righteousness. As we present our

members to righteousness, we are righteous. As a result, God can come in to sanctify us in our disposition. If we present ourselves and our members as slaves to righteousness, the issue is dispositional sanctification (v. 22).

We must present ourselves and our members as slaves to righteousness. This righteousness is Christ Himself. To present ourselves and our members to righteousness means to present ourselves and our members to Christ as righteousness. In the book of Romans grace (5:17, 21), righteousness (vv. 17, 21; 6:16, 18-20), and sanctification are all Christ. To present ourselves to righteousness is to present ourselves to the all-inclusive Christ. He is our righteousness, and He is the foundation, the base, for our being sanctified. Without Christ as a base in life, we cannot be sanctified in our disposition.

CHAPTER TWO

TO BE SAVED BY THE FREEING OF THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE AND BY THE DISPENSING OF THE TRIUNE GOD INTO OUR TRIPARTITE BEING

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 5-13

SAVED BY THE FREEING OF THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Four Laws in Romans 7 and 8

Romans 7 and 8 reveal four laws: the law of sin and of death in our members (8:2), the law of good in our mind (7:23), the law of God outside of us (v. 22), and the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit (8:2). The law of God is not personified. It is simply the objective law outside of us. But the law of sin and of death, which is satanic, the law of good, which is human, and the law of the Spirit of life, which is divine, are all personified. These three laws are three persons: the law of sin and of death is Satan, the law of good is man, and the law of the Spirit of life is God.

The Law of the Spirit of Life

The law of the Spirit of life, as we have already seen, is the Triune God Himself. The Spirit in Romans 8 is the processed and consummated Spirit. At the beginning of the New Testament, the Spirit had not yet been processed and consummated. In Genesis 1 the Spirit had only the element of divinity, but in Romans 8 the Spirit has many ingredients. In this consummated Spirit there is God, man, human living, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the ascension of Christ.

All these elements have been compounded together into one entity—the compound Spirit (cf. Exo. 30:23-25). This compound Spirit has become a law (Rom. 8:2). This law, like a natural law, has a spontaneous power that moves,

works, and operates by itself. Gravity is such a natural law. Things drop to the earth spontaneously because the law of gravity operates upon all the objects on the earth.

The processed Triune God, who is now the consummated Spirit, the compound Spirit, the all-inclusive Spirit, has entered into us as a law. Our physical body also has many natural laws. One such law is the process of digestion. In the morning at breakfast I eat many things, but at noon I become hungry again. This is because the things I ate in the morning have all been digested, assimilated, and absorbed into my body. This process of digestion operates as a law within our body. Today in the twentieth century we know much about this and other natural laws. But it may surprise us that Paul also had some knowledge of these natural laws in the first century. Based upon his understanding of the natural laws, he spoke in Romans 7 and 8 about three laws, all of which are operating within us.

Each of these three laws operates within us when we fulfill the requirements. We must fulfill the requirements of each law for it to work within us. The natural law of digestion works in the same way. If we do not eat, the law of digestion cannot work, because the requirement for its operation has not been fulfilled. But if we fill our stomach by eating, the law of digestion will work.

The law of the Spirit of life works to save and free us from the law of sin and of death. The law of sin and of death is a bondage, a slavery. We need to be freed from its slavery, its bondage. Only another law that is more powerful than the law of sin and of death can free us from its slavery. Thus, only the law of the Spirit of life, which is more powerful than the law of sin and of death, can free us. The law that governs the flight of an airplane and the law of gravity are illustrations of this. The law that governs the flight of an airplane is more powerful than the law of gravity; therefore, an airplane can take off from the earth, overcoming gravity.

The Law of the Spirit of Life Working through Our Cooperation by Minding the Things of the Spirit

We are saved in the divine life of Christ by the law of the consummated Spirit of life freeing us from the law of sin and of death, which is the slavery and the bondage of sin and of death. This law works through our cooperation by minding the things of the Spirit (8:5b). When we mind the things of the Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life works.

The Law of the Spirit of Life Working through Our Cooperation by Walking according to the Mingled Spirit

This law of the Spirit of life also works through our cooperation by walking according to the mingled spirit (v. 4). When we mind the things of the Spirit and walk according to the mingled spirit, this gives the law of the Spirit of life the opportunity to work within us. For this reason we do not need to try to overcome our temper or other besetting sins. We just need to mind the things of the Spirit and walk according to the mingled spirit. Then spontaneously, a law works within us to free us from the law of sin and of death. Today there are many people who have addictions. Addiction is a negative law. The only way to be freed from this negative law is to allow the law of the Spirit of life to operate.

SAVED BY THE DISPENSING OF THE TRIUNE GOD INTO OUR TRIPARTITE BEING

Another crucial point of God's saving in the life of Christ is the dispensing of the processed Triune God into our tripartite being. This is clearly unveiled in Romans 8:5-13. This divine dispensing saturates us in our tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—making every part alive, and saves us from death in all the three parts.

First, the Triune God dispenses Himself into our spirit by the Spirit's regenerating of our spirit (John 3:6b) with Christ as life (Col. 3:4a) to make our spirit life (Rom. 8:10). Then from our spirit the dispensing God spreads His dispensing into our mind, the leading part of our soul, to make our soul life (v. 6b). By such a dispensing, our natural soul is transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Third, through our soul the triune dispensing of the processed Triune God penetrates further, even into our mortal body, by the indwelling Spirit, to impart the divine life into it and save it from being

deadened (Rom. 8:11). Such a triune dispensing will go on progressively within our entire being until our body of humiliation is transfigured into a body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21). This is the redemption of our body, the full participation in our divine sonship, the full taste of the entire God for our enjoyment (Rom. 8:23). This is also the consummation of the mingling of the processed Triune God with us, the God-regenerated, -sanctified, -transformed, -conformed, and -glorified people, which is the ultimate saving of God in the divine life of Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God. This will be portrayed and manifested in full in the coming New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2—22:5).

CHAPTER THREE

TO BE SAVED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND, ISSUING IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR SOUL, AND BY BEING BUILT UP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:2a; 8:5b-6; 12:1, 3-5

SAVED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND, ISSUING IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR SOUL

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind." Transformation is not simply a change. Rather, transformation is a metabolic process. In this metabolic process a new element is supplied, and an old element is discharged. In metabolism a new element comes in to supply, replace, and discharge the old element.

Transformation is the completion and issue of renewing. First, we are renewed, and then we are transformed. Renewing issues in and brings in transformation. Renewing is in our mind, and transformation is in our entire soul. When our mind, the main part, the leading part, of our soul is renewed, our entire soul is transformed. The transformation of the soul comes out of the renewing of the mind. This kind of renewing and transformation saves us from our living, a living that is conformed to the present age (the modern style) of the world (v. 2a). The present age is just the modern style. This can be shown by the different architectural styles over the past centuries. In Europe you can tell the age of a building by its style of architecture. At the time the building was built, its architecture was the modern style. The hair styles and styles in dress of people today are also according to the present age, the modern style, of the world.

We have seen in one of the preceding chapters that our disposition has been soaked with the element of the world and that we love to have the present age, the modern style, the present fashion, of this world. Subjective sanctification saves us from the world-soaked disposition, and the renewing with transformation saves us from the appearance, the living, that is fashioned

according to the present age, the modern style, of the world. Such a saving delivers us, by the indwelling Spirit, out of the world, not only inwardly but also outwardly. Inwardly, we are saved from our disposition, and outwardly, we are saved from a living that is conformed to the present age of the world.

Through Our Cooperation by Setting Our Mind on the Spirit

Our being saved from the living that is conformed to the present age is through our cooperation by setting our mind on the spirit (v. 6). We need to turn our mind away from the worldly appearance. In order to be saved from the modern style of the world, we must set our mind on the spirit.

Through Our Cooperation by Receiving the Dispensing of the Divine Element into Our Inner Being

We must realize and believe that God's divine element is always being dispensed into us. If we do not reject this dispensing, we will immediately receive the dispensing of this divine element into our being. It is the inner dispensing of the divine element that transforms our inner being. First, we must set our mind on the spirit, minding the things of the Spirit. Then we must be careful to not reject or block the inner dispensing of the divine element within us. This dispensing takes place day after day in a slow way. Digestion in our physical body is an illustration of this dispensing. Through digestion whatever we taste by eating is dispensed into our blood, cells, and fibers. Through the dispensing of the food into us, nourishment and sustaining strength are absorbed into our cells and fibers. Every day we live by this dispensing. The dispensing in the physical life is a figure of the dispensing in the spiritual life. In the spiritual life the dispensing is a matter of the divine element spreading within us. Through years of study and experience we found the fact of dispensing in the New Testament.

The dispensing of the divine element within us is spontaneous. This dispensing is also a law. The digestion of our physical food dispenses the food into our blood. This is a law. It goes on all the time. Physically speaking, we live on the dispensing of food through digestion. Spiritually speaking, we live on the inner dispensing of the abiding divine element in our being. This abiding divine element is God Himself. He is our food (John 6:35). As our

food, He gets into us, and there is the dispensing of this food into our spiritual being. Without this spiritual dispensing, we could not live spiritually.

Being renewed in our mind and being transformed in our soul issue in all the virtues and victories in chapters 12 through 16 of Romans: being built up in the Body of Christ, living an excellent life of the highest standard of ethics (ch. 12), subjecting ourselves to authorities, practicing love, putting off the works of darkness by putting on Christ as the weapons of light (ch. 13), living a proper church life in its locality (ch. 14), and crushing Satan under our feet so that we may enjoy the God of peace by participating in the grace of Christ (16:20).

Being renewed in our mind and being transformed in our soul issue also in our being conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God (8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18). This is the prerequisite for our being glorified as a last step of God's full salvation in His divine life (Rom. 8:30).

DISPOSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION BY THE INDWELLING SPIRIT, THE FREEING OF THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE, AND THE RENEWING OF THE MIND, WHICH ISSUES IN TRANSFORMATION, BEING RELATED TO ONE ANOTHER

Dispositional sanctification by the indwelling Spirit, the freeing of the law of the Spirit of life, and the renewing of the mind, which issues in the transformation of the soul, are all very crucial and are connected to one another. First, the inner element, the nature of God, which is holiness, works within us. This working within us is dispositional sanctification. Through dispositional sanctification we are renewed in our mind and transformed in our soul. Then there is the freeing of the law of the Spirit of life. We must study these items diligently and seek to experience all of them.

SAVED BY BEING BUILT UP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

In order to be built up in the Body of Christ, we must experience reigning in life, dispositional sanctification, the freeing of the law of the Spirit of life, and the renewing of our mind, which issues in the transformation of the soul.

Without these experiences we cannot be built up in the Body of Christ. We do not have the capacity within our natural life to be one with others. Marriage life illustrates that we do not have much capacity in our natural life to be one. In God's ordination man and woman should be married. Marriage is to make two people, husband and wife, one flesh (Gen. 2:24). The only couple in the universe that is able to be genuinely one is Christ and the transformed and glorified church. This couple will be in eternity. We must learn to reign in life, to be sanctified in our disposition, to be freed from the bondage of sin by the law of the Spirit of life, and to be renewed in our mind and transformed in our soul. When we have such experiences, we have the capacity to be built up with others.

The building up of the Body of Christ is a great matter. It is not simple or superficial. On the whole earth today, very few Christians have been built up. There are separations upon separations, divisions upon divisions, denominations upon denominations, groups upon groups. The building up of the Body of Christ is a very deep matter in Romans. The matter of reigning in life is mentioned in chapter 5, the freeing of the law of the Spirit of life in chapter 8, and the renewing of the mind, which issues in transformation, in chapter 12. Ultimately, the building up of the Body of Christ also is mentioned in chapter 12, after all the preceding experiences, and it continues through chapter 16.

Paul presents the building up of the Body in Romans 12, but he does not use the word *build* in this chapter. Instead, he says that we are "individually members one of another" (v. 5). This describes the building up of the Body. To build is to be members one of another. To be members one of another is difficult to experience. In a group of three coordinating in the gospel, it may be pleasant and joyful or very unpleasant, depending on the different temperaments of those in the group. On some occasions the team members may exercise to be polite to one another, not wanting to offend one another. But at other times the team members may simply express their feeling, disregarding the feeling of the other team members. Hence, it is not easy to be members one of another.

In September 1939 Brother Nee held a conference in Shanghai after he had returned from his visit to England. The messages of the conference were concerning the Body of Christ. They were deep and high. In one of these messages Brother Nee used Deuteronomy 32:30a to show the principle of the

Body: “How shall one chase a thousand, / And two put ten thousand to flight?” Brother Nee said that if one works by himself, he is able to gain one thousand. If two work individually, they can gain two thousand. But if two work together, they can gain ten thousand, five times as many as the two who work individually. Brother Nee said that this is the principle of the Body. This was the first time that I heard this matter. Brother Nee spoke message after message, week after week, concerning the Body, from 1939 until the middle of 1942. But after this period of time a big turmoil broke out. That turmoil was so severe that Brother Nee gave up his ministry for a period of time.

In February 1986 I spoke on the subject of one accord during a training of the elders and co-workers. Through those messages I sounded the trumpet concerning the matter of one accord. Due to the messages given in that training, a letter was spontaneously drafted and sent to me with the signatures of over four hundred leading brothers throughout the world (see *Elders' Training, Book 8:The Life-pulse of the Lord's Present Move*, ch. 10) who attended that training, assuring me that they would be in one accord with the ministry. But within a short time—about nineteen months—a strong opposition against my ministry began by a few brothers. One of them said publicly that he regretted signing the letter of February 1986. This is another example of how difficult it is to be built together with others.

I have been practicing the church life since July 1932. During these fifty-eight years I can testify that I have seen much discord. Recently, in a meeting with the elders of the churches in California, I spoke about the genuine oneness and the one accord. The genuine oneness that the Lord prayed for in John 17 was actually practiced in Acts 1 and 2. In John the genuine oneness was taught, but in Acts the one accord was practiced. The one accord is just the practice of the oneness. Without the practice of the oneness, which is the one accord, the oneness might simply be a kind of thought or theory. But with the practice of one accord, the genuine oneness is realized in practicality.

In Acts the most prevailing thing among the disciples was neither their prayer nor the outpouring of the Spirit. The most prevailing thing was the one accord (1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25). In Acts 1 the Lord’s disciples saw the vision of the Lord’s ascension (vv. 9-11). That vision of the Lord’s ascension caused them to be outside of themselves and to be in one accord (vv. 14-15). Because of the one accord, they turned the entire world upside down (17:6,

KJV). Their one accord was truly unique. Even to the present day, that one accord has never been repeated. We in the Lord's recovery are somewhat weak and poor because of the lack of one accord. To be in one accord is to be built up. The one hundred twenty were built up. Their being in one accord was a building up. Therefore, the heavens opened, and the world was turned upside down.

In the beginning of Acts the practice of one accord by the disciples brought in the Holy Spirit's outpouring and the blessing of three thousand people being saved on the day of Pentecost (2:41). The church was established and built up through the one accord. In order to have the one accord today, we must pass through these aspects of being saved in the life of Christ presented in Romans 5 through 12.

Saving Us from the Individualism of Our Natural Life

Being built up together in the Body of Christ saves us from the individualism of our natural life. Individualism is the philosophy, thought, doctrine, and principle of not being one with others. When not going along with others and not being one with others becomes a principle or philosophy, that is individualism. Some brothers or sisters may respect the elders and may realize that the church needs a group of brothers to take care of the administration of the church. But often these same brothers or sisters may not agree with the elders or may refuse to be one with them. Such individualism is difficult to deal with. Actually, each one of us has this problem of individualism. In order to be built into the Body of Christ, we must overthrow individualism. Conversely, if we are built up in the Body of Christ, we will be delivered from the individualism of our natural life.

Through Our Cooperation by Presenting Our Bodies as a Living Sacrifice

We are built up in the Body of Christ, saved from the individualism of our natural life (12:5), through our cooperation by presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice (v. 1). In the past five years I discovered that the primary frustration to the Lord in carrying out His new way is not our agreement or disagreement with the new way. The main frustration and difficulty in carrying out the new way is twofold: first, we do not present our body, and second, we do not like to cooperate with others. If we present our bodies and

go along with others, we will be in the new way. It is not enough to agree with the new way. We must also present our bodies as a sacrifice to the Lord and present our bodies to go along with others. This is the building up of the Body of Christ, and this is the new way.

In one locality, I know a number of the saints very well. Many of these saints agree with the new way, but there is still very little actual practice of the new way among them. The reason for this is that the saints are short in the presenting of their bodies to the Lord as a sacrifice for the new way, and they are also short in going along with others. If the saints would present themselves and go along with one another, immediately there would be the practice of the new way. To visit people with the gospel is not a small thing. To visit people requires that we present our bodies to the Lord as a sacrifice and that we go along with others. When we go to visit others, the three or four of us who go together should be as one man. In this way our visiting people with the gospel becomes very effective.

Through Our Cooperation by Not Thinking More Highly of Ourselves Than What We Are

We are built up in the Body of Christ through our cooperation by not thinking more highly of ourselves than what we are (vv. 3-4). We think more highly of ourselves than what we are. For this reason we see very little of the building up of the Body of Christ and very little actual practice of the new way.

CHAPTER FOUR

TO BE SAVED BY THE LIVING OF THE CHURCH LIFE IN A LOCALITY AND BY THE CRUSHING OF SATAN UNDER OUR FEET

Scripture Reading: Rom. 16:1-25; 14:1-3, 10, 12, 15, 17; 15:5, 7; Eph. 4:3; 6:12

The book of Romans, a book on the full gospel of God, consummates in its last three chapters, chapters 14 through 16, in a particular revelation of the practice of the local churches, after the unveiling of God's full and complete salvation in chapters 1 through 13. This full and complete salvation is composed of two aspects: the objective aspect of redemption, including forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation; and the subjective saving, including reigning in life, dispositional sanctification by the indwelling Spirit, the freeing of the law of the Spirit of life, the dispensing of the Triune God into our tripartite being, the renewing of our mind issuing in the transformation of our soul, and being built up in the Body of Christ (these being the six items that we have covered in the preceding chapters), and the two succeeding items, conformation to the image of the Son of God and the redemption of our body (which we will cover in the last chapter). Having participated in the first six items of God's saving in the life of Christ, we will be well enabled to live a proper church life in a definite locality as a local expression of the Body of Christ to be a local testimony of Christ according to God's New Testament economy.

SAVED BY THE LIVING OF THE CHURCH LIFE IN A LOCALITY

The book of Romans not only has a rich content regarding God's complete salvation conveyed in His full gospel; it also has a definite goal, which is the practice of the church life. The experience of the first six aspects of being saved in the life of Christ, which we have seen in the first thirteen chapters of Romans, makes it possible to enter into the experience of the living of a proper church life in many localities. This is according to God's desire as the

good pleasure of His heart, which He arranged in eternity in His eternal economy (Eph. 3:9-11).

Saving Us from Our Self-view, Self-goal, and Divisions

The living of the church life in a locality saves us from our self-view, self-goal, and divisions (Rom. 16:1-25). Each of us has his own view and goal. In the church life there should be only one view and one goal. Without a unique view and a unique goal it is impossible to have the genuine church life. We will be divided because of our different views and goals. A number of saints may begin to meet in a certain locality. But if all the brothers and sisters have different goals and views, division will result. The living of the proper church life in a locality will save us from our different views and goals. Eventually, by being saved from our own views and goals, we are saved from division.

Living Locally and Fellowshipping Both Locally and Universally

In the living of the church life in a locality, our living is local, but our fellowship should be both local and universal (vv. 1, 16b, 22-23). We should fellowship not only with the brothers and sisters in our own locality but also with the brothers and sisters in all the other localities. In this way our fellowship is universal. If I live in Yorba Linda, I should fellowship with all the churches in Southern California. The church life is both local and universal, but it is universal to a greater extent than it is local. In the churches we must exercise to have fellowship with Taipei, London, New York, Zurich, and all the churches around the globe.

Receiving All the Believers in Christ

According to God's Receiving

In the living of the church life in a locality, we must receive all the believers according to God's receiving (14:1-3). We must be able to receive the genuine believers of all kinds: Pentecostal, fundamental, Seventh-day Adventists, and all others. To have the church life we must be all-inclusive, receiving all the believers in Christ. This kind of receiving is according to God's receiving. We must receive the genuine believers because God has received them. In order

to have the Body life of Romans 12, we must practice the principles unveiled in Romans 14 and 15 concerning the receiving of the believers. We must be able to receive those who keep certain days and those who do not keep any days (14:5), those who eat only vegetables and those who eat meat (v. 2).

In the Light of the Judgment Seat

We must receive the believers in the light of the judgment seat of Christ (vv. 10, 12). In receiving the believers, we surely need to exercise a certain amount of discernment. However, we should not overjudge others in our unbalanced concept and in our personal preference. When we are about to judge another Christian, we must realize that we ourselves have many shortcomings and weak points that need to be judged. Therefore, we should not judge others today according to our view. All the believers, including us, will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. We should receive every believer in the light of this judgment.

In the Principle of Love

The church life is altogether a life of love. The Lord has charged us with this more than strongly in John 13:34-35 and 15:12 and 17; the apostles also repeated the Lord's charge to us (1 Thes. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 2:10; 3:14; 4:7). In receiving the believers, we must do it in the principle of love (Rom. 14:15a). Whatever we would do and say to other believers must be based on and controlled by the divine love that we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy all the time. We must not forget that all the believers are a treasure to the Lord in His affection because He has obtained them with His own blood in His love (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25b). We need to walk in love toward them. We should not destroy by anything the believers for whom Christ died (Rom. 14:15b).

According to the Kingdom Life

This kind of receiving of the believers for the proper church life is according to the kingdom life. Romans 14:17 says, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The church life, which is God's kingdom life today, is a matter of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. God's kingdom life is not a matter of diet, nor of the keeping of days, nor of any kind of formality and custom, but a

matter of the reality of the divine life in the Spirit of God, such as righteousness in strictness toward ourselves, peace in the all-embracing love toward others, and joy in the exulting praise toward God. Our receiving of the believers must be in such a sphere with such an atmosphere.

According to Christ

Our receiving of the believers should also be according to Christ (15:5), who did not please Himself (v. 3). We should take Christ as our pattern, our center, and our everything in the practice of the church life. Whether or not we receive someone depends on whether or not Christ has received him. If Christ has received someone, we must receive him, as Christ also received us to the glory of God (v. 7).

Turning Away from Those Who Make Divisions and Causes of Stumbling

The living of the church life in a locality also involves turning away from those who make divisions and causes of stumbling (16:17-18). The present rebellion among us involves mainly two things: divisions and causes of stumbling. Those involved in the present rebellion are attempting to proselytize the saints, to make them leave the recovery. If they are unsuccessful at this, they try to cause the saints to be disappointed. This disappointment causes the saints to stumble. In Romans 14 and 15 Paul encourages us to be all-embracing concerning the believers. But in Romans 16 Paul tells us to turn away from those who make divisions and causes of stumbling (v. 17). We should be all-inclusive toward the believers, but we still need to have some discernment for the keeping of the oneness of the Body of Christ. We must discern what we should receive and what we should turn away from. Chapters 14, 15, and 16 of Romans are all on the proper church life. To have the proper church life we must practice according to these three chapters. First, we must receive all the believers; second, we must be all-embracing toward the believers; and third, we must exercise discernment concerning the divisive ones and those who make causes of stumbling. To turn away from the divisive ones and those who make causes of stumbling is to quarantine these divisive ones. When a person in a family is sick with a contagious disease, the members of the family turn away from the infected person so that they will not be contaminated with the same disease. If they do not turn away from the infected member, they may become infected

themselves and spread the contagious germs to other members of their family. This does not mean that the members of the family do not love the infected member or have given him up; it simply means that the other members want to prevent the spread of the contagious germs.

By Standing on the Unique Ground of Oneness Locally

The living of the church life in a locality must be by standing on the unique ground of oneness locally. Locally, we must stand firm on the unique ground of oneness. The standing of the church should be the ground of genuine oneness. This oneness is on the ground of locality where we live. Hence, there can be only one church in one locality (Rev. 1:11). This is our definite and firm standing, and we must hold to this firm standing.

By Keeping the Unique Oneness of the Body of Christ Universally

The living of the church life in a locality also includes the keeping of the unique oneness of the Body of Christ universally (Eph. 4:3). We are not only standing on the unique ground of oneness locally but also keeping the fellowship with all the churches around the globe. If we do not fellowship with all the churches universally, we are sectarian. Some of the saints may feel that they cannot have the church life with other saints in a certain locality. They may realize that to form another group in that locality would be a division. Therefore, they may go to another city in order to separate themselves from the other believers. Actually, to go to another place in this way is still something of division, making themselves a local sect instead of a local church. The reason such a meeting in another locality would be divisive is because the fellowship is not universal with all the churches on the globe. The Body of Christ is one, universally expressed in every locality around the globe. Locally, we need to stand on the local ground; universally, we need to maintain the universal fellowship in order to keep the unique oneness of the Body of Christ.

SAVED BY THE CRUSHING OF SATAN UNDER OUR FEET

Satan Being Crushed under Our Feet so That the Kingdom of God May Be Brought In

We are saved in the life of Christ from the aerial power of darkness by destroying Satan (Rom. 16:20; Eph. 6:12). We need to be saved from the power in the air; this power is Satan. Romans 16:20 says, "Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." Today Satan should not be in the air above us; he should be under our feet (Eph. 1:22). When we are in the proper church life, Satan is under our feet. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." If we would overcome the power of Satan, we must be built up; that is, we must have the church life. The built-up church can overcome the power of Satan. In the proper church life Satan is crushed under our feet so that the kingdom of God may be brought in. The church life in a locality is the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17), even the kingdom life. This kingdom is in contrast with the power in the air, the power of Satan.

By the God of Peace Being Our Portion

In the church life Satan is crushed under our feet by the God of peace being our portion (16:20). When we enjoy our God as the God of peace, He has the opportunity to destroy His enemy, Satan, and He crushes him under our feet so that we may partake more of His fullness in abundance.

With the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Being Our Enjoyment

When the enemy Satan is crushed under our feet in the church life, we enjoy Christ as our grace, our life supply. Peace is God Himself for us to remain in, and grace is Christ Himself for us to enjoy. When we live a proper church life and Satan is crushed under our feet, we remain in God as peace and enjoy Christ as grace. What a wonderful life this is! This is the blessed conclusion of the book of Romans, issuing from God's full salvation, consisting of His redemption through Christ's death and His saving in Christ's life.

CHAPTER FIVE

TO BE SAVED BY OUR BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD AND BY OUR BEING GLORIFIED

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:28-30, 11; Phil. 3:21

In this chapter we will cover the last two items of God's saving in the life of Christ: our conformation to the image of the Son of God and our glorification. These two items are unveiled in Romans 8:28-30—in the middle, not at the end, of Romans. However, these two will be the final, consummating items of God's full salvation. Hence, these two items are presented to you in the last chapter of this book.

BY OUR BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD

The full salvation of God as revealed in the whole book of Romans has a particular purpose, that is, to make us sinners His sons so that we may be His corporate expression. He is the mysterious God and He is invisible, but He has a desire, as His good pleasure, to have Himself expressed through man. First, He was expressed in His incarnated Son, Jesus Christ. Then He desires to enlarge this individual expression into a corporate one by making us, His chosen and called people, His many sons so that His only begotten Son could be His firstborn Son among many brothers to express Him in a corporate way. Hence, we, the many brothers of Christ, need to be conformed to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God.

The Image of Christ as the Firstborn Son of God

Christ was the only begotten Son of God from eternity past until the time that He was resurrected in His incarnated and crucified body. In His resurrection with His humanity He was born (Acts 13:33) to be the firstborn Son of God (Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29). As the only begotten Son of God, He is God, the second of the Divine Trinity, having divinity only; as the firstborn Son of God, He is the God-man, the embodiment of the Triune God, possessing both

divinity and humanity, bearing the image of the God-man, of God mingled with man, to manifest God through man, to express all of God's attributes in man's virtues.

Conformed to the Image of Christ as the Firstborn Son of God

For us to be conformed to the image of the Son of God is to be conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God (v. 29), the One who possesses both the divine nature and the human nature and who bears the image of God mingled with man, with God's attributes expressed in man's virtues. When we are conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God, we bear the image of divinity mingled with humanity, the image of His all-inclusive death, and the image of His resurrection and ascension. When we experience this aspect of being saved in the life of Christ, we become persons full of the proper human life with the expression of the divine life in resurrection and ascension.

The New Testament charges us strongly to express the firstborn Son of God with His divinity and humanity. We must have our human virtues filled up with the divine attributes. Then what we express will be human yet divine, divine yet human.

Saved from Our Natural Life

This kind of conformation saves us from the expression of our natural life. When we experience being conformed to the image of Christ as the God-man, we will be persons who are in the death of Christ, under the death of the cross, being conformed to the image of Christ, not to the fashion or image of the world or of our natural life. In order to have such an expression, we must have the application of the cross. The cross terminates our natural man. For Christ as the firstborn Son of God to live a human life, full of the expression of the divine attributes, He needed the death of the cross and resurrection. The expression of Christ as the firstborn Son of God requires the death of the natural life and the power of resurrection in the divine life. When our natural life is crossed out, divinity in the power of resurrection will be expressed. This expression is the image of the firstborn Son of God, and this is the image to which we must be conformed through death and resurrection. This was Paul's aspiration in Philippians 3:10 when he said that he wanted "to know Him and

the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

By the Inward Transformation with the Element of the Divine Life

In order to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, we need the inward transformation by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2a) with the element of the divine life. The divine life is the element with which we are transformed. Transformation is the addition of some new elements and the discharge of the old elements. It is a metabolic process. The main thing in this process is the element of the divine life. Therefore, we must learn to go along with the element of the divine life, the inward metabolism, the inward transformation, in order to be conformed by God to the expression of His firstborn Son, Christ.

By God Causing All Things to Work Together for Our Good

Romans 8:28, which says that "all things work together for good to those...who are called according to His purpose," unveils that it is by God causing all things to work together for our good that we are conformed to the image of the Son of God (v. 29) and are thus saved from the expression of our natural life. By His sovereignty God causes our environment to fulfill the purpose of His calling, that is, to conform us to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God. Our environment and our circumstances work together with the divine life within us for our conformation to the image of Christ. Whether we think our marriage is right or wrong, the wife or husband we have today is the right one for us. A brother may think that if God had given him a better wife, he would be a better person. In this way he may blame God for his being in a poor condition because of the "poor" wife that the Lord has given him. Yet we must realize that all things, including our spouse and children, are the environment that God uses to conform us to the image of the firstborn Son of God.

BY OUR BEING CONFORMED

Concerning God's full salvation, Romans 8:29 unveils that God predestinated His chosen people to be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son. The next verse, verse 30, also unveils that God calls, justifies,

and will glorify His predestinated people. Both our conformation to the image of God's Son and our glorification are the consummation of the purpose of God's predestination concerning His people. This indicates that God's conforming us and God's glorifying us are two aspects of the same step of God's saving us in the life of Christ. God's conforming us is His fashioning us in the life of Christ so that we may bear the image of Christ as the God-man to express Him as the embodiment of the Triune God, and God's glorifying us is His saturating us with the splendor of the life of Christ so that we may be soaked with His glory to express the processed God. Both are for the expression of the Triune God, which will be consummated at the consummation of our Christian life when Christ will appear the second time. This is to make us like Him not only in our spirit and soul but also in our body and to bring us into His divine glory (v. 18; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:10).

A Process in the Growth of the Divine Life, Not Merely an Operation by the Power of Christ

God's conforming us to the image of Christ and God's glorifying us with His divine glory are a process in the growth of Christ's divine life, not merely an operation by Christ's power as unveiled in Philippians 3:21. While we are experiencing all these items—the reigning in Christ's life over all the insubordinate things, the subjective sanctification in our disposition by the indwelling Spirit, the freeing from the bondage of sin by the law of the Spirit of life, the dispensing of the Triune God into our tripartite being, the renewing in our mind and the transformation in our soul, being built up in the organic Body of Christ, and the living of the proper church life in a locality—God is actually conforming us gradually to the image of His firstborn Son, the God-man, Christ. Not only so, while we are experiencing these items of life in the life of Christ, God is actually also saturating us with the splendor, the glory, of the life of Christ. Such a process of conforming us to the image of Christ and saturating us with the splendor of Christ's life will proceed all the way through the whole course of our Christian life until we become mature in the divine life.

The Transfiguration of Our Body

God's glorifying us is also considered by the apostle Paul as the transfiguration of our body (v. 21). This is carried out in the virtue of the divine life, to save us from our body of humiliation. Our body will be

transfigured by the power, the virtue, of the divine life. The divine life is within us today transfiguring us. Actually, transformation is a form of transfiguration. When the inner life transforms us from within, this is a kind of saturation. This saturation is a kind of transfiguration. When the divine life saturates our entire being, it transfigures us, changing us metabolically. This metabolic change is not merely an outward change in form. It is brought about by a new element being added into our being. This new element discharges the old element. Thus, we are changed and transformed. Such transformation takes place by the life saturation, the life power, the virtue, of the divine life.

The Redemption of Our Body

The transfiguration of our body is also considered by the apostle Paul as the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23). This is carried out through the indwelling Spirit as the firstfruits, which is the foretaste (vv. 11, 23a). The indwelling Spirit transforms us by saturating us all day long. This saturation is the sealing, the "inking," of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13). The Holy Spirit seals us with the divine ink, and the Spirit Himself as the ink carries out a continuous inking within us. This inking transfigures us, and one day the form of our body will be changed to the uttermost. That day will be the day of the redemption of our body, the day of the glorification of our body. That day has not yet come, but today we have the indwelling Spirit as the firstfruits, the foretaste, of God as our portion. Day by day something within us is sealing, inking, and saturating us. The Spirit seals us unto the day of redemption (4:30), unto the redemption of the acquired possession (1:13-14), unto the redemption of our body. The Spirit's sealing is for and issues in the redemption of our body. In this sense, the redemption of our body will not be something that happens in a sudden way, as if by accident. Today we are under the inking, the saturating of the inner life, by the indwelling Spirit. Thus, bit by bit, we are being redeemed. One day our entire being will be fully redeemed. The matter of our rapture, the redemption of our body, is a matter of maturity. We have the divine life, and we are growing in the divine life. The full maturity of the divine life in us is the redemption of our body.

By the Saturation of Our Body of Humiliation with the Glory, the Expression of the Divine Splendor,

of the Divine Life in Christ

The transfiguration of our body is by the saturation of our body of humiliation with the glory, the expression of the divine splendor, of the divine life in Christ (Rom. 8:30c). Glory is the expression of the divine splendor of the divine life. We have the divine life within us, and this divine life has its splendor. In the Bible this splendor is called glory. When we are glorified, we will be saturated thoroughly with the splendor of the divine life. This glorification is the transfiguration of our body, the redemption of our body.

The Completion of the Divine Sonship

Our glorification, the transfiguration of our body, and the redemption of our body are also considered by the apostle Paul as the completion of our divine sonship. When we are glorified by God and our body is transfigured and redeemed, we will be manifested as the sons of God to the fullest extent. Because our whole being, including our outward body, will be saturated and permeated with the divine splendor, everyone will see that we are the sons of God. This is the completion of our divine sonship. God's glorifying us, the transfiguration and the redemption of our body for the completion of our divine sonship, will be the consummate step, the final step, of our being saved in the divine life of Christ. In this way the book of Romans comprises all the items of God's redemption and God's saving in His full salvation.