

The Mingled Spirit— The Key to the Christian Life

by Ron Kangas

The book of Romans, a marvelous presentation of the gospel of God concerning His Son, is a summary of essential truths related to the Christian life and the church life. The central thought of this Epistle is that God, through His complete salvation including redemption and salvation in life (5:10), is transforming sinners into sons of God to constitute them the Body of Christ, which is expressed as the local churches. This thought is woven into the structure of Romans: introduction—the gospel of God (1:1-17), condemnation (1:18—3:20), justification (3:21—5:11), sanctification (5:12—8:13), glorification (8:14-39), selection (9:1—11:36), transformation (12:1—15:13), and conclusion (15:14—16:27). Paul's central thought is developed through his description of the eight stages of the Christian life. The first of these stages is the stage of being sinful and under God's condemnation, and the last is the stage of living in the Body of Christ by participating actively in the church life. The intervening stages include being justified and regenerated, realizing that in Adam we have sin and death, realizing that we have been baptized into Christ, trying to do good in the flesh, and walking according to the spirit (Lee, *Mingling* 7-15). Thus, Romans begins with sinners under the righteous judgment of God and ends with the local churches as the expression of the unique, organic Body of Christ constituted with the sons of God.

Regrettably, countless readers of Romans have failed to see that the subject of this book is the complete gospel of God, including everything from condemnation and justification to the Body of Christ and the local churches. However, even among those who have been enlightened regarding the gospel of God as unveiled in Romans, very few have paid adequate attention to a matter of inestimable importance—the truth that the Spirit of Christ (who is also the Spirit of life and the Spirit of God) and the regenerated human spirit have been joined organically to become one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). As a result of this union, the divine Spirit and the human spirit have been mingled together in the believers to become a mingled spirit, a spirit which, in reality, is both divine and human.

Concentrating on the revelation in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, this essay will advance the thesis that the mingled spirit is the key to the Christian life. This key opens to the children of God the vast, infinite realm of the kingdom of God, bringing them into the experience of salvation in life, reigning in life, walking in newness of life, serving in newness of spirit, living the grafted life in the organic union, and experiencing the dispensing of the Triune God as life into their tripartite being. Furthermore, this key activates the operation of the law of the Spirit of life, which law conforms the children of God to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God for the corporate expression of God. Apart from our living and walking in the mingled spirit, we cannot live the normal Christian life, we cannot practice the genuine church life, and we cannot build up the Body of Christ. Stated positively, when we live and walk in the spirit—the mingled spirit—we live as sons of God, we function and serve in the church, and we contribute to the building

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up of the Body of Christ. The mingled spirit is therefore the key to the Christian life and the church life. If we know and live in the mingled spirit, the Triune God and all the divine things will be realities to us, but if we are ignorant of the mingled spirit or if we continue to live in ourselves and not live by the mingled spirit, we will be utterly devoid of spiritual reality, having a mere doctrinal understanding of God and His purpose. In a very real sense, this is an issue of all or nothing. If we walk according to the mingled spirit, we have all, but if we live in the flesh and out from the self, we have nothing. The believers must know the key to the Christian life, and this key is the mingled spirit.

The Significance of the Mingled Spirit

The New Testament speaks clearly and emphatically of the divine Spirit—the eternal Spirit of God—and of the human spirit—the spirit of man placed in humankind by God in the act of creation. Certain portions of the Word refer to these two spirits simultaneously. “Who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11). Human beings have a spirit, which is the lamp of the Lord searching all the innermost parts (Prov. 20:27), and this spirit “knows the things of man.” The human spirit within a person thoroughly knows the things of that person. In like manner, only the Spirit of God knows the things of God, and “we have received...the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God” (1 Cor. 2:12). It is surely significant that in one breath, so to speak, Paul mentions both the human spirit and the divine Spirit.

According to the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus took the lead to link the human spirit and the divine Spirit. Explaining the truth of regeneration to an incredulous Nicodemus, He said, “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (3:6). *The Spirit* denotes the divine Spirit, and *spirit* refers to the regenerated human spirit. This indicates that in the action of regeneration, the human spirit is born of the divine Spirit and from that point onward contains eternal life (vv. 15-16), the life of God. “Regeneration is accomplished in the human spirit by the Holy Spirit of God with God’s life, the uncreated eternal life” (Recovery Version, John 3:6, note 2). As the Lord Jesus Himself made clear, it is in the regenerated human spirit that the children of God worship the Father in spirit and in truthfulness: “An hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness” (4:23-24). God is Spirit, and in order to worship Him in the way that He desires, we must worship in, with, by, and through our regenerated spirit. Because God is Spirit, we must exercise our spirit to contact Him. Thus, spirit worships Spirit.

We see an even closer, more intimate relationship between the divine Spirit and the human spirit in Romans 8:16: “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” Having been born of the Spirit in our spirit to become children of God with the life of God (John 1:12-13), we now have an inward, spiritual testimony to this fact. The Spirit, who regenerated us, witnesses along with our spirit, which has been regenerated by the Spirit, that we are children of God. We may say that the Spirit witnesses to our spirit and that the Spirit witnesses together with our spirit. This indicates that the Spirit dwells in our spirit and works in and with our spirit. Hence, it is not the Spirit alone who witnesses that we are children of God; rather, the Spirit and our spirit, the Spirit with our spirit, testify of this organic reality and relationship with the Father in the divine life. The Spirit confirms that we are children of God, and our spirit knows that we are children of God. What a sweet, precious, tender assurance this is!

In 1 Corinthians 6:17—one of the most mysterious and amazing statements in the Scriptures—we see that the Spirit is not only with our spirit but also that the divine Spirit and the human spirit have become one spirit. Here Paul says, “He who is joined to


the Lord is one spirit.” *Joined* refers to our organic union with the Lord Jesus through our believing into Him (and not simply in Him, John 3:15-16). As branches in the true vine, which is Christ Himself (15:1-5), we now have an intimate, personal life relationship with Him; that is, we are in Him and are even part of Him organically. The Lord, with whom we have been joined as one spirit, is the pneumatic Christ in resurrection, Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of reality. “The Lord is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17), and in spirit we have been joined to Him. *One spirit* in 1 Corinthians 6:17 denotes the oneness of the divine Spirit and the regenerated human spirit, the union of our spirit with the Lord as the life-giving Spirit. Now the Spirit and our spirit are not only co-existent in God’s salvation as distinct entities, the Spirit and our spirit are not simply linked by regeneration and in the worship of the Father, and the Spirit is not merely with our spirit testifying of our status as children of God; the Spirit (the Lord Spirit, the Lord as the life-giving Spirit—2 Cor. 3:18) and our spirit have actually been joined in such a marvelous way that these two spirits have become one spirit. The Spirit is with our spirit, the Spirit is in our spirit, and the Spirit is one with our spirit. As children of God, we are one spirit with the Lord.

Because we are one spirit with the Lord, our spirit has been mingled with the divine Spirit to become the mingled spirit. This is the spirit in Romans 8:4: “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.” Some translators regard *the spirit* in this verse as referring to the divine Spirit and thus capitalize the word *Spirit*; others consider *the spirit* here the human spirit and employ the word *spirit* to indicate this. However, the spirit here, as in numerous other places in the New Testament, is neither the divine Spirit only nor the human spirit only but the mingled spirit—the union, oneness, and mingling of the divine Spirit with the regenerated human spirit. The following note is exceedingly helpful:

It is difficult to discern the word *spirit* used in this chapter, in Gal. 5, and in other places in the New Testament, unless it is clearly designated to denote God’s Holy Spirit or our regenerated spirit, as in v. 9 and v. 16 of this chapter. According to the usage in the New Testament, the word *spirit*, as used in this verse, denotes our regenerated human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Spirit, who is the consummation of the Triune God (v. 9). This corresponds with 1 Cor. 6:17, “He who is joined to the Lord [who is the Spirit— 2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 15:45] is one spirit”—one mingled spirit. (Recovery Version, v. 4, note 3)

“One mingled spirit”: this is the great light shed on the Christian life in this verse. In the being of all those who have been born of God to become children of God, the divine Spirit and the regenerated human spirit have been mingled to be one mingled spirit.

At this juncture we need to ponder the nature of this mingled spirit. Is this spirit divine? Is it human? The answer, of course, is that the mingled spirit is both divine and human, for it contains the elements of both divinity and humanity. On the one hand, the mingled spirit continues to be a human faculty or organ; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit of God has come to dwell in the enlivened, regenerated human spirit, and as a result, the mingled spirit is divine. We would assert, therefore, that the mingled spirit, including both the eternal Spirit of God and the regenerated spirit of man is a God-man spirit—a spirit that is man yet God and God yet man. This certainly does not mean that by being the dwelling place of God and possessing the life and nature of God, a believer in Christ participates in the Godhead. No, although we have been born of God to be children of God having the life and nature of God and thereby having become the same as God in life and nature—who even are God in life and nature—we do not share the Godhead of God and will never be objects of worship. Furthermore, by entering into our regenerated spirit and mingling with it to become one mingled spirit, the divine Spirit has not ceased to be God in His incommunicable Godhead. In His essence and eternal co-existence as a person in the triune Godhead, the divine Spirit is immutable; He is eternally divine. Nevertheless, in God’s economy the Spirit



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of God has passed through a process that makes it possible for Him to live in our spirit, to be one with our spirit, and to be mingled with our spirit as one mingled spirit.¹

How the Human Spirit and the Divine Spirit Become the Mingled Spirit

In substance God is Spirit (John 4:24), and the Spirit of God is a person in the Godhead. Because His eternal intention according to the desire of His heart is to make Himself the content of the human beings created by Him in His image, God created humankind with a spirit, the human spirit. As the Lord's word in John 4:23-24 makes evident, only spirit can contact Spirit, and only spirit can be one with Spirit.

The human spirit, in the case of the believers in Christ, is in three stages. The first stage is the human spirit in God's creation of humanity. When God created humankind, He formed within the human vessel a spirit, produced by the entering in of the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). This spirit within man is neither the Spirit of God nor the life of God but is similar to the Spirit of God and the life of God.² Due to this similarity, it is possible for the human spirit to contain the divine Spirit and for the divine Spirit to dwell in the human spirit. We may say that because the human spirit is something very close to the Spirit of God and the life of God, the Spirit of God finds it comfortable to be in the human spirit, and the human spirit finds it most restful, peaceful, and satisfying to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Sadly, when humankind fell into sin by disobeying God's word and partaking of the sinful nature of Satan signified by the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the human spirit was seriously affected. Regarding the tree of knowledge, God had issued a solemn warning: "Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (vv. 16-17). This is the word of God, who cannot lie. The man and the woman partook of the fruit of this forbidden tree, and, true to God's word, on that very day they died. But in what sense did they die? To be sure, they remained alive physically for centuries, and their soul, having been corrupted by the element of sin, had become the self and was actually more alive than ever, as they began to live out from themselves as the source according to their newly acquired knowledge of good and evil. They died in their spirit and thereby became dead in their offenses and sins (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). When they died in this way, experiencing spiritual death—death in their spirit—their spirit was not annihilated; rather, in relation to the living God, the One who is eternal life, their spirit was deadened. The human spirit as an organ remained within them, but it was in a "coma," in the deep "sleep" of death resulting from sin. This is the second stage in the history of the human spirit.

This bad news is, through the gospel, followed by good news, glorious news. "Even when we were dead in offenses, [God] made us alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5). "You, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses" (Col. 2:13). Both verses tell us that we were made alive together with Christ. In the sight of God, this took place through the resurrection of Christ, at which time God regenerated us (1 Pet. 1:3).³ One day we experienced the fulfillment and application of the Lord's word in John 5:25: "Truly, truly, I say to you, An hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." *The dead* here refers to those who are dead in spirit, in keeping with the verses quoted above. Thus, *will live* means to be made alive in spirit. When we, under the enlightening and convicting of the Holy Spirit, believed into Christ, we heard "the voice of the Son of God" speaking as the Spirit of life in the word of God. Then we were made alive in our deadened spirit; that is, based upon Christ's redemption and its application by the Spirit, our deadened spirit was enlivened, made alive. This is the third stage of the human spirit, the stage in which the human spirit could be joined to the Lord Spirit to become one spirit.

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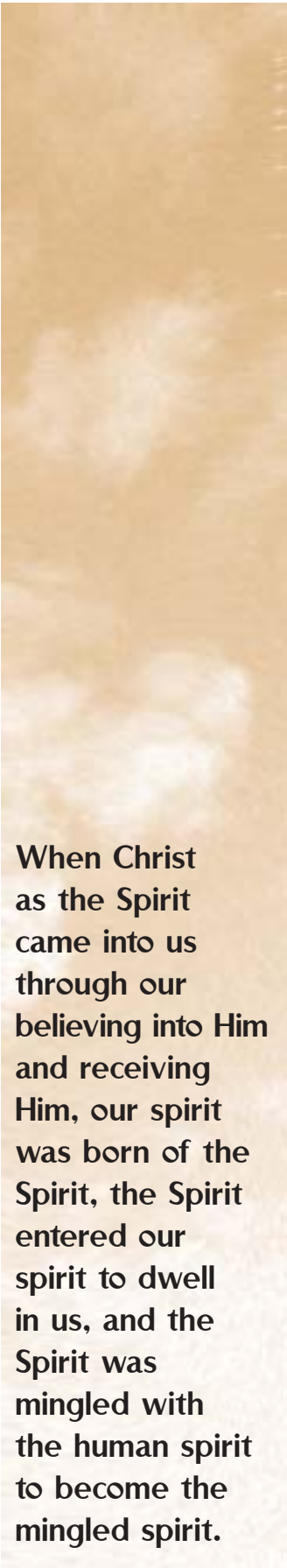
When our spirit was enlivened, the Lord as the Spirit (cf. 7:39) was joined to our spirit in regeneration to form the mingled spirit. To speak of *the Lord as the Spirit* is to emphasize a central matter in God's economy whereby the God who dwells in unapproachable light could dwell in us. Apart from the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, it would have been impossible for the Spirit of God to enter the spirit of man. We know from the Gospel of John that the Word, who is God, "became flesh and tabernacled among us" (1:14). This is God with us, God among us, but not yet God in us. In order to be in us, as the Lord Jesus revealed in John 14, it was necessary for Him to go away through death and then come to us in resurrection (v. 28). Regarding this, the Lord said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (16:7). This Comforter is "another Comforter," "the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you" (14:16-17). If we study John 14 with care in the spirit, we will see that "another Comforter" is actually Christ in resurrection as the life-giving Spirit. "The very 'He' who is the Spirit of reality in this verse [v. 17] becomes the very 'I' who is the Lord Himself in v. 18. This means that the Christ who was in the flesh went through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ" (Recovery Version, v. 17, note 2). Christ in His incarnation was the Comforter with the disciples, but He was not yet the Comforter within them. In order to dwell in them, He needed to "go" by dying on the cross and then "come" on the day of His resurrection as the Spirit, the holy breath (20:22). Now, as believers in Christ, we have Christ dwelling within us as another Comforter, the Spirit of reality.

When Christ as the Spirit—the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of reality—came into us through our believing into Him and receiving Him, our spirit was born of the Spirit (3:6), the divine Spirit entered our spirit forever to dwell in us, and the divine Spirit was mingled with the human spirit to become the mingled spirit within us. This is the mingled spirit about which we are speaking, the mingled spirit that, as we will now try to point out from the book of Romans, is the key to the Christian life.

Living Christ as the Spirit in Our Spirit

In the book of Romans the apostle Paul has a great deal to say concerning Christ. Christ is the seed of David and the One who was designated the Son of God in resurrection (1:3-4). Christ is the Redeemer and the propitiation place (3:22-26) and the factor of our justification (4:25). Christ is our peace toward God and our access into God's grace (5:1-2). Christ is the Reconciler and the Savior (vv. 8-11). Christ is the one man through whom we receive the grace of God and the gift in grace of our justification (vv. 15-21). Christ is the new husband (7:2-6) and the Emancipator from the law of sin and of death (v. 22—8:4). Christ is the One sent by God in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin (v. 3). Christ is the Heir of God, the Firstborn of God, and the One who makes us more than conquerors (vv. 17, 29, 37). Christ is God blessed forever (9:5). Christ is the end of the law, the word, and the Lord who is rich to all who call upon Him (10:4-13). Christ is the Deliverer (11:26), the element and sphere of the members in the Body (12:4-5), and the Lord of the dead and of the living (14:7-9). Such a Christ—the all-inclusive Christ—is for our experience and enjoyment so that we may fulfill God's desire to build up the Body of Christ as His corporate expression. If we are impressed with this marvelous revelation in Romans, we will realize that the Christian life is focused on this Christ, and the church is the organic expression of this Christ.

In Romans Paul develops the word of the Lord Jesus in John 15:4: "Abide in Me and I in you." This is a life, a divine-human coinherence—the mutual dwelling of the believers in Christ and of Christ in the believers. This coinhering life is unveiled wonderfully in chapter 8 of Romans. "There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). *In Christ Jesus* refers not only to our standing, or position, in Christ, as revealed



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in chapter 6, but especially to an actual daily living in the regenerated human spirit. To abide in Christ, who is the Spirit, is to live and remain in our spirit, where Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells. In 8:10 Paul uses the words *Christ is in you*. When Christ was in the flesh, He could only be among the disciples and with them; He could not be in them. Now that He is the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, He can dwell in us, and He does in fact dwell in our regenerated spirit.⁴ The genuine Christian life is a life of coinherence, as we dwell in Christ and Christ dwells in us. We live in Christ and Christ lives in us because He is the Spirit in our spirit.

If we are enlightened regarding this tremendous matter, we will realize that the Christian life is not simply a life of ethics, morality, and spirituality, and it surely is not a life of self-cultivation and self-improvement. Rather, the Christian life is Christ—the Christ who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit mingled with our regenerated spirit. The Christian life is a matter of living Christ, who is the Spirit in our spirit. In Galatians 2:20 Paul testifies that he has been crucified with Christ, that he no longer lives, and that Christ lives in him. In Philippians 1:21 he goes on to declare that for him to live is Christ, for Christ is his life (Col. 3:4). Thus, to live the Christian life is to live Christ, who is the Spirit in our spirit. He lives in us, and we live because of Him (John 6:57), and we actually live Him as He lives in us. This is according to the Lord's own word in John 14:19: "Because I live, you also shall live." The resurrected Christ is living His God-man life in us, and since we are one with Him, His living becomes our living as we live Him.

The key to the entire Christian life is that the all-inclusive Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our spirit and mingles Himself with our spirit so that now these two spirits are one mingled spirit. If we do not know Him and experience Him as the Spirit and if we do not know and exercise our regenerated human spirit, the life we live, regardless of how good, pious, and even scriptural it may be, is not the Christian life presented in the New Testament by Paul, who received mercy from the Lord to be a pattern to all the believers (1 Tim. 1:16). Paul lived by the Spirit, walked by the Spirit, and walked according to the spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4), and in his Epistle to the Romans he presents a number of crucial points regarding the mingled spirit as the key to the Christian life.

Our Spirit Being Life

"If Christ is in you,...the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10). In this verse there are at least five matters that require close attention. In the previous verse Paul refers to the Spirit of Christ, and in this verse He speaks of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself in us, and the indwelling Christ is actually the Spirit of Christ. For Christ to be in us means that the Spirit of Christ, or Christ as the Spirit, dwells in us, for as we have pointed out according to the Gospel of John, apart from being the life-giving Spirit, it is impossible for Christ to be in us. Christ can live in us only as the Spirit. Through Christ's being in us, our spirit is life because of righteousness.

In God's salvation the impartation of the divine life must be based upon His righteousness. By means of God's justification we receive righteousness, which is both objective—the justice of God as a divine attribute—and subjective—Christ as righteousness living in us. Justification is God's action of approving us, the believers in Christ, according to the standard of His righteousness. According to Paul's thought in Romans 5:18, justification is of life and unto life. Justification results in life, and life is the issue of justification. "Justification is not an end in itself; it is for life. Through justification we have come up to the standard of God's righteousness and correspond with it, so that now He can impart His life to us" (Recovery Version, Rom. 5:18, note 2). The dispensing, the imparting, of the divine life into our deadened spirit depends upon God's righteousness displayed in His justifying those who believe into Christ.

Although justification is of life and unto life, in 8:10 Paul says neither that the spirit has

life nor that the spirit is living. Amazingly, he says that the spirit is life itself. Not only does the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit dispense life into our spirit; by mingling Himself as the One who is life itself with our spirit, He causes the mingled spirit to be life (John 11:25; 14:6). *The spirit is life!* The mingled spirit is the divine life itself, for a divine element—life, the first and most basic attribute of God—has been added to our spirit and mingled with our spirit.

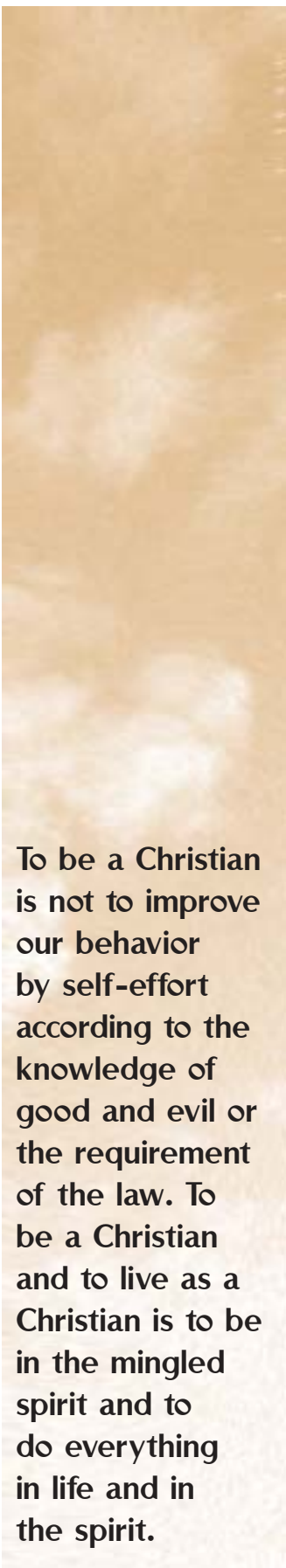
Because the mingled spirit is life, for us to be in spirit is to be in life, to walk in the spirit is to walk in life, to speak with the spirit is to speak life (2 Cor. 4:13), and to minister by the spirit is to minister life. The Christian life, therefore, is wholly a matter of life, and this life is the divine, eternal, uncreated, indestructible life. To be a Christian is not to improve our character or behavior by self-effort according to the knowledge of good and evil or the requirement of the law. To be a Christian and to live as a Christian is, first, to be in the mingled spirit, which has become life, and to do everything in life and in the spirit. This is the Christian life in the mingled spirit.

Walking according to the Spirit

The fact that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled not by us but in us is made evident by Paul's word in Romans 8:4: "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." In keeping with Paul's concept in this verse, to walk is to live, to move, and to have our entire being. Hence, to walk in the spirit is to live, move, and have our being in the mingled spirit. This is the Lord's particular requirement of the believers, and it is echoed in Galatians 5, where Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit," and "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (vv. 16, 25). To walk by the Spirit in Galatians 5 is to walk according to the spirit in Romans 8, because the Spirit by which we walk dwells in and is mingled with the spirit according to which we walk. Such a walk, such a daily living, is the believers' living Christ in a practical way, and it is actually Jesus living again in His many brothers. If we abide in Him by remaining in the spirit, where He as the Spirit dwells, we will live as He lived. The apostle John, who knew the Lord as the Spirit and who lived in the regenerated human spirit (Rev. 1:10), embraced and advocated this understanding of the true Christian life. "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). This is repetition, not imitation.⁵ As we walk according to the spirit, Christ lives in us, and we live the highest life on the highest plane:

According to the desire of the Triune God, who mingled Himself with us, our living as believers is not only a living that is scriptural, nor merely a living that is "sanctified" and "victorious," but a living that is a walk according to the spirit in us, which spirit is the mingling of two spirits as one. Such a living causes our flesh, our self, our soul, and our natural life to lose their position and function, and allows the processed Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, to gain the full ground in us in order that He may reach the goal of mingling Himself with our tripartite being, the spirit, the soul, and the body, that is, that we may be fully occupied by Him and filled and saturated with Him, taking Him as our life, our person, and our everything, that we may be completely one with Him to be His full expression. (*Life* 258)

In Paul's understanding of the spiritual life, walking according to the mingled spirit contrasts with two other kinds of walk common among believers. Romans 8:4 speaks of those who do not walk according to the flesh. Of course, as Galatians 5:17 makes clear, "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," and those who walk by the Spirit will "by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh" (v. 16) and thus will be kept from exhibiting the works of the flesh catalogued in verses 19 through 21. However, to walk according to the flesh may also bear the significance of trying by self-effort to fulfill the demands of the law. If believers are led by the Spirit, they are not under law as a principle, and if they walk according to the spirit, the righteous requirement of



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We must deny the self, take up the cross, and follow the Lord, who is now the Spirit in our regenerated spirit. Then we will no longer walk, as unbelievers walk, in the vanity of the mind but will walk according to the mingled spirit within us.

the law will be fulfilled in them but not by their own effort. In either case, a walk that is according to the spirit is opposed to a walk that is according to the flesh.

Ephesians 4:17-18, speaking of another way of living that is contrary to living in the mingled spirit, charges, “This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.” Paul’s words *no longer* indicate that whereas believers should no longer walk in the vanity of the mind, they can continue to do so. If this were not the situation, there would have been no need for Paul to give this exhortation. To walk in the vanity of the mind is to be controlled by vain thoughts and even by Satan himself. When our mind is set on “the things of men” instead of on “the things of God,” we are in the self—the fallen, corrupted soul—and become the practical expression of the mind of Satan (Matt. 16:21-26). To avoid this, we must deny the self, take up the cross, and follow the Lord, who is now the Spirit in our regenerated spirit. Then we will no longer walk, as unbelievers walk, in the vanity of the mind but will walk according to the mingled spirit within us.

Walking in Newness of Life

To walk according to the spirit is to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). Both newness and life are God Himself, the eternal, self-existing, ever-existing, ever-new Divine Being. Moreover, newness is related essentially to the resurrection life of Christ, which is intrinsically new and can never become old, stale, or moribund and in which and by which all things are made new (2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5). The context of Paul’s word about walking in newness of life reveals this emphatically: “Are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4). The link between Christ’s being raised from the dead and our walking in newness of life indicates that to walk in newness of life is to live in Christ as resurrection life (John 11:25) and to walk in Him as the realm of resurrection. Therefore, newness of life is God as newness in His eternal life in resurrection, and to walk in newness of life by walking according to the mingled spirit is to walk in God, in the life of God, in the element of God, and in the resurrection power of God. As we walk in the spirit and in newness of life, we are gradually renewed in our tripartite being by the renewing capacity of the divine life in resurrection.

If we would appreciate the need to walk in newness of life, we need to see that God’s goal is to produce the new creation out of the old creation (Gal. 6:14; 2 Cor. 5:17). The old, or original, creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation—which is not the renewed universe but the believers as sons of God born of God—does possess this life and nature. The new creation is new because it has God wrought into it and it is being filled with God. From this we see that the believers as God’s new creation have God within them as their life, nature, appearance, and expression. Since newness is God Himself, to become new is to become God in His attribute of newness (but not, of course, in the Godhead), and to be renewed (Rom. 12:2) is to have the element of God daily added into our being to replace and discharge our old element.

The new creation comes into being by resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23, 45). In His work in His resurrection, Christ rose up on the first day of the week to germinate the new creation (John 20:1). The fact that Christ rose on the first day of the week indicates that the universe had a new beginning in His resurrection. Whereas His crucifixion terminated the old creation with the old man (Rom. 6:6), His resurrection germinated the new creation in and with the divine life (1 Pet. 1:3). The germinating element of the new creation is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Hence,

the center and lifeline of the new creation is the life-giving Spirit, the very Spirit who, when entering the deadened spirit, causes our spirit to be resurrected.


This resurrection of our spirit was our regeneration, and it was by being regenerated that we were made a new creation. When we were regenerated, born of the Spirit in our spirit (John 3:6), we were re-created, and the element of God was added to us. Regeneration caused us to become a new creation, something which has the element of God as part of its constitution, because regeneration caused us to have God's life and nature (John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). Although we remain God's creation, now we are God's new creation in the divine life. By believing into Christ and being baptized into Christ, we enter into an organic union, a life union, with Christ in our regenerated spirit. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). We are a new creation in the organic union with Christ, and experientially, we live a life in the new creation only by abiding in Christ, that is, in the life-giving Spirit in our spirit. To be in Christ is to be one with Him in life and nature; this is of God, and it takes place through our faith in Christ, which faith is graciously given to us by God (1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 3:26-28). Apart from this organic union in the mingled spirit, we remain in the old creation and live as part of the old creation. By the organic union with the Triune God in Christ as the Spirit, we are in the new creation. In this union with Christ, the pneumatic Christ—Christ as the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ—lives in us, and we live in Him, by Him, and with Him. This is the new creation in reality. Although we remain God's creatures and will forever be dependent upon Him for our existence, we are nonetheless mingled with the Creator, for He is in us, and we are in Him. Since we have become one with the Triune God, His life becomes our life, and our living becomes His living. To walk in newness of life is to have such a living in and as the new creation.

The Christian life is a life of being renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). We are renewed daily by having more of the element of God added into our being through our contact with Him in fellowship through the Word and by the Spirit. Through this contact the renewing Spirit (Titus 3:5) imparts something new—the divine essence of the new man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10-11)—into our being to make us an altogether new creation in the divine life. The mingled spirit, as the renewing Spirit mingled with our regenerated spirit, renews us by infusing our inward parts with God's ever-new element and attributes. As we are being renewed, we are gradually transferred from the realm of the old creation to be the new man of the new creation to fulfill God's eternal purpose to produce the New Jerusalem as a corporate new man for God's glorious expression (Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

We have emphasized the fact that the new creation is a person, a believer in Christ, who has been born of God to have the life and element of God, both of which are eternally new. As such persons, we should live and walk not in the outer man, which is being consumed, but in the inner man—in our regenerated spirit mingled with and indwelt by Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This is to walk according to the spirit, and this is to walk in newness of life.

Serving God in the Spirit

The more we walk according to the spirit, the more we will serve God in the mingled spirit. "God is my witness," Paul testifies, "whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son" (Rom. 1:9). In the past as an ardent religionist, Paul served God (or supposed that he did) in the self and by the flesh, not in the spirit (Phil. 3:3-7), but eventually he became a person who served by the Spirit of God and had no confidence in the flesh (v. 3). To serve by the Spirit of God and to serve in the human spirit are to serve in the mingled spirit. No longer did Paul presume to serve God by the power and ability of his soul and his natural life. On the contrary, as one who was conformed to the mold of Christ's death and who experienced the circumcision of the cross (vv. 10, 3), Paul served in the spirit. Such service is rare among believers today, the vast majority of whom serve by natural,



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human ability, not with resurrected ability, that is, ability that has been processed through the experience of the cross to be in the resurrection life of Christ. When believers serve in resurrection, they serve by the Spirit of God, and when they serve in the mingled spirit, they serve in resurrection. In seminaries and Bible schools around the globe, men and women are taught various methods of service, including worldly techniques. But who takes seriously Paul's word about serving in the mingled spirit?

To serve in the mingled spirit is spontaneously to serve "in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter" (Rom. 7:6). Serving in newness of spirit is the issue of our old man having been crucified with Christ (6:6), our being discharged from the law (7:6), and our being joined to Christ as the Spirit in resurrection. Regarding this, verse 4 says, "So then, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God." If we serve in the reality of our crucifixion and resurrection with Christ and of our being joined to Him as one spirit in the organic union, we will serve in newness of spirit, not in any kind of religious or ritualistic oldness. Once again, the spirit in 7:6 is the mingled spirit, the regenerated human spirit enlivened by and one with the life-giving Spirit, and in this mingled spirit we experience perpetual, divine newness in the resurrection life of Christ. "Everything that is related to our regenerated spirit is new, and everything that comes out of our spirit is new. Our regenerated spirit is a source of newness because the Lord, the life of God, and the Holy Spirit are there" (Recovery Version, v. 6, note 4).

In Romans 12:11 Paul touches on another aspect of serving in the mingled spirit: "Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord." Zeal in this verse is not natural human fervency or fleshly intensity, such as that exhibited by Saul of Tarsus in his persecution of those who called on the name of the Lord Jesus. To be zealous in serving the Lord is to be burning in the mingled spirit. God Himself is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29)—the divine fire that is burning in our regenerated spirit, making it a burning spirit that is fanned into flame to be a spirit of power, of love, and of sobermindedness (2 Tim. 1:6-7). In and by the mingled spirit within us, we serve God with a burning spirit and in newness of spirit.

It is significant that in Romans 1:9 Paul said that he served God "in the gospel of His Son." To serve God as a slave in the gospel concerning His Son (vv. 1, 3-4), as Paul surely did, is not merely to preach the elementary, yet most precious, truth that Christ died on the cross for our sins so that we may have eternal life. Rightly understood in the light of the New Testament, the gospel of God, which is the word of the truth, includes the entirety of divinely revealed truth (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5), especially the truth of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ (2:2; Eph. 3:4, 9-10). This gospel is intensely focused on the Son of God, whom, in His love for the world, God gave so that by believing into the Son, we might be born of God, have eternal life, enter the kingdom of God, and become the bride of Christ, all for the fulfillment of the desire of God's heart to produce the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem. If we serve God in the mingled spirit, we will be one with God and thereby serve Him, not according to what is right or necessary in our eyes but according to God's intention to produce many sons as the reproduction of Christ as the firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29). The mingled spirit, serving God in the spirit, and the gospel of God concerning His Son are all part of one marvelous reality in the economy of God, planned in eternity for eternity but fulfilled in time through believers who live, walk, and serve in the mingled spirit.⁶

Living a Grafted Life in the Mingled Spirit

The Bible reveals that the relationship which God desires to have with man is that He and man become one in an organic union, a union of life (1 Cor. 6:17; John 15:1-5). As we read and study the Scriptures, we need to respect the principle that God's intention


is to be one with His chosen and redeemed people. The central line in the divine economy is that of God and man, man and God, becoming one corporate entity, with the two having one living by one life with one nature (Rev. 22:17). In His desire to be one with man, God created man in His image and according to His likeness, and with a spirit to contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him. To work out the divine-human oneness that God desires, Christ in His incarnation brought God into man, and in His resurrection He brought man into God, accomplishing the mingling of God and man. Using the biblical metaphor of grafting in Romans 11:17-24, we may say that we have been grafted into Christ as the tree, and now He and we are one organism. Christ and the believers are one tree: He is the vine, and we are the branches (John 15:1, 4-5). Ultimately, the oneness between God and His chosen people will be completed, and they will be consummated to become the holy city, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10).

If we see this great spiritual vision, we will realize that as believers in Christ, we should live a grafted life—a life in which we are one spirit with the Lord and, in the mingled spirit, live in an organic union with Him. In grafting, two similar lives are joined and then grow together organically. Thus, grafting can be effective only if the lives to be grafted are similar. Because our human life was made in the image of God and according to the likeness of God and because the human spirit is similar to the life and Spirit of God, the human life and the divine life can be joined through grafting. The most wonderful reality in the Christian experience is that, in the spiritual grafting that produces an organic union, the believers in Christ are united with Christ in the way of life.

This is not a so-called exchanged life but the mingling of the human life with the divine life. According to the concept of an exchanged life advocated by some Christian teachers, the Lord requires that we give up our poor life in exchange for His superior life, with the result that we yield our human life to Him, and He replaces it with His divine life. However, far from being an exchanged life, the genuine Christian life in the mingled spirit is a grafted life involving the mingling of the divine life with the human life. Instead of exchange, there is the dispensing of the divine life into the human life, the mingling of the divine life with the human life, the living of the divine life in the human life, and the expression of the divine life through the human life. Therefore, in the grafted life the human life is not eliminated but is strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine life. The human life retains its essential characteristics, but it is transformed by the divine life for God's expression (2 Cor. 3:18). As we live a grafted life with Christ in the mingled spirit, the divine life saturates our entire being, and by this saturation we are transformed and conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29).

In order for us to be grafted into Christ, He had to pass through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit. Christ became flesh to be the seed, the shoot, of David, that He and we could be grafted together (John 1:14; Matt. 1:1; Zech. 3:8; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). It was necessary for Christ to become a wooden branch because as human beings we are branches. Through His incarnation Christ came as the branch of David to be the same as we so that He and we could be grafted together. Grafting requires cutting, and on the cross Christ was "cut" by God. In this way, Christ's being was opened for us to be put into Him by God (1 Cor. 1:30). After He was "cut" on the cross, He was resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit ready to be grafted together with us (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17). When we repented and received the Lord by believing into Him, He as the Spirit came into our spirit, and the two spirits were grafted, joined to become one mingled spirit. In this mingled spirit we can live a grafted life.

As regenerated ones who are one spirit with the Lord, we should live a grafted life—a life in which two parties are joined to grow together organically. After we have been grafted into Christ, we should no longer live an independent life by ourselves apart from Him; rather, we should allow the pneumatic Christ to live in us, and we should live Him by walking according to the spirit (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; Rom. 8:4). Instead of continuing



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The incarnated Christ and God the Father had a coinhering oneness with one life and one living. This coinhering oneness has been enlarged and duplicated by Christ through His resurrection to become the oneness that He shares with His believers.

to live by our flesh or by our natural being, we should live by our regenerated spirit, a spirit grafted into Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This is not an individualistic life, that is, a life apart from the life of fellowship flowing in the vine, the fellowship of the unique, universal Body of Christ. Through grafting we are united with Christ, mingled with Christ, and incorporated with Christ to become members of the organic Body of Christ (12:4-5). Therefore, we live a grafted life as members of the Body of Christ.

To live a grafted life is to live according to the God-ordained principle of incarnation. The principle of incarnation is that God enters into man and mingles Himself with man to make Himself one with man; thus, God is in man, and man is in God. The incarnated Christ and God the Father had a coinhering oneness with one life and one living (John 6:57; 14:10). This coinhering oneness has been enlarged and duplicated by Christ through His resurrection to become the oneness that He shares with His believers as He lives in and through them and as they live Him. The Christian life in the mingled spirit thus becomes a life in the principle of incarnation—the principle of God living, acting, and moving through those who are one with Him. As 1 Corinthians 7 illustrates, the experience of the grafted life in the principle of incarnation is God mingled with man as one person with two natures and is God and man living together with one life and one living. This is also the living revealed in Galatians 2:20. On the one hand, Paul could say, “It is no longer I who live”; on the other hand, he could say, “Christ...lives in me.” In this verse we have both the old “I,” which was without God, and the new “I,” which has God as life added to it. The “I” who no longer lives is the “I” without God, and the “I” who now lives is the “I” into which God has been added. The old “I” was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6) and then was resurrected in Christ and with Christ, and in this resurrection the new “I” came into being. This “I” has been grafted together with Christ to be mingled with Him as one spirit. Christ lives in a new, resurrected “me,” and a new, resurrected “I” lives Christ. This is the grafted life in the mingled spirit.

In order to be proper, normal Christians, we need to know that today the Lord Jesus as the embodiment of the Triune God is the Spirit dwelling in our regenerated spirit and mingled with our spirit as one mingled spirit. The secret of everything in God’s eternal economy is in the life-giving Spirit who is now in our regenerated human spirit and who has become one spirit with our spirit. Ultimately, what the Bible requires of us as believers in Christ is that we walk according to the mingled spirit, for the mingled spirit is the key to the Christian life. **AFC**

Notes

¹A crucial distinction needs to be made between the Triune God in His eternal Godhead and the Triune God in His economy. In His Godhead the Triune God is immutable in His essence, nature, and attributes; He does not change, and He cannot change. From eternity to eternity, He is the one unique, self-existing, ever-existing, co-existing, coinhering God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It is impossible for Him ever to be either more or less than what He eternally is. However, this Triune God has an economy, which is His plan and arrangement to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people in order to work Himself into their being and fill them with Himself with the result that they become His corporate expression. In this economy God, who in Himself is immutable, has passed through a process that makes it possible for Him, without violating His transcendence, to enter into us, to live in us, to be one with us, and to be mingled with us. Thus, in Christ as the Spirit, the God who dwells in unapproachable light can regenerate us and dwell in us (1 Tim. 6:16), making us children of light, the light of the world (Eph. 5:8; John 8:12; Matt. 5:14). If we are clear about this distinction between God in His Godhead and God in His economy, we will see how, as the Spirit, such a great and glorious God can become one spirit with His believers, producing the mingled spirit.

²It would be erroneous and even heretical to claim that by nature human beings have the

Spirit of God and the life of God. For man to have a spirit by God's creative act does not mean that the man in God's original creation has the divine element, as may be taught in Gnosticism and in some schools of mysticism. Human beings were given by God a spirit to contact God, to receive God, and to contain God, but this spirit is neither the Spirit of God nor the life of God. The only way for a person to have the Spirit of God and the life of God is to be born of God by believing into and receiving Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To believe into Him is to have eternal life, the life of God. To receive Him is to receive the eternal Spirit, the Spirit of God.

³In comparison with the book of Romans, the book of Ephesians does not consider us sinners; it considers us dead persons. As sinners, we need God's forgiveness and justification, as revealed in the book of Romans. But as dead persons, we need to be made alive. Forgiveness and justification bring us back to God's presence to enjoy His grace and participate in His life, whereas being made alive causes us, the living members of the Body of Christ, to express Him. God made us alive by imparting His eternal life, which is Christ Himself (Col. 3:4), into our dead spirit through His Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). He has enlivened us together with Christ. (Recovery Version, Eph. 2:5, note 1)

⁴Since the divine truths in the Scriptures are balanced according to the principle of the twofoldness of the divine truth, we should also be balanced in our understanding. We know from Luke 24 that the resurrected Christ has a body of flesh and bones, and we know from 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 3 that the resurrected Christ is the Spirit who gives life. According to Romans 8:34, Christ in His ascension is "at the right hand of God," but verse 10 reveals that Christ is in us. Here we have two pairs of balanced truths: the resurrected Christ has a body of flesh and bones, yet He is the life-giving Spirit; Christ is at the right hand of the God in the heavens, yet He is in us, in our spirit. We should not prefer one truth to another, accept one at the expense of the other, or try to force the biblical truths into a system. Rather, we should simply receive and believe all the divine truths without bias, preference, or partiality. If this is our practice, we will believe that the resurrected Christ has a body, and we will confess that He is also the Spirit. We will testify that Christ is in the heavens, and we will know that He is also in us. The point of emphasis in our discussion is that Christ as the Spirit—Christ as the Spirit of Christ—dwells in our regenerated human spirit, forming one mingled spirit.

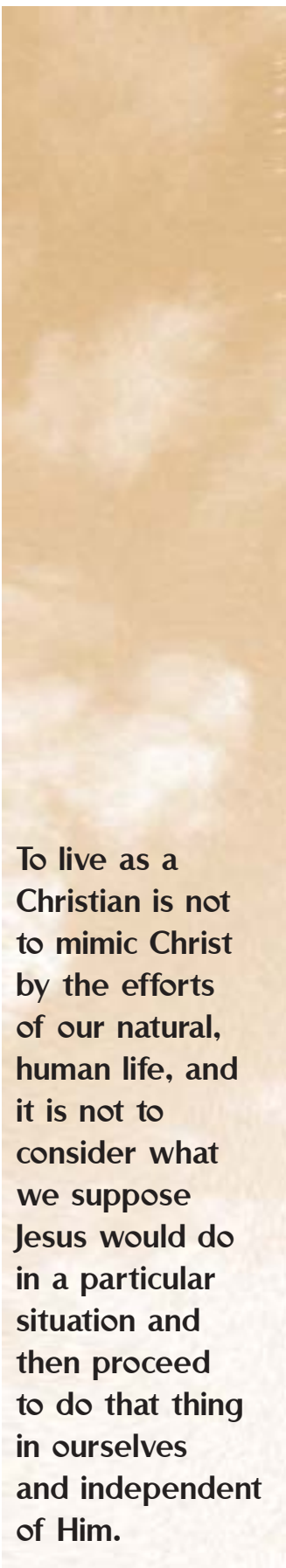
⁵The notion of imitating Christ or of asking "What would Jesus do?" is a deviant idea of the Christian life. To live as a Christian is not to mimic Christ in His divine life by the efforts of our natural, human life. Likewise, the living of a believer in Christ, according to the revelation in the New Testament, is not to consider what we suppose Jesus would do in a particular situation and then proceed to do that thing in ourselves and independent of Him. To reaffirm what we have already emphasized, the Christian life is, on the one hand, a matter of Christ living in us and, on the other hand, a matter of us living Christ by walking according to the mingled spirit. This is two persons—Christ and the believer—living as one, having one life and one living. Only this kind of living can satisfy God, who finds His delight in Christ alone, and only this kind of living can carry out God's economy and fulfill His eternal purpose.

⁶In Romans 2:28-29 Paul says, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God." The following note is enlightening:

Whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have must be in spirit...The reality of all spiritual things depends on the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is in our spirit. Hence, the reality of all spiritual matters depends on our spirit, not on anything apart from our spirit. Whatever is in us is vanity unless it is in our spirit. Everything that God is to us is in our spirit. (Recovery Version, v. 29, note 2)

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