

The Transformation of the Soul

Because human beings are tripartite, the Triune God in His complete salvation takes three steps to gain us for His corporate expression: regeneration in our spirit, transformation in our soul, and transfiguration in our body. To be regenerated is to be born of the Spirit in our spirit to receive the divine life and thereby to become genuine children of God, born of Him, possessing His life and nature. However, after our spirit has been regenerated, we still need to be transformed in our soul. This means that we need the indwelling, pneumatic Christ to spread from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will that every part of our soul may be transformed into the image of the resurrected Christ.

In transformation the Christ who is in our spirit, the organ for receiving God, becomes the Christ in our soul, the organ for expressing God. The function of the soul to express God is intrinsically related to the Lord's image, into which we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another. In transformation the element of the divine life in Christ is dispensed into our soul to produce the expression of the image of Christ. As the process of transformation takes place within us, the old element of our natural being is expelled and the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit is added into us to replace the natural element.

This process of transformation is not only organic but also metabolic. Transformation is not mere outward change or improvement. Rather, transformation is altogether an inward, metabolic change of our being, and to be transformed is to have an organic element—the divine life of the Triune God—wrought into our being to produce a spiritual metabolic change inwardly. This kind of metabolic change includes the supplying of a new element, the replacing of the old element with the new element, and the discharging of the old element so that something new may be produced within our soul. Therefore, in transformation, a divine, spiritual metabolism, a new element is added to the old to discharge the old and to produce something new.

Central to the experience of such a transformation of the soul is the renewing of the mind. We are transformed by the renewing of the mind. As the mingled spirit—the regenerated human spirit mingled with the Spirit of God to be one spirit—spreads into our mind, it becomes the spirit of the mind for the renewing of the mind with the element of God, who is forever new.

Transformation is intrinsically related to God's economy—God's plan and arrangement according to the desire of His heart and His eternal purpose to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people to make them His corporate expression. The outworking of such an economy requires not only redemption and regeneration but also transformation. We need to see that transformation is a matter of inward spiritual metabolism issuing in an outward expression. Far from being an outward, cosmetic change, transformation is a metabolic change in substantial form, an inward process to change us organically in our soul from one degree of glory to another.

In God's economy, transformation is related to the divine attributes, the reproduction of the firstborn Son of God, and the corporate expression of God. In the process of transformation, the Triune God works the divine attributes into us, the believers in Christ, to become our virtues. Through the process of transformation, the believers, the many God-men, become the mass reproduction of the first God-man—Christ as the firstborn Son of God. The firstborn Son is the prototype, and the many sons are the reproduction of the prototype. The many sons are gradually transformed into the image of the firstborn Son. The result of the organic, metabolic process is the corporate expression of the Triune God in Christ. The more we are transformed in our soul, the more we become the reproduction of Christ and the expression of God.

The Bible reveals not only the fact of transformation but also the means of transformation. We are transformed by eating Christ as the tree of life, by drinking Christ as the river of life and enjoying Him as the inner flow of life, and by turning our hearts to the Lord to behold His face. Also, we are transformed through the breaking and constituting work of the Holy Spirit and the practicing of the Body life. Eventually, through transformation, which is based on redemption and regeneration, we will become the New Jerusalem, the ultimate, consummate, eternal expression of the Triune God in His chosen, redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified people. The transformation of our soul is for this glorious, corporate expression of the redeeming God.

by the Editors