The All-Inclusive Indwelling Spirit

Witness Lee

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE INDWELLING SPIRIT

by Witness Lee

ISBN: 978-0-7363-3895-0

CONTENTS

1. The All-inclusive Spirit Indwelling the Believers as Their Life Supply
2. The All-inclusive Spirit Supplying the Believers with Life to Conform Them to the Image of the Firstborn Son of God
3. The Processed Triune God as the Spirit Giving the Divine Life to the Believers for Their Living
4. The Way to Live by the Divine Life
5. The Spirit of the Processed Triune God Indwelling the Believers to Resurrect Every Part of Their Being
6. The Indwelling of the All-inclusive Spirit for the Imparting of Life to the Believers
7. The All-inclusive Spirit—the Ultimate Consummation of the Processed Triune God— Residing in the Believers
8. The Vision and Practice of God's Economy in Romans 8

PREFACE

This book is composed of messages spoken by Brother Witness Lee in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 4-6, 1982, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on June 7-8, and in Denver, Colorado, on June 9-10.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT INDWELLING THE BELIEVERS AS THEIR LIFE SUPPLY

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 6, 9-11

ROMANS 8 BEING THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES

The Bible is a book of mystery, containing at least five main mysteries—God, the universe, man, the church, and the future. Any thoughtful person would be puzzled by these five mysteries. Many have wondered, "Does God exist? Who is God? What are God's attributes?" The universe is a mystery, for its dimensions are immeasurable. Man is a mystery in more than one sense. Corporately, human beings throughout the earth are busy doing various things, but very few know the real meaning, the purpose, of human existence. Individually, each person is a mystery. Even husbands and wives do not understand one another, nor do parents understand their children. The church is a mystery as well, especially in its definition and purpose. Finally, the future of the universe, mankind, the church, and even God is a mystery. The answer to all these mysteries is in the Bible. The Bible reveals the mystery of God, the mystery of the universe, the mystery of man, the mystery of the church, and the mystery of the future. Within the Bible, Romans 8 is the mystery of all the mysteries, for it particularly unveils and explains these five mysteries.

THE TRIUNE GOD DISPENSED INTO THE TRIPARTITE MAN

Romans 8:3 says that God, referring to the Father, sent His Son. Furthermore, Romans 8 mentions the Spirit in at least ten verses (vv. 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 23, 26, 27). Thus, this chapter reveals the Triune God. However, Romans 8 is not a doctrinal chapter but an experiential chapter. It speaks not about the doctrine of the Trinity but about the Trinity in the experience of the Christian life. God is triune to be experienced by us. We are able to experience God because He is triune as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Romans 8 reveals that the Triune God is dispensed into the tripartite man. In other words, the Triune God is imparted into the three parts of our being. Verse 10 says, "If Christ is in you...the spirit is life." Verse 6 says, "The mind set on the spirit is life." Our mind is the leading part of our soul. Verse 11 says, "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Thus, our spirit, soul, and body all receive the divine life. This is the infusion of the Triune God into the three parts of man.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

Romans 8 also reveals that the Spirit is all-inclusive. Verses 9 and 11 mention the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead. These are not three separate Spirits but three aspects of the one Spirit. Eventually, at the end of the Bible the Spirit becomes sevenfold. Revelation 4:5 and 5:6 mention the seven Spirits of God, which are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne and the seven eyes of the Lamb. God the Spirit is one and also seven. Like the Triune God, the all-inclusive Spirit is a mystery that our mind cannot fully comprehend. Nevertheless, we need to know the various aspects of the Spirit for our experience.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

There are many riches in Romans 8. When we read the Bible, we should not take any verse for granted. Romans 8:2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life, which is not the Mosaic law or any written law but a natural law, a natural power that works automatically. The law of gravity is an example of a natural law. According to our perception, it is our standing that keeps us firmly on the earth, but it is actually gravity that keeps people fixed to the globe on every side. Almost two thousand years ago, before the development of science, the apostle Paul received a revelation from God of the law of the Spirit of life and was able to describe it in scientific terms. Within us is the powerful law of the Spirit of life.

According to New Testament Greek, the English word *of* in phrases such as *the law of the Spirit of life* indicates apposition. This means that the nouns are identical, referring to one another. Accordingly, the law is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the law. Similarly, the Spirit is life, and life is the Spirit. In the same principle, the phrases *the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ,* and *the*

Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead indicate that the Spirit is God, Christ, and the resurrecting One. Altogether, four persons and two things are in apposition in Romans 8:2, 9, and 11—God, Christ, the Spirit, the resurrecting One, the law, and life. We must see that the Spirit is God, Christ, the resurrecting One, the law, and life. Furthermore, because the resurrecting One is resurrection itself, the Spirit is resurrection. The reality of resurrection is the Spirit. The Lord said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Thus, resurrection and life are a person, and now this person is the Spirit. Moreover, today this person is also a law—the law of the Spirit of life.

The law of the Spirit of life, which is uniquely revealed in Romans 8, is nothing less than the Triune God in motion. When the Triune God moves within us, He is the law of the Spirit of life. The Triune God works in us not by accident or activity but as a law. Once electricity is installed in a building, it works as a law, not by activity or accident. When the people in a building need light, they do not need to petition the power plant. Instead, they need only to switch on the light. Some Christians believe that in order to receive the Spirit, they must fast and pray for a long time. They hope that God will suddenly send a great outpouring of the Spirit, as He did at Pentecost. However, today the Spirit functions according to a law. We do not need to pray that God will have mercy to send the Spirit. As long as we have believed in the Lord and called on His name, the Triune God as the heavenly "electricity" has been installed in us and works automatically and powerfully as the law of the Spirit of life.

We should not think that we have many problems. As believers, we have problems only when we do not apply the law of the Spirit of life. If I try to move and work in a building without applying electricity, I will have trouble. This is like the regrettable situation of many Christians today. Those who know the law of the Spirit of life are much blessed. If I know about electricity, I will not worry about anything when I go into a building. As long as the electricity is installed in a building, the electricity will work automatically as a law to provide light, sound, air conditioning, and many other things. As such a law, the all-inclusive Spirit is life to every believer.

The Spirit of God

The Spirit is not only life and the law of the Spirit of life, but He is also God (v. 9). We need to see that God in Romans 8 includes more than God in

Genesis 1. In Genesis 1:1 God did not have the human nature, for He had not yet become a man or lived a human life, nor had He passed through death and entered into resurrection and ascension. In Genesis 1 God was merely God, but in Romans 8 He is both God and man, and He has been fully processed through incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension. Traditional systematic theology says that God is ever the same, that God never changes from eternity to eternity. It is true that God in His essence never changes. However, God in His economy did undergo a change when He became a man (John 1:1, 14; cf. Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23). Incarnation surely was a change. In resurrection God in Christ underwent another change—He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). God took one step in incarnation to become a man, and He took a second step in resurrection to become a life-giving Spirit. Because God has been processed, the Spirit of God is all-inclusive.

The Spirit of Christ

Romans 8 also mentions the Spirit of Christ (v. 9). This title contains a marvelous revelation. In Greek *Christ* means "anointed One." As God's anointed One, Christ was appointed by God to do a great work. In order to accomplish God's eternal purpose, Christ died on the cross to cleanse us from our sins, redeem us, and terminate the entire old creation. Then He resurrected to germinate God's selected people with the divine life. The Spirit of Christ includes all these accomplishments.

The Spirit of the Resurrecting One

The Spirit in Romans 8 is also the Spirit of the resurrecting One. As the resurrecting One, the Spirit is resurrection. Today He is within us continually resurrecting us. He has resurrected our spirit, and now He is resurrecting our mind, emotion, will, and body by infusing us with the divine life. This infusion may be compared to an injection used to administer medicine, which provides immediate and effective care. Many Christians today trust in teaching to enable them to have proper human relationships. No matter how much we are taught to be a good husband, wife, son, daughter, or roommate, we cannot do it by our natural strength. What we need is not teaching but the infusion of the Spirit. When we contact the Lord, even simply by calling on His name, we receive an infusion of life into our being. As a result, we do not need to make up our mind to be a good person. Rather, a proper living will spontaneously

be produced by the life that has been infused into us. The proper Christian life is a matter not of doing but of living.

The life that the Spirit infuses into us is God Himself. Likewise, the Spirit and the law of the Spirit of life are God Himself. The mystery in the entire universe is that the Triune God is working Himself into us. What we need is not religion or teaching but the Triune God infusing us with Himself as life. We need to realize that God's intention and His economy are not to teach, change, or improve us but to infuse Himself into us as life day by day.

The Indwelling Spirit

God's work of infusing us with Himself as our life is carried out by the all-inclusive Spirit, who indwells us. The root of the word *indwell* is related to the word for *house*. Therefore, to indwell means to reside in. In Greek the expression *indwelling* is even stronger than *dwells in*. Paul first says that the Spirit of God dwells in us (vv. 9, 11a), but he ends by saying that the Spirit indwells us (v. 11b). A living person, the all-inclusive Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One, indwells us.

A wedding or engagement ring is a sign to others that the wearer is not available but is fully occupied by another person. The Bible reveals that the indwelling Spirit is such a "ring" to us, indicating to the enemy and all others that we belong to God and are occupied by Him. Paul says, "I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). To be betrothed is to be engaged. Because we have been engaged to Christ, we have received the indwelling Spirit as an engagement ring. In Luke 15 when the prodigal son came home, the father gave him a robe, sandals, and a ring (v. 22). The ring signifies the sealing Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 says that once we believe in the Lord, we receive the Spirit as a seal, which, like an engagement ring, indicates that we belong to God. Thus, we are occupied and sealed, marked out, by the indwelling Spirit.

THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE INDWELLING SPIRIT INFUSING US WITH GOD AS OUR LIFE SUPPLY

The Triune God has been installed within us. We do not need to try to behave properly or improve our conduct; instead, we only need to take care of

the indwelling Spirit, who is God, Christ, the automatically functioning law of the Spirit of life, our life, and our life supply. The indwelling Spirit wants to supply us with God as our life; He desires to constantly infuse us with God. The Spirit of the resurrecting One is within us, resurrecting us with the divine life, which is God Himself. We do not need to change ourselves, because if we allow the all-inclusive Spirit to infuse us with God as life, we will spontaneously be transformed, resurrected, and renewed.

In order to receive the infusion of life from the Spirit, we need only to be open, just as a switch must be on to allow electricity to flow through a circuit. We should always be "switched on." For this reason, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Unceasingly pray." Throughout the day we must have our mouth, heart, spirit, and entire being open, calling on the Lord in every place (1 Cor. 1:2). If we keep ourselves open, we will receive the injection, transfusion, and supplying of the Spirit, who is God, Christ, the resurrecting One, the law of the Spirit of life, the life, and the life supply. We will be continually resurrected, renewed, transformed, and sanctified. This is the genuine Christian life according to Romans 8.

We need to realize that the all-inclusive Spirit is within us. We do not need to fast and pray or babble incoherently and hope that God will mercifully send the Spirit. God's way is simple, normal, and practical. At the moment we repented, believed in the Lord, and called on His name, the indwelling Spirit was installed within us. Now we can "switch on" simply by calling on the Lord. Even if we call softly from a believing heart, we will receive an infusion of God as life from the indwelling Spirit. When we thus experience God as the all-inclusive Spirit, this proves that God is real, true, experiential, and practical.

We do not need to make up our minds or strive to improve ourselves. We need to forget about all such religious things and simply say, "Lord, I thank You that You have been installed in me as the all-inclusive Spirit, who is God, Christ, the resurrecting One, life, and the law of the Spirit of life, so that I can enjoy and experience You. Keep me calling on You, breathing You in, and always open to You." When we pray in this way, the life supply will be infused into our being, and we will experience, enjoy, and grow with Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT SUPPLYING THE BELIEVERS WITH LIFE TO CONFORM THEM TO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11, 29

ROMANS 8 BEING THE FOCUS OF THE BIBLE

Romans 8 may be considered the focus of the entire Bible. The Bible begins in Genesis by revealing that God, according to His eternal plan, created the heavens and the earth so that man could exist to fulfill God's eternal purpose and desire, which is to impart Himself into His chosen people as their life supply so that they could become His expression (1:1, 26; 2:9, 16). According to this marvelous purpose, God and man will be brought together in one expression with God as the content and God's chosen people as the corporate manifestation. The Bible concludes in Revelation with this corporate expression. Revelation 21 and 22 describe the New Jerusalem as a composition of God's redeemed people from both the Old Testament and the New Testament (21:12, 14). This composition is built with the Triune God as the content and God's chosen people as the expression. The New Jerusalem thus fulfills God's eternal purpose. Between these two ends of the Bible are Paul's Epistles, which complete the divine revelation. Paul's writings are the heart of the Bible, and Romans 8 is the focus of the entire revelation of God.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT BEING LIFE TO OUR SPIRIT, MIND, AND BODY

The New Testament uses three Greek words to denote three different lives. *Bios,* which is the root of *biology,* denotes the physical life. Our physical life is mysterious and difficult to define. The New Testament uses the word *psuche,* which is the root of *psychology,* to denote the soul-life. We have bios, the physical life, in our body, and we have psuche, the psychological life,

in our soul. A third word, *zoe*, is used to denote the highest life, the divine, eternal, uncreated life of God.

The word *zoe* is translated as "life" in Romans 8:2, 6, 10, and 11. Verse 2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life. Within us is a mysterious and marvelous law of the Spirit of the divine life, which frees us from the law of sin and of death. According to Greek grammar, in the expression *the Spirit of life, the Spirit* and *life* are in apposition, which means that they are identical and refer to one entity. The Spirit is life, and life is the Spirit. Similarly, the titles *the Spirit of God* (v. 9a), *the Spirit of Christ* (v. 9b), and *the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead* (v. 11) indicate that the Spirit is God, Christ, and the resurrecting One. Life, the law of the Spirit of life, God, Christ, and the resurrecting One are all one in the Spirit. To have the Spirit is to have all these.

Verse 10 says, "If Christ is in you...the spirit is life." Regeneration is to be born anew, to be born of the divine Spirit in our human spirit with the divine life (John 3:3, 5). The divine Spirit reached us and entered into our spirit to impart the life of God into our spirit. Thus, our spirit was made alive with the divine life. We have a regenerated spirit, a human spirit born of the divine life. By being born of God, we became a child of God (1:12-13). To be born of God is to receive His divine life. Although we are human beings, we are also children of God because we have the divine life in our spirit. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God." We are much blessed to have the assurance that we have been born of God, yet this is only the beginning.

Verse 6 says, "The mind set on the spirit is life." The spirit here is our regenerated spirit indwelt by and mingled with the divine Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). When we set our mind on our regenerated spirit, which possesses the divine life, our mind becomes zoe, divine life. This is transformation (Rom. 12:2). First, we are regenerated in our spirit with the divine life, and then we are transformed in our mind also with the divine life.

Finally, Romans 8:11 says, "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." The resurrecting One within us gives divine life to our bodies. Although our spirit is life, and our mind set on the spirit is life, our body is mortal, dying.

However, He who raised Christ from the dead is within us resurrecting us. He is waiting for an opportunity to infuse zoe into our mortal bodies.

Romans 8 is the center, the focus, of the Bible and of the entire universe. Thus, if we are experiencing Romans 8, we are in the center of the universe. Romans 8 reveals that the Spirit of life, the law of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One are all one in the Spirit, who is life to our spirit, mind, and body. Nothing is more precious than these aspects of the all-inclusive Spirit, which meet our every need and completely satisfy us.

THE SPIRIT SUPPLYING US WITH LIFE TO CONFORM US TO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD

The purpose of the all-inclusive Spirit being life to our spirit, mind, and body is revealed in verse 29, which says, "Those whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers." Before the foundation of the world, God knew each one of us and loved us in spite of our flaws, defects, and sinfulness. God loves us without reason. Real love has no reason. If love has a reason, it is political. God foreknew us, and because He loved us, He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son. To predestinate is to mark out beforehand. Our destiny is to be conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son. This conformation is the goal of the working of the divine life within us. God made our spirit life at regeneration and is now making our mind life and even working life into our body for His purpose—to conform us fallen sinners to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God.

Romans 8 is central because it concerns God's goal and our destiny—our conformation to Christ's image. God is accomplishing this goal, and we will reach this destiny. One day we will no longer be flawed and sinful. Today we are in the process, which means that we still have many defects and shortcomings, but we can be assured that we will eventually be fully conformed to the image, the expression, of God's firstborn Son. We will be the same as Christ is. When we are fully conformed, we will express Christ perfectly. Our sinful nature and all our defects will be swallowed up as we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

The all-inclusive Spirit being life to our spirit, mind, and body is for us to experience all the time. When we leave the church meetings, we should not go back to living, speaking, and acting according to our nature, culture, habits, ethics, or religious concepts. Our nature is our natural disposition. Perhaps we even claim that it is our right to live according to our nature, saying, "I am this way by birth. Do not try to change me." We are also habitual, often doing things spontaneously and unconsciously. We even insist on doing things according to our habit and sometimes offend others by our habit. According to our religious concepts, we may like to carry ourselves with a certain demeanor or prefer a certain kind of church meeting. This is to be religious. If we live according to nature, culture, habits, ethics, or religion, we are neglecting the Spirit of life, the law of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One, and we are missing the Spirit being life to our spirit, mind, and body. To exercise our spirit only in the meetings is not life but performance. Many Christians behave very differently on the Lord's Day. However, Christian meetings should be an exhibition of the daily Christian life. We should meet and worship God in the same way that we live. Our meeting in the spirit should be a result of our living according to the spirit.

We need to walk according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4) and forget about our nature, culture, habits, ethics, and religion. This does not mean that we will be unethical, for the mingled spirit is higher than ethics. The Spirit is the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One, and He is life in our spirit, mind, and body. We simply need to walk according to this Spirit, who is life. When we do, there will be an expression of the divine life in our daily living.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT BEING THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

We have seen that Romans 8 is central in the Bible and in the universe. We also need to see that God in Romans 8 is different than He was in Genesis 1 and even different than in the four Gospels. In Genesis 1 He was God the Creator, but He was merely God. He had not yet entered into humanity. In the

Gospels God came in the person of the Son to be incarnated. He became a man and lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years. However, not until the end of the Gospels did He pass through death and enter into resurrection. God in Romans 8 has passed through creation, incarnation, human living, an all-inclusive death, and resurrection. Now in ascension He is on the throne, having received the lordship and the headship over all things. Today God has planned and accomplished everything. After all these procedures, or processes, He has presented Himself to us as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

If we simply believe, God in Christ becomes our Redeemer and Savior. We are saved, forgiven of our sins, justified, reconciled to God, and regenerated. The all-inclusive life-giving Spirit enters our spirit and will never leave. God as the Spirit makes His home in us. Today our God has passed through all and accomplished all. He is now the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit indwelling our spirit. Furthermore, He is mingled with our spirit and is one spirit with us (1 Cor. 6:17). He is infusing us with the divine life in our spirit, mind, and body. This life is active and energetic, working within us toward the goal of conforming us to the image of the firstborn Son of God. The goal of the Spirit's working within us is to renew, transform, and conform us in every avenue and corner of our being.

Romans 8 concerns the wonderful, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God. This Spirit is now infusing life into our entire being from our spirit into our mind, the leading part of our soul, and eventually into our entire body—resurrecting, renewing, transforming, and conforming us to the glorious image of the firstborn Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. The Spirit will make us exactly the same as Christ is in life, nature, and expression. This is Romans 8.

LIFE HAVING MANIFESTATIONS

Life is difficult to define. One principle concerning life is that it is invisible. For instance, we may say that our physical life is in our body, but we could not point to its specific location, even if we could see inside our body. However, life has manifestations, which are visible. Although we cannot see or define life, we can see the manifestations of life. We recognize that people have life because their bodies manifest the life within them. However, after a person

dies, the same body that previously manifested life now manifests death. Similarly, we can see whether someone has zoe, the divine life, in his or her spirit, mind, and body by the manifestations of the divine life. When a brother spontaneously prays in a meeting, this indicates that he has life in his spirit. The way we listen to a healthy, proper message in a meeting may be a manifestation of life or death in our mind. If we receive the message with joy, this is the manifestation of a mind full of life. However, if we inwardly question and argue with the message, this is a manifestation of death in our mind. The life or death in the minds of the listeners can supply or kill the spirit of the speaking one. Life itself cannot be seen, but life is manifested by what we are, do, speak, and express. When we are full of life, although we may not do anything, our being will express life and minister life to those around us. The manifestation of the divine life in our bodies is not by jumping and shouting in the meetings. When certain brothers and sisters stand up to speak in the meetings, even before they say anything, the way they stand up indicates that they are full of life. When they begin to speak, their words and even their gestures and demeanor indicate that they have been given life even in their mortal bodies.

LIFE HAVING A SENSE

Life is realized not only by its manifestation but also by the proper feeling, or sense. Romans 8:6 says, “The mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” Peace indicates a kind of sense. Whenever we receive the life supply, we will have a sense deep within that we are full of peace. Peace implies joy, rest, satisfaction, and refreshment. When we sense that we are lacking joy, rest, satisfaction, and refreshment, this indicates that we need life. If we try to improve ourselves by our own effort, even if we are successful, we will not have peace. Perhaps an unbelieving husband is never kind to his wife. When he becomes a Christian, he may decide that he should be kind to his wife. However, even if he is successful in improving his behavior by his self-effort, he will not have peace, joy, satisfaction, or refreshment deep within. Instead, he may begin to inwardly complain that his wife does not deserve his kindness. On the other hand, when we regularly contact the Lord, call on His name, and pray-read the Word, we will receive the life supply and be full of life. Then we will spontaneously have a proper relationship with everyone around us, and we will have peace, joy, rest, satisfaction, and refreshment within. This inward condition and the sense of peace are indications that we are being supplied with life.

THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEING TO RECEIVE THE LIFE SUPPLY OF THE ALL-INCLUSIVE, INDWELLING, LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT SO THAT WE WILL BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

As we receive the life supply from the indwelling Spirit, every day we are approaching the goal of this life by being more conformed to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God. The genuine Christian life is not a matter of performance or human effort but of receiving of the life supply of the all-inclusive, indwelling, life-giving Spirit, which issues in peace, joy, rest, satisfaction, and refreshment and carries us on toward the goal. Although we do not have any realization that we are being transformed and conformed, every day we are closer to the goal of being fully conformed to Christ's image. This is the genuine Christian life for the church life, and this is what God is after, as revealed in Romans 8. If we see this, it will help us to drop all other concepts. To endeavor to improve ourselves is according to religious teaching. Romans 8 tells us that the Triune God through all His processes has accomplished everything that is necessary. Therefore, we do not need to do anything but receive Him as the life-giving Spirit and allow Him to work in us to supply our spirit, mind, and body with life. If we are simply a willing receiver of the life supply, life will work out everything and will conform us to the image of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD AS THE SPIRIT GIVING THE DIVINE LIFE TO THE BELIEVERS FOR THEIR LIVING

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11, 29

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT AS THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD IMPARTING HIMSELF AS LIFE INTO THE TRIPARTITE MAN

Romans 8 concerns the all-inclusive Spirit giving life to our three parts for the goal of conforming us to the image of the firstborn Son of God. The sole function of the all-inclusive Spirit is to impart zoe, the divine life, into us. We are not born with the divine life. By birth we have only bios, the outward physical life, in our bodies, and psuche, the inward soul-life, in our souls. According to Romans 8, the divine life is dispensed into our spirit, mind, and body (vv. 10, 6, 11). God's way is to spread from within to without. God came into our spirit as life at the time of our regeneration. From our spirit He spreads into our mind, the leading part of our soul. Then through our mind He spreads into our physical body.

Today nearly no one knows that in addition to our body and our soul, we have another organ, our human spirit. However, the Bible reveals that man is a trichotomy. Some say that *the soul* and *the spirit* are synonyms, but in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul writes, "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In *God's Plan of Redemption* Mary E. McDonough uses three concentric circles to illustrate man's spirit, soul, and body. It is quite meaningful that God is triune and that we human beings are tripartite. Only the tripartite man can match the Triune God. Our spirit is the inmost part of our being. Romans 8:6 says that our mind is life, and verse 10 says that the spirit is life. The context of verse 10 indicates that *the spirit* here refers not to the Holy Spirit but to our human spirit. First Peter 3:4 says that there is a hidden man in our

heart. The hidden man of our heart is our human spirit. In John 4:24 the Lord said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.” We must worship God, who is Spirit, with our spirit. Only spirit can worship Spirit.

Romans 8 also reveals that the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God is the all-inclusive Spirit as the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One (vv. 2, 9, 11). The all-inclusive Spirit brings the divine life into us, just as the current of electricity brings electricity into a building. The current of electricity is electricity itself, for the current of electricity and electricity are inseparable. Likewise, the Spirit of God is God Himself, the Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself, the Spirit of the resurrecting One is resurrection itself, and the Spirit of life is life itself. The current of electricity may also be defined as electricity in motion. Similarly, the all-inclusive Spirit is the Triune God in motion. Traditional theology does not define the Trinity in these terms, but after studying the Bible and experiencing the Spirit for over fifty years, I have the full assurance and the boldness to say that the Spirit is God in motion. When God moves to reach us, He is the Spirit. Just as electricity moves as a current from the power plant to a building and is applied to the building for all its needs, our God is in motion, reaching and energizing each of us as the all-inclusive Spirit.

The Spirit carries and transmits the divine life into us. Many Christians today emphasize spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, but the greatest gift is the Triune God as life. Some Christians are concerned mainly with spiritual power. However, nothing is more capable or powerful than life. When a tiny carnation seed is sown into the earth, it grows and blossoms into a beautiful flower. The life of a bird has the power to fly. Thus, life is more excellent than gifts or power.

Romans 8 concerns zoe, the highest life. The account in Genesis 1 and 2 mentions every form of life from lowest to highest. God first created the lowest life, the plant life (1:11). Next, He created the animals—first the fish, then the birds, and last the cattle and land animals (vv. 20-21, 24-25). After creating all the animal lives, God created the human life (vv. 26-27). Then Genesis 2:9 mentions the tree of life, signifying zoe, the divine life. We were created with the human life, and we are reborn with the divine life. Thus, all

believers possess the two highest kinds of life—the human life and the divine life.

Through regeneration we have received God's life (John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6). We have the life of God but not the Godhead, just as a child has the father's life but not the father's position. Although we do not have God's position, we can boldly declare that we have His divine life. According to God's economy, the believers have two statuses and two lives. We were created as humans with the human life, and we were reborn as children of God with the divine life. We are descendants of man and of God. God is our Father and our origin because we have been born of God.

By the time we were born of God, He was no longer the same as He was in Genesis 1:1. We were born of the God who created the universe, was incarnated, lived on the earth as a man for thirty-three and a half years, passed through an all-inclusive death in which He took care of all the problems in the universe, overcame death to enter into resurrection and release the divine life, and was glorified and enthroned in ascension. Because God had accomplished everything before we were born of Him, all His processes are the qualifications of our status. We were born of the processed God.

The term *the processed God* may be new to some of us. Some may point out that this term does not occur in traditional theology, which is based on the early Christian creeds. However, after studying and experiencing the truth in the Bible for over fifty years, I must testify that traditional theology and the early creeds are inadequate. I have experienced much more of the Triune God than the creeds afford. I am not teaching anything heretical but only the truths according to the pure and complete divine revelation in the Bible. Romans 8 unveils to us that God has passed through many processes—His work of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension. After all these processes He reached us and entered into us as the all-inclusive, consummated Spirit, referred to in the New Testament as *the Spirit* (John 7:39; Rev. 2:7). Genesis 1:2 mentions the Spirit of God. However, Revelation 22:17 says, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" Thus, the Bible begins with the Spirit of God, and it ends with the Spirit. The Spirit is the all-inclusive, ultimate consummation of the Triune God. After all His processes the Triune God is now the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17). The

Spirit is revealed in Romans 8 as the all-inclusive Spirit—the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One.

The all-inclusive Spirit is the ultimate expression of the Triune God, and He is waiting for man to receive Him. The way to receive the Spirit is to believe in Christ. As soon as we call on the Lord and accept Him as our Redeemer and Savior, the all-inclusive Spirit enters into us, indwells our spirit, becomes one with our spirit, and imparts the divine life into our spirit. Then from our spirit He spreads into our mind to make our mind life. Through our mind He will spread into our body, saturating every part of our body with the divine life. Thus, we will become persons of the divine life.

LIFE BEING IN CHRIST JESUS

Romans 8:2 says, "The law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death." In the original Greek text it is difficult to discern whether the phrase *in Christ Jesus* modifies *the law of the Spirit of life* or *has freed me.* Actually, the law of the Spirit of life and the freeing are both in Christ Jesus. Only in Christ Jesus is there such a law and such a freeing. We may also say that *in Christ Jesus* modifies *life.* The divine life is in Christ Jesus (cf. John 1:4; 1 John 5:12).

We need to see what it means to say that life is in Christ Jesus. The title *Jesus* refers to mainly the Lord's human life of thirty-three and a half years on the earth. Jesus was a wonderful man because within Him was the divine life. When He was twelve, He went up to Jerusalem with His parents at the time of the feast (Luke 2:42). Afterward, His parents could not find Him and began to look for Him. Luke 2:46-47 says, "They found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them. And all those who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers." As a young boy, Jesus amazed those who heard Him, because the divine life was in Him. The biography of the Lord in the four Gospels depicts an excellent life full of human virtues.

Only Jesus could have such a wonderful living because the divine life was only in Him. From the creation of Adam until the time of Jesus' life on the earth, through four thousand years of human history, there was no other man who had the divine life. Jesus was the first man who possessed the divine life. Today we too have the divine life within us. Although we have the same life

that was in the Lord, we do not always live an excellent life full of human virtues as the Lord did. When we were young, we may have been quite naughty. Then one day we were saved, and the divine life entered into our spirit. Although we began to live a more excellent, virtuous life at the time of our salvation, we still express our old defects and sinfulness quite often. When we live by the divine life that was in Jesus, we live an excellent life full of human virtues.

The title *Jesus* refers to the Lord in incarnation, and the title *Christ* refers to the Lord in resurrection. In Romans 8:2 Paul lists *Christ* before *Jesus* because the Lord is no longer living as a man on the earth but is in resurrection as the Christ, possessing both the human life and the divine life. *Hymns,* #505 says, "There's a Man in the glory." This is Christ. In Christ's death everything natural was terminated, and He is now living in resurrection to germinate all the believers with the divine life. Christ Jesus is both human and divine. His life is full of human virtues and divine glory.

The all-inclusive Spirit is imparting the life that is in Christ Jesus into the three parts of our being. To have the real experience of Romans 8 is to live a life full of human virtues and the divine glory in resurrection. This is much better than ethics. Ethics may be compared to copper, but the life that is in Christ Jesus is like gold, which is brighter and more valuable than copper. Because we now possess the life in Christ Jesus, we do not need ethics, religion, or culture. Our standard is the divine life, which is much higher than ethics, culture, or religion.

GOD DESIRING THAT WE LIVE BY THE DIVINE LIFE

As believers, we have the divine life of God. God's desire is that we live as human beings by the divine life. Many Christians think that God wants us to be perfect human beings. Therefore, they think that we need to improve ourselves, and because we cannot make it, we need to seek God's help through prayer. They believe that in order to keep the teaching in Ephesians 5:24-25, husbands must trust in God to enable them to love their wives, and wives must pray and trust in God to help them submit to their husbands. However, the fact is that God does not work in this way. God does not want us to live as angels or perfect human beings but to live as humans by the divine life. Many Christians misinterpret the words *eternal life* in the Bible to mean a condition of living eternally in a physical paradise. However, eternal life is actually the

divine life of God. Although we are human beings, God imparts His life into us that we may live as human beings by the divine life.

As a young man in China, I heard Christian missionaries say that the Bible teaches the same thing as Confucius teaches. They pointed out that the Bible and Confucius both teach submission. When I heard this, I wondered to myself, "We Chinese have had Confucius's teachings for centuries. If the Bible teaches the same thing as Confucius, why do we need the Bible?" I was disappointed, stumbled, and left the denomination in which I had been born and raised. Then by the Lord's mercy I was saved and began to realize that there is a great difference between the teachings of Confucius and the Bible. The virtues taught by Confucius are produced entirely by the human life, but the virtues taught by the Bible are produced by the divine life. For instance, the context of Ephesians 5:24-25 reveals that the submission and love taught in these verses are not to be carried out by our natural human life. Verse 18 says, "Be filled in spirit." When we are filled with the Lord, we spontaneously submit and love in the Lord. Such submission and love are by the divine life. Romans 8 reveals that the divine life that is in Christ Jesus is now being transmitted and transfused into us.

Perhaps some are still not clear about the difference between being virtuous by the human life and living by the divine life. Life is abstract, but it can be discerned by its manifestations. Whatever we are able to do by our human life makes us proud, and pride kills others spiritually. Even if we are quite virtuous, as long as we are proud, we cannot build, minister life, or supply anything of the Lord to others. If a brother and his wife are taught to love and submit to one another, they may accept the teaching and pray for the Lord to help them to obey the teaching. However, if they are successful by their own self-effort, they will become proud and self-exalted. When we touch them, we will sense not that we are meeting God but that we are meeting proud, self-exalted people. This is the manifestation of being virtuous by our human life. On the other hand, the husband and wife may realize that they cannot love and submit to one another by their own life and that God actually wants them to live a human life as a husband and wife by the divine life. As a result, they may pray, humble themselves, deny their human ability and energy, and live not by themselves but by the Lord as the indwelling Spirit. Then spontaneously, unconsciously, and unintentionally they will love and submit to one another, yet they will not realize that they are being virtuous. Instead, they will feel that they are short in living Christ and expressing His excellent

virtues. When we contact such ones, we sense that they are full of Christ. Even if they do not say anything to us, what they are will minister life to us. When we contact such ones, we are nourished, strengthened, edified, and built up. Furthermore, we are spontaneously influenced to live the same kind of life, expressing excellent virtues as human beings living by the divine life, which is in Christ Jesus and is imparted into us by the all-inclusive indwelling Spirit.

It is not sufficient to forsake ethics and religion. We must see that the life in Christ Jesus is higher and better than these things and that the all-inclusive indwelling Spirit is transmitting such a life into us. God's desire and goal is that we live by this life and minister this life to others for the building up of the church. What the church life needs is for us to live as human beings by the divine life. If we live by our natural human life, even if we are proper and virtuous, we will damage the church life by our pride. God wants a group of people who live as human beings by the life of God, which is in Christ Jesus. This life is far better than ethics, religion, or anything else, because it is Christ lived out in our human life. The church life should not be a social life by the human life but a Body life, the life of the Body of Christ, by the divine life. We must live as human beings yet not by our human life but by the divine life. This life is in Christ Jesus, and it is the life of the law of the Spirit of life. The all-inclusive indwelling Spirit is constantly transmitting this life into each one of us. The transmission of the divine life into us will build up the church, edify the saints, and minister the riches of Christ to everyone who contacts us.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WAY TO LIVE BY THE DIVINE LIFE

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:4-5, 13-15

LIVING A GRAFTED LIFE

The New Testament reveals the way for us to enter into the reality of God's economy. In order to see how to live by the divine life, we first need to realize that God desires to be one with man. For two persons to live one life is altogether extraordinary and mysterious. The problem is that God and man have different lives. God has His zoe life, and we have our psuche life. God's life is divine, uncreated, and eternal, and our life is human, created, and temporal. However, when someone is saved, these two lives are grafted together in that person.

Grafting implies more than adding, or joining, together. Grafting implies that two lives grow together. For two lives to be grafted, they must be of similar species. A banana tree cannot be grafted to a peach tree, because these two species are too different. However, God and man are not too different to be grafted together. Genesis 1:26 says, "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." We are very similar to God, for we were made in His image. We are a photograph of God. The only difference between a man and a photograph of the man is that the man has his life within, his living essence, but the photograph does not. The photograph does not have the life or nature but only the likeness, the image, of the man. Human life is very similar to the divine life. According to the Bible, psuche is very similar to zoe because psuche is a photograph of zoe. We should not despise ourselves. We were made in God's image and according to His likeness and are very similar to God. Therefore, it is possible for us to be grafted together with God just as it is possible to graft a pear tree with an apple tree. Grafting is not merely a joining of two lives but a mingling, because the two lives mutually enter into each other to live together as one.

For two persons to be grafted and mingled together to live together is not easy. Married ones know that it is hard for a couple to live together, yet a couple living together is not as strict as grafting. A husband and wife may

quarrel about whether to have the window opened or closed, but they still breathe independently and thus do not need to coordinate the pace or manner of breathing. However, to live together with God is even harder than to live together with our spouse. When we are living a grafted life with God, we must do everything with God. To live together is really a bondage. When we are saved, on the one hand, we are freed by Christ, but on the other hand, we are bound by Him. The Christian life is a cycle of release and bondage. The more we are bound, the more we are freed, and the more we are freed, the more we are bound. This is difficult to understand, but it is the fact.

The human and divine lives are similar, but the human and divine natures are different, just as copper and gold have a similar appearance but different natures. Although copper and gold resemble each other, copper rusts, but gold never rusts, because the natures of the two substances are absolutely different. The human nature is like copper, and God's nature is like gold. Every genuine believer has these two natures—the corruptible human nature and the incorruptible divine nature.

We need to see that God wants the believers to live a human life by the divine life. God does not want us to live as angels. Neither does He want us to live as God with His status and position. God treasures and loves man. He wants us to live as men, yet He wants us to live not by our human life but by His divine life. God wants us to be a husband or wife but not by our own life. God-created humanity is not evil, but our soul-life is corrupted and evil. God does not want us to commit suicide, but the Bible charges us strongly to deny, put off, and crucify our soul-life (Matt. 10:38-39; 16:24-26; Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22). We must live as a proper human being, but our old, natural life must be put aside and crucified, and we must live instead by God's life.

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

We need to see the way to live as a man by God's life. Romans 8:4 says, "The righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit." Within us there are two substances: flesh and spirit. We must choose to walk according to the flesh or according to the spirit. It is entirely up to us to make this choice. It is difficult to know what is the spirit, but it is easy to know what is the flesh. In every environment and situation we all can recognize the flesh. When we deduct the flesh, what remains is the spirit. Since we know what is the flesh,

we can walk according to the spirit simply by not walking according to the flesh.

We may think that some things are neutral and that it is not possible to know whether or not they are the flesh. However, according to the Bible, there is no third choice or neutral ground; everything is either according to the flesh or the spirit (vv. 4, 6, 9; John 3:6; Gal. 5:17; 6:8; 1 Pet. 3:18). For instance, a wife may prefer to open the window, and her husband may prefer to close it. The window being open or closed may be neutral, but for either spouse to insist on his or her preference is the flesh. If we insist on anything for our own sake, interest, or profit, even if the thing itself is not sinful or immoral, we are walking according to the flesh. We may not know if something is according to the spirit, but we can always recognize the flesh. As long as we are not walking according to the flesh, we must be walking according to the spirit.

BEING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:5 says, "Those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit." The verb in verse 4 is *walk,* but the verb in verse 5 is *are*. Being according to the flesh or the spirit implies more than walking according to the flesh or the spirit. We need to not only *walk* according to the spirit but also constantly *be* according to the spirit, not according to the flesh.

A living according to the spirit and not according to the flesh is the realization of an inward law—the law of the Spirit of life (v. 2). The law of gravity keeps us on the ground. If we jump into the air, the law of gravity will immediately bring us back to the ground. However, if we are in an airplane, another law, the law of aerodynamics, is applied to us to keep us off the ground. One of these two laws will always be applied to us. If we want to remain on the ground, we need only to stay away from the airplane. However, to remain in the air does not require a great effort. Instead, we must only enter into an airplane. If we are in an airplane, it can overcome the power of gravity to lift us off the ground. Being according to the flesh is like remaining on the ground, and being according to the spirit is like being in an airplane. The law of the Spirit of life in our mingled spirit has the power to overcome the law of sin and of death in our flesh. Which law is applied to us depends entirely on our choice. If we choose to be according to the spirit, the law of the Spirit of life will spontaneously free us from the law of sin and of death. The

law of the Spirit of life does not need our help, but it needs our consent. We do not need to do anything to free ourselves from the law of sin and of death. We only need to be according to the spirit.

The secret of being according to the spirit is to make a choice. We must tell God, Satan, ourselves, and the entire universe, "I hate to be according to the flesh. I like to be according to the spirit. I do not know what is the spirit, but I know what is the flesh, and I choose not to be according to the flesh." Then we will make it. We should not be concerned about our natural disposition and shortcomings. Instead, every morning as soon as we wake up and every night before going to bed, we can practice to declare our choice to be according to the spirit.

MINDING THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT

Paul wrote Romans 8 not only according to his revelation but also fully according to his experience. According to verse 5, we need to mind the things of the Spirit. To mind the things of the Spirit is to set our mind on the things of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul mentions the things of the Spirit of God. The things of the Spirit of God are the deep things of God (vv. 10-11) concerning Christ as our portion (vv. 2, 9). No one was born, raised, or educated to have a habit of setting the mind on the spirit. However, the Bible teaches us to habitually and continually set our mind not on the things of the flesh but on the things of the Spirit. We need to build up such a habit. We should never allow our mind to be vacant. If we allow our mind to be vacant, problems will immediately come in. Our mind will never stay vacant for long; it will always be occupied by something—either by the things of the flesh or by the things of the Spirit, the things concerning Christ. We need to exercise to keep our mind occupied by the things concerning Christ not only in the meetings but also in our daily life, family life, marriage life, school life, and job life. It is dangerous to have a vacant mind at any time or place. In order to prevent demonic things from coming in, we must fill our mind with something, and the best contents with which to fill our mind are the things concerning Christ. Thus, we must declare that we choose to be not according to the flesh but according to the spirit, and we must continually have our mind occupied with the things of the Spirit, the things concerning Christ.

The two spirits, the divine Spirit with our human spirit, connect all the things concerning Christ to our mind. As long as our mind is connected to the

things concerning Christ by the two spirits, we are victorious. Our mind represents our entire being. When our mind is vacant, our entire being is open to the enemy. We know this according to experience. When our mind is vacant, only evil thoughts come in. In order to overcome the evil thoughts, we must fill our mind with the things of Christ. If a jar is filled with something, dirt cannot get in, because the jar is full. However, when the jar is empty, contamination can easily get in. Our being is a vessel, and our mind is the mouth, the opening, of the vessel. The only way to protect our mind and our being from dark things is to be filled with pure things, the things of Christ. This is a battle. The secret of spiritual warfare is not to allow our mind to be vacant. It is especially dangerous to let our mind be vacant in the morning and when we are resting. When we are busy with school or work, those things occupy our mind. When we try to rest, our mind may become vacant, and evil things may come in. Therefore, especially when we are not busy, we need to exercise to fill our mind with the things of the Spirit, the things concerning the glorious Christ. This is our victory.

PUTTING TO DEATH THE PRACTICES OF THE BODY

Romans 8:13 says, "If you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live." According to my experience, verse 13 is a direct continuation of verse 5. If we set our mind on the things concerning Christ, we immediately put to death all the practices of our body. After we rise up in the morning, we quickly begin to consider many things that we intend to do. More than nine out of ten things that we intend to do are of the flesh. Therefore, we need a lot of putting to death. If our flesh says, "Make a phone call to So-and-so," making this phone call is a practice of our body that needs to be put to death. Perhaps we intend to have a talk with our spouse, but we are actually planning to avenge some offense. This too is a practice of the body that needs to be put to death. If we consider our basic intentions, we will discover that nearly every practice of our body needs to be put to death. The practices of the body are mainly our habits. We need to put to death not only our bad habits but also our good habits. Every practice of our body needs to be put to death by the Spirit.

BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT

We may wonder how we can live after so much putting to death. Actually, the more we put to death, the more we live. Following verse 13, verse 14

continues, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Thus, our putting to death the practices of our body by the Spirit is the leading of the Spirit of God. After the putting to death, we know what the Spirit wants us to do, and we have the clear leading. When we feel that we do not know what to do, it is because we are not putting to death the practices of our body by the Spirit. Once we put to death the practices of our body by the Spirit, we will know what the Lord’s leading is.

CRYING, ABBA, FATHER!

Verse 15 says, “You have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!” The experiences in verses 13 and 14 eventually lead us to cry, “Abba, Father!”

Now we have seen the way to live by the divine life. First, we need to declare that we choose to be not according to the flesh but according to the spirit (vv. 2, 4). Second, we need to continually set our mind on the things concerning Christ (v. 5). Third, we must put to death the practices of the body by the Spirit (v. 13). Then spontaneously, we will cry, “Abba, Father! Father, I have put to death everything but You. So I cry to You, Abba, Father!” If we practice these things, we are living by the divine life.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SPIRIT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD INDWELLING THE BELIEVERS TO RESURRECT EVERY PART OF THEIR BEING

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 9-11

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Romans 8 is a mysterious chapter. Verse 2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life. Life in this verse is not our physical life but God's eternal life, the divine life, which is the highest and richest life. Our physical life is mysterious and difficult to define, but the divine life is much more mysterious. Verse 2 also mentions the Spirit of life, which is also quite mysterious. In addition, the law in this verse is not a law in letters, such as the Mosaic law, but a law of life. Such a law is not a set of outward regulations but a scientific law of nature, which is also mysterious.

Every life has a law. The higher the life, the higher the law. The law of the dog life causes dogs to bark; therefore, a dog does not need to be taught to bark. The law of the cat life causes cats to chase mice. A cat chases mice not out of duty but because of the law of the cat life. Even a plant life has a law. An apple tree does not need to be trained to produce apples according to certain standards. The law of the apple life causes the tree to grow and to produce apples with the proper shape, color, and taste. According to the same principle, there is a law of the divine life.

Gravity is a law of nature. According to our limited understanding, it is our standing that keeps us upright and in place on the earth. Actually, however, our standing does not mean that much. People are able to stand on opposite sides of the globe because of gravity. Thus, it is the law of gravity that holds us in place. When we jump into the air, the law of gravity will automatically bring us back to the earth. An airplane can lift people off the ground because airplanes operate according to another law, the law of aerodynamics, which is versus the law of gravity and overcomes the law of gravity. Two thousand years ago, before the development of modern science, the apostle Paul used

scientific terms under God's inspiration to write, "The law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death" (v. 2).

The law of the Spirit of life is a mysterious matter, yet it is the controlling factor of the Christian life. The genuine Christian life is a life by the mysterious law of the Spirit of life. Human beings are physically controlled by the law of the human life. The arrangement and proportions of our bodies are all generally consistent because of the regulation of the law of the physical human life. This law controls not only the structure but also the functions of our bodies. When we eat, we do not worry about how to digest what we have eaten, because the law of our physical life causes our body to digest the food. There are many mysterious things about the law of our physical human life. Everything that is according to this law is normal and healthy, and anything that is contrary to this law is abnormal and a sickness.

As believers, we are sons of God (Gal. 3:26). We have been born of God and possess God's life and nature (John 1:12-13). In the divine life there is a law that controls us as we live the Christian life. If we live according to this law, we will live a genuine, normal Christian life. Regrettably, most of us live a somewhat abnormal Christian life, because our Christian life is under the control of something else, such as our habit, nature, or culture. Many of us live and do things by our habit. We even worship God and pray according to habit. If our worship and prayer are not under the direction and control of the law of the Spirit of life, our worship and prayer life will not be normal. Most of us also move and act according to our nature, our natural disposition. If we were born with a slow disposition, we may always do things in a slow way. If we live under the control and direction of the law of the Spirit of life, our daily walk will be different. We may also live, walk, and have our being according to our culture. Our Christian life will be abnormal if we live according to our habit or culture. We must be controlled and directed by the law of the Spirit of life to experience a genuine and normal Christian life. Romans 8 is a practical and crucial chapter because it reveals the law of the Spirit of life.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

Romans 8:9 says, "You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him." Here the apostle Paul uses the expressions *the Spirit of God* and *the Spirit of Christ* interchangeably, indicating that the Spirit is both

the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. These are not two Spirits but one. Paul was a careful writer and was exercised to choose the proper terms to compose his writings. In verse 11 Paul mentions the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Thus, we can see that the same one Spirit is the Spirit of God, of Christ, and of the resurrecting One. In the New Testament the title *God* refers to God the Father, who is the Originator, source, and origination of all things. Christ is God the Son, who was anointed, appointed, and commissioned by God with a divine purpose and who became incarnated, was crucified, rose from the dead, and is now in resurrection and ascension. God the Father is the Originator, and God the Son is the Accomplisher. Thus, the Spirit in Romans 8 is the Spirit of the Triune God.

The Bible reveals that God is triune as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. How God can be one yet three is mysterious and beyond our understanding. We can only say that in the Godhead there is the aspect of one and also the aspect of three. On one hand, God is one, and on the other hand, He is three. However, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are not three gods. Tritheism is a great heresy. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal that God is uniquely one (Deut. 6:4; 1 Tim. 2:5). Yet the one God is also three. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinct but not separate. The Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son (John 14:10-11). Moreover, according to the New Testament Greek, when the Spirit comes, He comes "from with" God, which means that the Spirit is sent from God and brings God with Him (15:26). The Son also comes from with the Father (1:14). When one of the Trinity comes, all three come. They are inseparable because They are one God.

Because our mentality is limited, we cannot comprehend the trinity of the Godhead. Trying to understand the Triune God with our mind is like trying to use a small dipper to measure the ocean. Martin Luther said that when we are asked how God could be triune, we should answer, "I do not know." Luther also said that to trust in our own mental power to understand the Trinity is to be a teacher of God. We should not think that we understand the Triune God. We know only what the Bible tells us, and this is good enough. The Bible tells us that God is one and also that He is three as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Although we cannot understand how God can be triune, we need to see why He is triune. The title *Father* indicates the source. In a family the father is the

source, the origin. Thus, God the Father is the source, the origin. A son is a continuation and expression of his father. It is often possible to recognize that two people are a son and a father because the son looks very much like the father. Thus, the Son is the continuation, the expression, of the Father. The Spirit is the application, the reaching, of the Triune God to us. The Triune God reaches us by being the Spirit, just as electricity from a power plant reaches a building by being a current. The current is the flow of electricity for its reaching and application. Actually, the current of electricity is electricity itself. The current and the electricity are inseparable, for the current of electricity is simply electricity in motion. If electricity does not move, there is no current. When electricity moves, it is a current. Just as a current is the reaching and the application of electricity to a building, the Spirit is the reaching and the application of God to us. God the Father and God the Son are able to reach us and be applied to us as the Spirit.

As saved ones, we realize through our experience that the Spirit has reached us and continually touches us and moves within us to apply the Son and the Father to us. In a sense, Christians are quite peculiar, for when we are under a heavy burden that seems unbearable, we may pray for a few minutes and then become joyful. To others this seems crazy, but this is the Spirit moving within us. We all can testify that there are many other expressions of the Spirit moving within us. Our Christian life is a life under the moving of the Spirit, who is the application and reaching of God to us. When the Spirit reaches us, God reaches us. The Spirit works within us to apply God to our situation.

According to Romans 8, the Spirit is the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One (vv. 2, 9, 11). He is the Spirit of the Triune God. Today we experience the God revealed in Romans 8. At the start of Genesis 1:1 God had not yet accomplished His work of creation, incarnation, crucifixion, redemption, and resurrection. Genesis 1 may be likened to an empty plot of land, and Romans 8 may be likened to the same plot of land with a new building and garden on it. Even in Matthew 1 Jesus had only recently been born. We need to be in Romans 8 because in Romans 8 the Triune God has passed through the processes of incarnation, human living, an all-inclusive death, and resurrection. In incarnation He put on the form of the flesh, and in resurrection He put on another form as the Spirit. First Corinthians 15 concerns resurrection. Verse 45b says, “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.” Thus, in resurrection Christ in the flesh became a life-giving Spirit. Moreover, He ascended to the heavens, where He was

enthroned, made Lord of all, and given the headship of the entire universe (1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:22). Then on the day of Pentecost He came down as the Spirit to be with His church (Acts 2:1-4). Today the Lord is not only with His church but also indwelling all His believers as the Spirit of the processed Triune God.

THE TRIUNE GOD AS THE ALL-INCLUSIVE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT INDWELLING US TO RESURRECT EVERY PART OF OUR BEING AND MAKE US ONE WITH HIM THAT WE MAY EXPRESS HIM

According to Romans 8, the Spirit of the processed Triune God is the Spirit of God (v. 9a), who planned and originated everything, the Spirit of Christ (v. 9b), who has accomplished everything to fulfill God's plan, and the resurrecting Spirit (v. 11), who is daily working within us to resurrect us. He first resurrected our spirit at the time of our regeneration, and He is now resurrecting our entire inner being—our mind, emotion, and will. He is also resurrecting our mortal body with the divine life to make us a new creation, a being altogether in resurrection. Thus, Romans 8 is crucial because it reveals that the processed Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit gives life to His believers in their spirit, mind, and mortal body (vv. 10, 6, 11). The all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is imparting life to every part of our being—spirit, soul, and body.

Because the Triune God has accomplished everything, there is no need for us to do anything. He has passed through all the necessary processes—incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. He is now not only on the throne as the Lord but also within us as the life-giving Spirit. He is living in us and is one with us (1 Cor. 6:17). He has accomplished all but one thing, that is, to resurrect and renew us. Therefore, He is working within us toward the goal of making us a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

Our Christian life should be lived not according to our nature, culture, ethics, religion, or habit but according to the indwelling Spirit. In other words, after being saved and regenerated, we should live not by our natural life but by God as the divine life. With the divine life is a law that works to regulate us from within (Rom. 8:2). This law of the divine life, which has a particular

essence, shape, and taste, is continually and automatically working within us to resurrect us, renew us, transform us, and make us altogether a new creation. According to Romans 8, the processed Triune God as the Spirit is indwelling us to make us one with Him so that we may express Him. Therefore, we must live according to the indwelling Spirit.

We need to see that Christ, who redeemed, saved, and regenerated us, is indwelling us as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit to be our life and life supply and to thereby resurrect us. He has resurrected our spirit in regeneration. Now He is resurrecting us further, saving our mind, will, and emotion from being natural. He is also resurrecting our body, making our entire being a new creation. We should live uniquely by Him, with Him, and according to Him.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INDWELLING OF THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT FOR THE IMPARTING OF LIFE TO THE BELIEVERS

Scripture Reading: Zech. 12:1; John 14:23; 15:4; Eph. 3:17; Rom. 8:2, 6, 9-11, 29

GOD DESIRING TO DWELL IN MAN

Romans 8 may be considered the focus of the entire Bible and even the central focus of the universe. To understand this fact, we must first consider what God's purpose is. Zechariah 12:1 says, "Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him." In this verse we can see that God created three crucial things—the heavens, the earth, and our spirit. Most people would agree that the heavens and the earth are great. However, we may have never thought that in the Bible a part of our being is ranked with the heavens and the earth. In order to understand why the spirit of man is ranked with the heavens and the earth, we need to turn to the New Testament, which reveals that our spirit is the location where God desires to dwell (Eph. 2:22; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22). Most Christians have the concept that the heavens are God's home and aspire to go to heaven to be with God. However, this is not according to God's concept as revealed in the Bible. Isaiah 66:1 says, "Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest?" In this verse God is aspiring to obtain a proper home. His home is not the heavens or the earth but man.

Several verses in the New Testament reveal that God desires to dwell within man. John 14:23 says, "Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." The Son and the Father do not come to us merely for a short visit and then go away. If we are genuine lovers of Jesus, the Son and the Father will come to us to make a mutual abode with us. In other words, we become God's home, and He becomes our home. In John

15:4 the Lord said, “Abide in Me and I in you.” Here the Lord was indicating that He is our home and that we are His home.

In Ephesians 3:14-17 Paul says, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father...that He would grant you...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith.” The inner man is our spirit. We can see the Triune God in these verses. The Father grants us to be strengthened into our spirit by the Spirit so that Christ the Son may make His home in our heart. To make home is to be settled. When we temporarily stay in someone else’s home, we do not make our home there. When we believed in the Lord, He came into us not for a brief visit but to stay forever. When we move into a house, we make home in it by filling every room and corner with our possessions. Our heart is a composition of our mind, emotion, will, and conscience. Therefore, Christ makes His home in our heart by occupying our mind, will, emotion, and conscience. Paul prayed that the Father would grant us to be strengthened into our inner man, our spirit, that Christ would have the opportunity to make His home in our heart. We need to be strong to agree and cooperate with the Lord’s settling Himself in our heart by filling every part of our inner being with Himself. The Lord comes into our spirit when we believe in Him, but we need to give Him the permission to spread into our will, our emotion, and especially our mind. We need to give Him the freedom to take over our mind, emotion, and will. Otherwise, He will be confined by us in our spirit and will be unable to settle in our entire inner being to make His home in our heart.

The above verses in John and Ephesians convey the New Testament revelation that the Triune God desires to dwell within us to make us His home. Although the Bible is composed of sixty-six books and over a thousand chapters, it has a central thought—Christ as the embodiment of God wants us to receive Him and give Him the permission to make His home in our hearts, to dwell in us permanently and eternally. The Triune God created the heavens and the earth, was incarnated, lived as a man on the earth for thirty-three and a half years, and died on the cross to accomplish redemption, take away our sins, and terminate our old man and the entire old creation. Then He entered into resurrection and ascension. The central focus of the universe is that this processed Triune God has come into us and now dwells in us. This is the greatest miracle. Nothing else in the universe could be more important than this.

We need to see that the indwelling of the processed Triune God is not a mere theory or doctrine but a real and present fact. Nothing should be more important to us. If we see that the Triune God lives in us, we will be ecstatic. If we were given a precious diamond, when others saw us, they would realize that we had received something extraordinary. We should all be full of joy since the Triune God is indwelling us and is one with us. He is our life and our person, and He is making us His home. It is crucial that we recognize this fact. We need to pray, "O Lord Jesus, show us this glorious fact." We need His mercy to see a vision that the processed Triune God, who has accomplished everything and is now the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, dwells in us. Even if we see only a little, it is better than nothing. Although we may not be ecstatic, as long as we are happy, it is good enough. A Christian must be a happy person. The Christian life is a happy life.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT BEING THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION AND APPLICATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD

We need to see that the indwelling Spirit is the Triune God. According to the New Testament Greek, in the expression *the Spirit of God, the Spirit* and *God* are in apposition, indicating that the Spirit and God are one (Rom. 8:9). Similarly, *the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the resurrecting One,* and *the Spirit of life* in Romans 8 indicate that the Spirit is Christ, the resurrecting One, and life (vv. 9, 11, 2). Therefore, since the Spirit indwells us, all three of the Triune God are in us as life. Actually, the three of the Triune God are all one. In John 14:23 the Lord said clearly that if we love Him, He and the Father will come and make an abode with us. In Ephesians 3:17 we read that Christ the Son is making His home in our heart. However, this does not mean that the Father does not come into us as well. Wherever one of the Godhead is, the other two are as well, because the three of the Godhead not only coexist but also coinhere. This is a mystery. To coexist is to exist simultaneously, and to coinhere is to exist within one another. The Father exists in the Son and in the Spirit, the Son exists in the Father and in the Spirit, and the Spirit exists in the Father and in the Son. The three exist at the same time and within one another. Therefore, when one of the three comes to us, all three come. The Lord Jesus told us that when the Spirit comes from the Father, He comes "from with" the Father (John 15:26). When the Spirit comes

to us, He does not leave the Father in heaven. Instead, He comes with the Father and with the Son, because the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coinhere.

In Romans 8 the indwelling Spirit is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One. Thus, we can say that the Spirit in Romans 8 is the all-inclusive Spirit as the ultimate consummation and application of the Triune God. The Spirit is the link of the Triune God to us, for when He is present, the Triune God is present. The all-inclusive Spirit is nothing less than the Triune God Himself. God may seem far away and objective to some, but the Spirit is always subjective. The Spirit is the reaching, the application, of God to us. The current of electricity is the application and reaching of electricity from a distant power plant to a building. When electricity is thus applied as a current, it becomes subjective. Similarly, the Spirit is the application and the reaching of the Triune God to us. In our experience God is the Spirit. For this reason the Lord said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness" (John 4:24). Because God is Spirit, we can worship Him, touch Him, reach Him, and experience Him. God reaches us and is applied to us as the Spirit.

The Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit is within us for us to experience and enjoy by taking Him as our life and our person. We need to realize how wonderful it is that the Triune God dwells in us. Within every genuine believer of Christ, there are two persons: the believer and the Triune God. We are the container of the Triune God, and He is within us as our life and our person. The Triune God indwelling us as the Spirit is a great and central matter in the Christian life, yet it is missed by many Christians today because it is mysterious and abstract. We need to fully realize that the Triune God is in us. God's desire is that we, as believers of Christ, would live no longer by our self but by Him, who indwells us. He wants us to take Him as our life and our person. Because this teaching is neglected today, I have been burdened by the Lord to speak concerning Romans 8 for the past two years. Thus far, I have given at least fifty messages, mainly on the first fourteen verses of Romans 8. The more I minister, the more I am burdened. Because I enjoy the indwelling Triune God as the Spirit, I desire that all the brothers and sisters also would enjoy Him. We need to take Him as our life and our person.

THE TRIUNE GOD AS THE SPIRIT BEING LIFE TO OUR SPIRIT, MIND, AND BODY

Now we come to a very mysterious and puzzling point: life. The all-inclusive Spirit indwells the believers for the imparting of life to the believers. We may be familiar with the imparting of gifts and power to the believers, but Romans 8 does not mention gifts or power. Romans 8:2, 6, 10, and 11 all mention life. Today many Christians mainly seek after spiritual power; those who serve the Lord want to be full of impact. However, Paul was not for power but for life.

When Christ enters into us, our spirit is regenerated. Thus, our spirit is life (v. 10). When we love the Lord and set our mind on the things concerning Him, our mind is life (v. 6). Furthermore, if the Spirit of the resurrecting One indwells us, He will give life to our body (v. 11). For the Spirit to indwell us, we must give Him the permission to settle within us and saturate our inner being. We need the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead to give life to our mortal bodies. Concerning the things of God, our bodies are weak and dying, but the resurrecting One gives life to our dying bodies.

Life is abstract, mysterious, and difficult to define. Nevertheless, I have the assurance to say that in Romans 8 life is nothing less than Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God. For our spirit to be life means that our spirit is full of Christ. For our mind to be life means that our mind is filled with and occupied by Christ. For life to be given to our body means that Christ as the indwelling Spirit is ministered into our body.

A brother may be saved for years and know the Bible quite well, but one day he may be down and weak in his spirit, mind, and body. He may have no interest, thought, heart, or strength to pray. We have all been in this kind of situation. We are genuine believers, yet sometimes we do not have any strength for the things of God. This means that we are weak in our spirit, mind, and body; we have no life, strength, or energy but are exhausted and dying. When we are in this kind of situation, it is not because something is wrong but rather because something is missing. We may say that we are short of breath, which is to be short of life. To stop breathing is to die. Therefore, we need more breath. If we are weak, lacking life in our spirit, mind, and body, it is because we are short of spiritual breath. To breathe spiritually is to call on the name of the Lord. When we are weak, we do not need to call on the name of the Lord loudly. To shout loudly may be a kind of performance. Instead, we can breathe softly, “O Lord Jesus,” and we will be enlivened.

When we breathe by calling on the Lord, life comes into us. First, life comes into our spirit. Then we may go on to pray something, such as, "Lord Jesus, thank You. You are so good to me and to all of Your believers. Lord Jesus, I love You, I love the church, and I love all the saints." If we pray in this way, life will spread into our mind, and our mind will be life. At this point we may have a burden to go to a meeting, offer a prayer, and speak something to the saints. Perhaps twenty minutes before, we were tired in every part of our being and did not have the strength or the energy to go to the meeting. However, now our spirit and mind are life, and life is being given to our body. A number of times before I came to speak, I was tired and very weak. However, when my mind is filled with life, I receive physical strength and am able to speak. Then the more I speak for the Lord, the more I am energized, as life is given to my mortal body.

The life that is given to our spirit, mind, and body is the Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God. Life, the Triune God, and Christ are one in the Spirit. Therefore, as we continually breathe in the Spirit as life and allow Him to spread into all our being, more and more of Christ is added into us. We become different when Christ as the life-giving Spirit is added into us, because we receive a new element. This is to know God in the experiential way of life. It is more than believing and trusting in an objective God and more than merely receiving gifts or power from God for our use or strength. Instead, it is to possess, experience, and enjoy the subjective God within our being.

When God is thus repeatedly added into our being, we will receive the life element that causes us to grow. Power does not cause us to grow. Growth requires the addition of a new element. A plant will not grow if the soil is poor and lacks nourishment. However, if the soil is rich, more nourishing elements will be added to the plant and cause it to grow. We need more than the knowledge of an objective God in our mind; we need to have the element of the subjective God added into our being. This occurs not by teaching but by experiencing. Therefore, whenever we feel weak in our spirit, mind, or body toward the things of God, we need to call on the name of the Lord. *Hymns,* #73 says, "Just to breathe the Name of Jesus, / Is to drink of Life indeed." To call on the name of the Lord is to breathe life into us, and this life is nothing less than Christ as the embodiment of God realized as the Spirit. This is not a theory but a real fact. In this way the divine element is added into our being, and we grow with this element. As a result, our Christian life and growth will be normal and healthy.

My burden is not to exhort, admonish, or entreat you to improve yourself. To try to correct our outward behavior is a matter of ethics or religion and is not of God's economy. Instead, we simply need to breathe in Christ as our life and live by Him. This is the proper, genuine, normal Christian living by the divine life. We need to realize that God is in us and that there is no need for us to do anything since He has accomplished everything necessary. The only need today is for us to take God as our life so that He may be added into our being. In this way He and we become one and live one life. This is the Christian life according to Romans 8.

THE LAW OF LIFE CONFORMING US TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

In the divine life is a law, which is the working, the function, of this life (v. 2). While we are growing with the element of the divine life, this life has an automatic function, the law of life. This law regulates us from within, shaping us into the form of Christ. Thus, we are being conformed to the image of Christ and will eventually be exactly the same as He is (v. 29). This is not ethics, religion, or improvement of character; much less is it something of habit, nature, or culture. Instead, it is the Triune God indwelling us so that we can take Him as our life, our life supply, and even our person and thereby live by the divine life and grow with the divine element every day. While we are growing with this life element, the law of life works in us automatically to shape us, conform us, into the image of Christ. The Body of Christ, the fullness of Christ, the new man, and the mutual habitation of God and man issue from our experience of this life. Ultimately, this life will prepare the bride of Christ, which will cause the Lord to come back and usher us into the next age. For this reason, the crucial focus of the Bible and the universe is in Romans 8.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT— THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD— RESIDING IN THE BELIEVERS

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:9-11

GOD CREATING MAN WITH A SPIRIT SO THAT MAN CAN RECEIVE AND EXPRESS GOD

Romans 8 is mysterious and abstract, yet it is a crucial chapter in the Bible, for it reveals the focal point of God's economy. The highlight of God's salvation is that He wants to be one with His redeemed people. God's desire to be one with man is not accidental or temporary but eternal. Ephesians 1:3-5 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." These verses reveal that in eternity past God had a heart's desire and purposed to fulfill this desire. In order to fulfill His desire, God planned to work Himself into a group of human beings. In other words, in eternity past God purposed to enter into His redeemed people so that He could be their life and so that they could be His corporate expression. This is the focus of God's economy.

According to God's purpose, He created the heavens, the earth, and millions of items with human beings as the center. Man is the center of God's creation because God's intention is to be expressed through man. Man can become God's expression only by God entering into man to be man's life and content and to make man one with Him so that man may live by Him and even live Him out. In this way God is expressed from within man.

Zechariah 12:1 indicates that the heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and God created man with a spirit so that man can receive God. The crucial part in a transistor radio is the receiver, which receives the radio

waves from the air. Without a receiver, a radio does not work. Although there are many radio waves in the air, only a radio with a receiver can substantiate the radio waves. God created man with a spirit as such a receiver to substantiate and receive God.

We human beings are different from animals because we have a spirit as a wonderful receiver. No animal ever built a shrine to worship something. Animals have no thought about God, but throughout history and regardless of race, people have always worshipped. Although what they worship may be wrong, their desire to worship is right. Atheists say that there is no God, yet deep in their being is a desire to worship something. Within man there is a subconscious need to worship God, because man has a spirit. Just as we hunger for food because we have a stomach, we hunger for God because He created a spirit in us.

The Lord said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness" (John 4:24). We cannot worship God with our physical body. We should not try to physically feel, see, smell, or hear God. We must use the proper organ. Just as we must exercise our ears to substantiate sound, we must exercise our spirit to substantiate God. Although radio waves are everywhere in the air, the proper receiver must be used to prove that they are real. God is real, but we need to exercise the proper organ—our human spirit—to know Him. People often come to a point in their lives when it seems that nothing can satisfy them. Although we may have a good family, education, job, and financial situation, we will come to a point when we realize that there is still a hunger and thirst within that is not satisfied. This hunger and thirst are in our spirit. Man was created with a spirit to seek after God.

God planned, purposed, and created the heavens, the earth, and millions of items for man to exist (Gen. 1). After everything was prepared, God created man with a spirit that man could receive God. However, instead of receiving God, man fell. Then in the New Testament God came in the person of the Son. In His incarnation He became a man. He was conceived in a virgin's womb and grew there for nine months (Matt. 1:23). Then He was born with a physical body and raised in a poor carpenter's family in Nazareth, a despised city. Isaiah 9:6 says, "A child is born to us... / And His name will be called... / Mighty God." The little child born in a manger was the Mighty God. The man Jesus who lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years was God. It is a

great thing that God Himself became a man to live a genuine human life on the earth among men.

God was incarnated and lived as a man in order to accomplish something. When the Lord was thirty years old, He came out to minister, preach, and teach. Actually, His ministering was to sow Himself as the seed of life into mankind. However, no one around Him realized what He was doing. Even the Lord's disciples, who were with Him day and night for three and a half years, did not realize the real significance of His earthly ministry while they were with Him. According to Matthew 13:3, the Lord came as a sower to sow Himself as the seed of life into the soil of man's heart to grow there. Of all the great historical figures, only Jesus has sown Himself as a seed into other human beings. Jesus was incarnated, lived a human life among men, and eventually sowed Himself into His believers.

In John 6:48-51 the Lord said, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died...I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, given for the life of the world." Verse 52 says, "The Jews then contended with one another, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" The Lord continued in verses 55 through 56: "My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him." Verse 60 says, "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This word is hard; who can hear it?" They did not understand how Jesus, a Nazarene, could be the bread of life for them to eat. The Lord died as the Lamb of God not only to take away our sins and redeem us but also to feed us.

Christ gave Himself to us through death and resurrection. Through death He accomplished redemption, and after His death He entered into resurrection. First Corinthians 15 is a chapter on resurrection. Verse 45 says, "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." In and by resurrection Christ became a life-giving Spirit. First, He died on the cross, sacrificing His flesh and blood to accomplish redemption for us. Then He entered into the tomb and Hades, and after three days He rose from the dead and entered into resurrection. In resurrection He became the Spirit to give life to us. Thus, Christ is our Redeemer, Savior, Lord, and life. Once we believe in Him and call on His name, He enters into our spirit as the life-giving Spirit. Our sins are forgiven because He died on the cross to accomplish redemption and shed

His blood to wash away our sins. He solved the problem of sin and sins by His death, and now as the life-giving Spirit, He is in our spirit to be our life.

THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD AS THE SPIRIT DWELLING IN THE BELIEVERS

Today God has passed through His work of creation, incarnation, human living, and His redemptive death. He has entered into resurrection and ascension, in which He has been enthroned, crowned, and glorified. He has received the headship, lordship, and kingship over all of creation. Since God has accomplished all this, He is no longer merely God the Creator, as in Genesis 1, not yet having passed through all His processes. In the four Gospels He was incarnated and lived on the earth. Many believers wish that they could have been with the Lord as the disciples were. Perhaps we have all thought that it would have been wonderful to touch Jesus, wash His feet, serve Him, and accompany Him. During His earthly ministry the Lord was able to be among the disciples, but He could not enter into them, because He had not yet died and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit. Therefore, today is actually the best time to live. The Lord was with the disciples, but He was not in them as He is in us today. The disciples had the Lord's visible presence, but we have His inward, invisible presence. We need to treasure the Lord's invisible presence, realizing how valuable it is that the Lord is in us. We are living in the best age, the age of Christ for the church. We have Christ within and without. We who are living in this age are very much blessed, for we are indwelt by the Triune God who has gone through the procedures and processes of creation, incarnation, human living, His all-inclusive crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The God who has accomplished, obtained, and attained everything has come into us as the Spirit.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT BEING THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

Romans 8 shows that the Spirit today is all-inclusive. In verse 9 Paul first says, "The Spirit of God dwells in you." Then he continues in the same verse, "Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ." In verse 11 Paul says, "The Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you." Thus, the Spirit is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the

resurrecting One. He is the Spirit of the Triune God. John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit." *God* here surely refers to the entire Triune God, comprising the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Therefore, the Father is Spirit, the Son is Spirit, and of course, the Spirit is Spirit. Because traditional theology overemphasizes the distinction among the three of the Trinity, some Christians today oppose the truth that Christ is the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17). Instead of caring for theology, which is a set of human concepts about God, we should care for the pure revelation of God in the Scriptures. The Bible tells us that the entire God is Spirit. Thus, all three of the Godhead are Spirit.

In John 7:38 Jesus said, "He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." Then the writer, John, gives a kind of interpretation, saying, "This He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (v. 39). Today the Spirit is, because Jesus has been glorified through death and resurrection. The Spirit is the all-inclusive Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God.

Some may be unfamiliar with terms such as *the processed Triune God*. However, all believers know that God passed through incarnation. To be incarnated, God was conceived in a virgin, grew in her womb, and was born of her. Such a birth was surely a process. Further, God in Christ lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years, passing through all kinds of experiences and sufferings of human life. This too was a process. His crucifixion was also a process. Likewise, His passing through death and Hades and entering into resurrection were also processes.

God today is different from God in Genesis 1. God the Creator in Genesis 1 possessed only divinity, but God today also possesses humanity. In Genesis 1 God was merely God, but today He is both God and man; He is fully God and fully man, the real God and a true man. He is human as well as divine, possessing the human nature as well as the divine nature.

In Genesis 1 and even in the Gospels before John 20, God had no way to enter into the believers. Because He had not accomplished redemption, the requirements of His righteousness, His holiness, and His glory had not been fulfilled. The righteous, holy, glorious God could not come into fallen sinners. Therefore, in John 14:2-3 the Lord said to His disciples, "In My Father's

house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be." The Lord died to prepare the way so that He could bring us not into heaven but into the righteous, holy, and glorious God. Christ's death satisfied all the requirements of God—His righteousness, holiness, and glory. Moreover, Christ's resurrection brought His human body into glory. Today in resurrection He possesses a glorious body, and He will make our body the same as His (Phil. 3:21). Our God today is utterly complete in what He is, has done, and is able to do. He has accomplished, obtained, and attained everything. This God, who is complete, full, and perfect, is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

The all-inclusive Spirit is the ultimate consummation and application of the processed Triune God. God the Creator was mysterious and far away from us, but as the Spirit, God is near and applicable to us. The all-inclusive Spirit is the Triune God reaching us. We need to see that the all-inclusive Spirit of the processed Triune God resides in us. Although we may not recall every point that we have read in these chapters, we need to at least remember the good news that we live in an age in which the Triune God is fully processed, has accomplished everything, and is the applicable God as the life-giving Spirit. He is in our mouth and in our heart, and if we only say, "O Lord Jesus," He will come into us (Rom. 10:8-9).

NEEDING TO LIVE CHRIST CONTINUALLY

Because we are genuine Christians, Christ has come into us to be our life, and we should live Him all the time. However, we mostly live by many things other than Christ. For instance, we often live by the traditions of our nationality or culture. Instead of living as an American or a Chinese, we should live Christ. Because we have received the Lord's mercy and grace, we may hate sin, not commit gross sins, and even not love the world. Nevertheless, day after day we may still live by tradition, living Christ only for a short time each day. Although we do not live in sin or love the world, neither do we live Christ. Instead, we live by our tradition or habit. However, as genuine believers in Christ, we should live only Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God and is applied to us as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. The Spirit who resides in us is the ultimate consummation and application, or reaching, of the Triune God. He is within us, expecting

that we would walk according to Him, live by Him, and live Him out. The genuine Christian life is not merely a sinless, perfect, and ethical life but a life that is Christ Himself. We should live by and with Christ, and we should live out Christ. Christ should be our life within and our living without. We need to live Christ continually.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE VISION AND PRACTICE OF GOD'S ECONOMY IN ROMANS 8

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 4-6, 9, 11-13

GOD DESIRING TO WORK HIMSELF INTO US AS LIFE

Because the book of Romans is mysterious and abstract, through the years many Bible teachers have not touched it adequately. Without the real experience of what is revealed in Romans 8, it is impossible to understand this chapter. However, we need to realize that with regard to life, whatever is the most mysterious and abstract is the most precious. For instance, what we can see of a human being, that which is physical, is not precious. The preciousness of a human being is not physical, visible, or material but something invisible within our physical body called life. If we do not have life, we become a mere material object, like a chair, which is not precious. We are precious because we have a life. We can speak, listen, and function because we have a life. The life mentioned in Romans 8 is the divine, eternal life of God, which is higher than our physical life. The higher the life is, the more mysterious it is. The plant life, which is not very high, is not difficult to understand. However, the human life, which is higher than the plant life, is more mysterious. The divine life is much more mysterious than our human life; therefore, it is more precious.

We need to realize that according to God's economy and eternal purpose, what God wants to do in His salvation is to work Himself into us, His redeemed people, as our life. God's desire to work Himself into us as our life is the focus of the Bible, yet because it is mysterious and abstract, it is nearly altogether missed by Christians today. When most Christians think of God's salvation, they mainly consider it to be a matter of the forgiveness of sins and salvation from hell. Our conscience is touched when we first receive the gospel, and we are enlightened and convicted, realizing that we are sinful. Because we become conscious of our sins and transgressions, we want our sins to be forgiven and washed away. The Lord shed His blood and died on the cross to take away our sins. Because of Christ's redemptive death, God

forgives us of our sins, and we are saved from eternal perdition. The forgiveness of sins and salvation from hell are great and necessary parts of God's salvation, yet they are not the central concern of God's salvation. The central focus of God's salvation is God working Himself into us as our life.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

We thank the Lord that our sins are forgiven and that we are saved from eternal perdition. However, we should not be satisfied merely with knowledge of these facts. Romans 8 does not concern the forgiveness of sins or going to heaven but the law of the Spirit of life, which frees us from the law of sin and of death (v. 2). The law of the Spirit of life is precious. The life mentioned in verse 2 is not our physical life but the divine life. The Greek word for physical life is *bios*, which is the root of the English word *biology*. However, the word for life in Romans 8 is *zoe*, which is a higher life, the life of God.

Our sins have been taken away by Christ's death on the cross, but the law of sin is still in us. Although we hate to lose our temper, it may seem that we have no control over our temper when it rises up. This is because sin is a natural law, like the law of gravity, which causes things to happen spontaneously and automatically. Gravity is quite strong—billions of people are kept on every side of the globe by the power of gravity. Only the law of aerodynamics can overcome gravity by lifting people off the ground in an airplane. Similarly, only the law of the Spirit of life can free us from the law of sin and of death. Verse 2 says, "The law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death." Regrettably, many genuine Christians do not realize that within them is the powerful law of the Spirit of life. In order to overcome the law of sin and of death, we need the law of the Spirit of life, which has been installed in every believer. This law is like a great sum of money that has been deposited into our bank account.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

In addition to the Spirit of life, Romans 8 mentions the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Verse 9 says, "You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him." Verse 11 says, "If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your

mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Thus, the Spirit revealed in Romans 8 is an all-inclusive Spirit who comes not merely to visit us but to indwell us. The Spirit of God is God Himself. Likewise, the Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself, and the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is the resurrecting One. The all-inclusive Spirit is the ultimate consummation and application of the Triune God—the Triune God reaching us. We need to see that as believers we have within us the law of the Spirit of life and the all-inclusive Spirit.

WALKING NOT ACCORDING TO THE FLESH BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

Romans 8 reveals that the law of the Spirit of life and the all-inclusive Spirit reside in our spirit. We need to see a vision of the scenery in Romans 8. There are at least four peaks in Romans 8—the law of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the resurrecting One. We also need to see the way by which we can reach the peaks. This way is in verse 4, which says, "That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit." This verse does not say that we will observe or keep the law but indicates that the law will be spontaneously fulfilled in us when we walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. We can reach the peaks in Romans 8 by walking according to the spirit.

In a sense, it is difficult to walk according to the spirit, because the spirit is mysterious and abstract. Like electricity, the spirit is real yet invisible and mysterious. Although it may be difficult to know what is the spirit, it is easy to know what is the flesh. The spirit is abstract, but the flesh is concrete. Everything that we do is either according to the flesh or according to the spirit. Therefore, as long as we are not walking according to the flesh, we are walking according to the spirit. In this way we can know the spirit by knowing the flesh. We can walk according to the spirit simply by not walking according to the flesh.

BEING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

Verse 5 says, "Those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit." Whereas verse 4 indicates that we need to *walk* according to the spirit, verse 5

says that we need to *be* according to the spirit. To be implies more than to walk. We may walk according to the spirit occasionally, but to be according to the spirit indicates a daily living. Paul's intention is to help us to enter into a daily, continual practice.

If we do not exercise our spirit in our daily life at home, school, and work but only when we come to the meetings, this is not a daily practice or walk but a performance. No matter whether we are in a meeting or at home, in every place and at every time, we need to exercise our spirit. Exercising and releasing our spirit should not be an accident but our daily practice. We should live a life of exercising and releasing the spirit. Everything that we do and say should be done and said by exercising and releasing our spirit.

Exercising the spirit is like turning on a light switch when we need light. To exercise our spirit is simply to "switch on." If we are in physical darkness in a house or building, it is only because we have not turned on the proper switch. Similarly, the reason we may lose our temper is that we are not exercising our spirit. Once electricity has been installed in a building, there is no need to petition the power plant to mercifully send light; this does not work. For light to appear when the proper switch is turned on is not miraculous but normal and even automatic. Many Christians today pray somewhat ignorantly, begging God to have mercy and send the help that they need. We can "switch on" anytime simply by exercising our spirit. The law of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the resurrecting Spirit have been installed in every believer. In order to receive His supply, we need only to exercise our spirit.

The devil is afraid whenever we exercise our spirit, for he knows that he will be defeated. We are often bothered by our troublesome mind. Although our situation may not be very difficult, soon after we wake in the morning, thoughts come in that cause us to be anxious. Such thoughts, which may concern our job, family, or safety, come from Satan through our troublesome, unbridled mind. The way to deal with such thoughts is to recognize where they come from and then choose to exercise our spirit. This frightens Satan. From early morning we need to guard ourselves by exercising the spirit. However, we do not often do this. Usually, when one dark thought comes in, we accept it, and another soon follows. As a result, we do not have peace. After washing up and dressing, we may speak to our spouse loosely and in a natural way, neglecting our spirit. Soon we may become impatient and even

lose our temper. This is not to walk according to the spirit. From the moment we wake up, we need to gird our spirit to guard ourselves. Before we accept any thought, we should exercise our spirit by calling on the Lord and worshipping, thanking, praising, and exalting Him. Doing this will drive away all the dark thoughts and gird our spirit to guard our entire being. If we practice this, we will not be loose, natural, or short-tempered, because our spirit will be on the alert.

If we exercise our spirit from the very beginning of the day, we will live this way all day long. As a result, when we exercise and release our spirit in the meetings, it will not be a performance but a continuation of our normal daily practice. If we practice this every day, after a few months we will have built up a spiritual habit. Because we have old habits, which have been built up for years, we often live in a loose, natural way. We sometimes live as if we do not have the law of the Spirit of life or the all-inclusive Spirit within us until we come to a meeting. We may not exercise our spirit even while we are driving to the meeting and parking our car. If we do not exercise our spirit or release our spirit until we step through the door of the meeting hall, this will be a kind of performance. We need to live a daily life with a spiritual habit to continually exercise and release our spirit so that we become a person who walks according to the spirit and is according to the spirit.

MINDING THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT

When we walk and are according to the spirit, we will mind the things of the Spirit (v. 5). To mind the things of the Spirit is to set our mind on the things of the Spirit, that is, to always have our mind occupied with the things of the Spirit, which are the things concerning Christ. From the beginning of the day, our mind should be fully occupied with the things concerning Christ, such as His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to become a life-giving Spirit who now indwells us. When certain persons take a vacation, their mind is still fully occupied with their business. They care only for that business; to them their business is everything. Our mind should be occupied with and set on Christ in this way. Our mind should even be addicted to Christ. In the Song of Songs the seeker was sick with love for the Lord (2:5; 5:8). Within her mind there was nothing but the Lord. We need to have such a mind.

Though we love the Lord to some extent, our mind may be mainly occupied by things other than Christ. As long as our mind is set on other things, we are not according to the spirit. If our mind is occupied with things other than Christ, it will be easy for us to lose our temper. If we are a person according to the spirit, our mind will be fully occupied by the Lord. In this way our mind is made spiritual. The natural mind is very troublesome and hard to control, but we can make our mind a spiritual mind, a mind of the spirit. We can cause our spirit to spread into our mind, making our mind the mind of the spirit. The expression translated "the mind set on the spirit" in Romans 8:6 is literally "the mind of the spirit." Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." First Corinthians 2:16 says, "We have the mind of Christ." The mind of Christ is a mind that is filled, occupied, and saturated with Christ. Such a mind helps us to continually walk and be according to the spirit.

BEING DEBTORS NOT TO THE FLESH

We need to realize that because we have the law of the Spirit of life and the all-inclusive Spirit in us, we do not have to be in the flesh or do things according to the flesh. The law of the Spirit of life and the all-inclusive Spirit are like a great deposit in our spiritual bank account, which causes us to be rich and short of nothing. Thus, Romans 8:12 says, "So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh." Before we were saved, we were debtors to the flesh. However, because we have a great deposit—the law of the Spirit of life and the all-inclusive Spirit—within us, we now owe nothing to the flesh. Furthermore, we have a heart to follow the Lord, we have seen the vision, and we daily practice to exercise and release our spirit to be persons according to the spirit. As such persons, we are no longer debtors to the flesh.

PUTTING TO DEATH THE PRACTICES OF THE BODY

Romans 8:13 says, "If you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live." To put the practices of the body to death means to kill our old habits, which is to no longer do anything according to our old habits. We are all habitual; our daily living is ninety percent according to our habit. Although we love the Lord, are in the church, and do not commit gross sins, we may still live, walk, behave, and have our being mostly according to habit. It does not take long to build up

a habit. Our habits are built up by our nature, culture, and ethical and religious teachings. We may be a slow or quick person by nature. Perhaps we excuse our slowness or quickness, saying that there is nothing we can do about it, because we were born that way. Hence, we act slowly or quickly according to habits that have been built up by our nature. Our habit is also built up by our culture, whether it is American, Chinese, or another culture. Furthermore, regardless of culture, all people are taught to be ethical. Therefore, our habits are spontaneously built up with ethics. Finally, everyone is influenced by religion. No matter how we live, we all live a habitual life, a life altogether according to habit.

To live according to our old habits is altogether versus the revelation in Romans 8 that the law of the Spirit of life is operating within us and that the all-inclusive Spirit is within us as our life and our person. We should live by Him, be filled and saturated with Him, and walk and be according to Him. To live according to our old habits is versus God's economy, which is to work Himself into our being and become one with us so that we may take Him as our life and our person, walk according to Him, and be absolutely according to Him. Now that we have seen this vision, what we need is the daily, continual practice of the vision. If we practice in this way daily and continually, we will kill our habits, which are the practices of our mortal body, and be persons fully according to the spirit.