

The Pattern of Paul and the Religion of James

by Ron Kangas

Concerning the organic union of the believers in Christ with the processed and consummated Triune God, the divine revelation in the Bible is complete and inclusive. In the New Testament we see that, in Christ, the Triune God has passed through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). We see also that, beginning with regeneration, the believers need to pass through a process involving sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, glorification, and transfiguration in order to be one with the Triune God in full. Furthermore, the New Testament unveils the central work of God—the Triune God in Christ working Himself into the tripartite man, making man the same as He is in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not, of course, in His Godhead. The process through which the believers become God in this way has been called *deification*. In addition, the New Testament shows us a person—Paul—who, although a typical sinner, received such abundant revelation and grace from the Lord that he was set forth as “a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life” (1 Tim. 1:16). In particular, Paul is a pattern of one who lives, moves, and has his being in union with the Triune God. As a contrast to Paul, the New Testament shows us another person—James—who, although a godly man, was lacking in revelation and thus is set forth as an example of one whose life is not fully according to and for God’s New Testament economy. Today, the “disciples” of James vastly outnumber those of Paul; that is, those who follow the religion of James are far more numerous than those who follow the pattern of Paul. This situation is most serious, for it is a cause of the believers’ deviation from God’s economy—God’s administrative arrangement to dispense Himself in Christ into the believers for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ (vv. 3-4). To follow James in his religion is to deviate from the process which furthers our union with the Triune God. To follow Paul as a pattern is to be directed to those spiritual

experiences which cultivate this marvelous union. Readers of the New Testament should recognize the risk of a blind adherence to the religion of James and the blessing of following Paul as the God-appointed pattern. If we want to cultivate our union with the Triune God, we need to be open to Paul but wary of James. This article is an attempt to explain why. We begin with Paul.

Governed by the Heavenly Vision

In Acts 26:19 the apostle Paul said, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” The word *disobedient* here indicates at least two things: that the heavenly vision has authority to command obedience, and that Paul was obedient to the heavenly vision. He was a person who was governed, directed, and controlled by the heavenly vision. This vision limited him, restricting him to the central line of the divine revelation in the holy Scriptures, the line concerning the divine dispensing for the carrying out of the divine economy. Because Paul was a person of divine vision, he was under divine restraint, doing not what he preferred but what the heavenly vision directed. In this matter his situation was the opposite of that described in Proverbs 29:18: “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained.” The American Standard Version says, “The people cast off restraint”; the King James Version says, “The people perish;” and the Berkeley Version says, “The people run wild.” All these renderings refer to people who are not ruled, restrained, directed, and governed. Before he met the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus, Paul was this kind of person, running amuck in a frenzy of religious hatred, persecuting the believers and seeking to destroy “the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood” (Acts 20:28). But after it pleased God to reveal His Son in him (Gal. 1:15, 16), the former persecutor began “announcing as the gospel the faith which formerly he ravaged” (v. 23). From Acts 9, when he first saw the Lord and believed into Him, through 2 Timothy 4, when he finished his course and was poured out as a drink offering, Paul was obedient to the heavenly vision.

Paul could be obedient to the heavenly vision because he had experienced a condition which we may call “blessed blindness.” Before he became a believer, he served the Lord not according to vision but according to tradition and religion and in a condition of self-confidence and self-righteousness.

But one day a heavenly vision came to him (Acts 9:1-5), revolutionizing him and radically changing his relationship with God and his view of God’s operation in the universe. Before the vision came, Paul was clear and full of sight; he knew what he was doing and where he was going. But as he was making a journey to Damascus, “suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him” (v. 3)—“a light from heaven beyond the brightness of the sun” (26:13)—and he fell to the ground, sightless. “Though his eyes were open, he could see nothing” (9:8), and as he “could not see because of the glory of that light” (22:11), he had to be led by the hand. This was the Lord’s dealing with Paul, who, prior to this time had considered himself very knowledgeable regarding the things of God. “The Lord made him blind so that he could see nothing until the Lord opened his eyes, especially his inner eyes, and commissioned him to open the eyes of others” (Lee, *Acts* 207). What a blessed blindness! Because of such a blindness Paul could experience an inner shining, an inner enlightening, as the inner vision increased more and more until he was thoroughly revolutionized.

Since Paul is a pattern for all believers, we need to question our own experience. Has there ever been a time in our Christian life when we saw a “great light” and became “blind”? Have we ever experienced, under a light brighter than the sun, losing our sight and direction and needing others—perhaps a humble Ananias—to lead us in the Lord’s way? It is a blessing to be blind in this way, for it is a sign that we have seen the heavenly vision.

Such a vision has three elements (cf. Eph. 1:17-18a). The first element is revelation, the lifting of the veil so that we can behold the spiritual scenery in the divine realm. The second element is light: not a natural light or a self-generated light but the light of life (John 1:4), the light which is God Himself embodied in Christ (1 John 1:5; Rev. 21:23). “I am the light of the world,” the God-man Jesus Christ declared; “he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Revelation and light are wonderful, but we still need the third element—sight, the capacity to see. What is the benefit of revelation and light if we are still “a man blind from birth”

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(9:1)? This is not a blessed blindness but the blindness of spiritual death. If, by God’s mercy, we admit that this is our natural condition, we, like blind Bartimaeus, may cry out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:47). If we cry out shamelessly to the Lord, He may ask us the question He addressed to

Bartimaeus: “What do you want Me to do for you?” Then we may say, “That I may receive my sight!” (v. 51). However, if we are self-confident, trusting in our natural abilities and applying them to spiritual matters, we may be subject to the Lord’s solemn word in John 9:39: “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” There is a blindness which comes from the Lord’s judgment on those who say, “We see,” and there is another kind of blindness—blessed blindness caused by “a light from heaven beyond the brightness of the sun.” It is a great mercy to have this blessed blindness, the blindness of those governed by the heavenly vision.

Faithful to God’s Economy

Because Paul was obedient to the heavenly vision, he was faithful to God’s economy (Gk. *oikonomia*). God’s heart’s desire, the counsel of God’s will, the mystery of God’s will, the eternal purpose of God, the economy of God, the central work of God—all this had been revealed to Paul “in spirit” (Eph. 3:5). Through revelation the Father of glory caused Paul to know “the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him” (1:9-10). Viewing himself as “less than the least of all saints,” Paul testified that to him “was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things” (3:8-9). This mystery is God’s hidden purpose—His intention to dispense Himself into His chosen people to produce and build up the Body of Christ as the corporate expression of the Triune God in Christ. For this mystery, this hidden purpose, Paul received “the stewardship [*oikonomia*] of the grace of God” (v. 2). The Greek word *oikonomia* is used to denote both God’s *economy*—God’s household administration—and Paul’s *stewardship*—his responsibility to dispense the grace of God into the people of God for the purpose of God. In Colossians 1:25 he tells us that he “became a minister according to the stewardship of

God.” He therefore became a steward (Gk. *oikonomos*), a household administrator who dispenses the household supply to all the members of the household. As a steward, Paul was exercised to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:12). The Lord Jesus Himself had said: “Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing” (Matt. 24:45-46). Paul was a faithful slave, and he trained Timothy to be faithful, exhorting him to “charge certain ones not to teach different things...rather than God’s economy, which is in faith” (1 Tim. 1:3-4).

Paul had a revelation of God’s economy, he had a stewardship in God’s economy, he labored as a steward for God’s economy, and he charged others concerning God’s economy. It is a tragic fact that, with few exceptions, Paul’s charge has gone unheeded and today’s Christians are occupied with and distracted by things other than God’s

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economy. Surely the Lord needs a recovery of that which is according to the desire of His heart, that which was so dear to Paul—the divine economy for the divine dispensing of the unsearchable riches of the all-inclusive Christ to produce the Body of Christ.

Focused on the All-inclusive Christ

Paul’s life and ministry were focused on the all-inclusive Christ in His centrality, universality, and preeminence (Col. 1:12-19; 3:10-11). *Christ* is the Lord’s title according to His office, His mission, which is a matter of God’s work. As the Christ, the Lord Jesus is God’s Anointed, the One appointed by God to accomplish His purpose, the One commissioned by God to carry out the desire of His heart. Christ’s being all-inclusive means that He is not only the Son of God and our Redeemer but also the reality of

God, of man, and of every positive thing in the universe. This was Paul’s Christ: the portion of the saints (1:12), the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation (v. 15), the One in whom, through whom, and unto whom all things were created and the One in whom all things cohere (vv. 16-17), the Head of the Body, the Firstborn from the dead (v. 18), the One in whom all the fullness is pleased to dwell (v. 19), the Christ who indwells the believers as their hope of glory (v. 27), the mystery of God (2:2), the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (v. 3), the One in whom we are rooted (v. 7), the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (v. 9), the body (substance, reality) of all the shadows (vv. 16-17), the Christ at the right hand of God (3:1), the Christ who is our life (v. 4), and the Christ who is all and in all in the new man (v. 11). This Christ is also the reality of every human virtue and of every human necessity, including light (John 8:12), food (John 6:51, 57), drink (1 Cor. 10:4), breath (John 20:22), clothing (Gal. 3:27), dwelling place (John 15:7a), and enjoyment and rest (Col. 2:16-17; Matt. 11:28).

This all-inclusive Christ is the centrality—the center—and the universality—the circumference—of God’s economy. God’s economy is like a great wheel, having Christ as its every part. The word *wheel* denotes God’s universal move on earth for the fulfillment of His economy (Ezek. 1:15). The hub is Christ as the center, the spokes are Christ as the support, and the rim is Christ as the circumference (Col. 1:17). If we see this, we will realize that Christ is “the centrality and the universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity for the divine dispensing of Himself into His elect” (Lee, *Isaiah* 1). In God’s eternal economy and in God’s move in His economy, Christ, the all-inclusive One, is everything.

For Paul this Christ had the preeminence, the first place, in all things. Christ has the preeminence in the Godhead, for all the fullness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell in Him (Col. 1:18b-19) and the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily (2:9). Christ has the preeminence in God’s old creation, for He is the Firstborn of all creation (1:15b). Christ has the preeminence in God’s new creation in resurrection, for He is the Firstborn from the dead (v. 18). Christ has the preeminence in God’s exaltation, for He has been exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33a; Eph. 1:19-20) and has been given the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9b). Christ has the preeminence in the church, for He is the Head of the Body (Col. 1:18a), which is the fullness of the One who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23). Paul’s being was focused on such a Christ, and Paul’s aspiration was always to be found in Him (Phil. 3:9).

Pursuing Christ

Paul not only focused on the all-inclusive Christ—He

pursued Christ in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:1-21). For the sake of this pursuit, Paul was willing to suffer the loss of all things, especially what previously had been a gain to him, and to count them as refuse that he might gain Christ (vv. 4-8). Paul was not passive in the least. Forgetting the things which were behind, he was always pressing on, as indicated in verses 12 through 14:

Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.

Not content with his progress and not regarding himself as already mature in the divine life, Paul kept on pursuing Christ. In a very positive sense, Paul pursued Christ to such an extent that he even “persecuted” Him. The Greek word for *pursue* in verses 12 and 14 is the same word for *persecute*, a word that may also be rendered “press toward” or “follow after.” Furthermore, the Greek word for *lay hold of* may also be translated “gain,” “grasp,” “get possession of,” or even “seize.” Paul pursued Christ—he “persecuted” Christ—in order to lay hold of Christ. If we would take Paul as our pattern, we also need to “persecute” the Lord:

To persecute a person is to trouble him and refuse to let him go. Before Paul was saved, he bothered Christ and would not let Him go, persecuting Him negatively. But after he was saved and had been gained by Christ, he still persecuted Him, but positively, for he refused to let Christ go. We also should persecute Christ in this way. This is to pursue Christ in order to gain Him. (Lee, *Philippians* 198)

Where are the Christians today who have Paul’s pursuing spirit? Where are the believers who are not satisfied with what they have of the Lord and are not content with where they are in the experience of the Lord but are pressing on to gain Christ? Where are the seekers who forget what is behind them and stretch forward to what is ahead? It is sad that so many believers are self-satisfied, pleased with their elementary experiences and meager spiritual attainment; some are even indifferent

toward the Lord whom they profess to love. How we need the pattern of Paul! In the midst of today’s degraded situation, may the Lord raise up a number of genuine and ardent Christ-seekers.

Knowing the Pneumatic Christ

The Christ pursued by Paul was the pneumatic Christ—the Christ who, in resurrection, has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b).

Paul was balanced both in his knowledge of Christ and in his experience of Christ. For instance, Romans 8 proves that he knew both the transcendent Christ and the indwelling Christ. “It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (v. 34). This is the transcendent Christ, the objective Christ in the heavens. “But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness” (v. 10). This is the indwelling Christ, the subjective Christ in our spirit. The Christ who dwells in our spirit is the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who has become the life-giving Spirit, who is called “the Lord Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18), and who is now one spirit with us (1 Cor. 6:17).

Paul clearly and emphatically tells us that Christ is in us. In Romans 8:10 he says, “Christ is in you.” In 2 Corinthians 13:5 he goes on to say, “Test yourselves whether

you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?” In Colossians 1:27 he speaks of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” These verses mean what they say: *Jesus Christ is in us*. How can this be? Was He not resurrected with a spiritual body of flesh and bones, and has He not been exalted to the right hand of God in the heavens? Yes, He has a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39-40), and He has been exalted to God’s right hand (Acts 2:33). Nevertheless, Jesus Christ is in us. Yet we do not have the sense that a person with flesh and bones is in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). Christ can be in our spirit because He is the Spirit. On the one hand, He was resurrected with a spiritual body of flesh and bones. On the other hand, in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit that He might impart Himself into us by breathing Himself into us (John 20:22). The Bible

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does not say that Christ is “in the Spirit” and that He has come into us “in the Spirit.” Rather, the Bible says that Christ is the Spirit and reveals that He has come into us as the Spirit. When we repented, believed in the Lord Jesus, and received Him, He entered into us as the Spirit, regenerating our human spirit. Now “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17), for the Lord as the Spirit is mingled with the believers’ spirit. This is the pneumatic Christ in our spirit.

Experiencing the Indwelling Christ

Because Paul knew the pneumatic Christ, he could experience the indwelling Christ. This experience is related to the central work of God, which is to work Himself into us to make Himself one with us and us one with Him and to make Himself our content so that we might become His corporate expression. To carry out this great work, God had to take seven steps in Christ: incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, baptism of the Spirit, indwelling, and advent or second coming. The first five steps have been accomplished once for all, and the seventh step will also be accomplished once for all. In contrast to all these steps, the sixth step—indwelling—does not happen once for all but is accomplished gradually and involves a number of matters.

Paul experienced all the matters related to the indwelling Christ and spoke of them in his Epistles. “When it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me” (Gal. 1:15a, 16a). It is God’s pleasure, His delight, to reveal, unveil, give a vision of, His Son in us. Paul said not that God revealed the Son “to me” but that He revealed the Son “in me,” indicating that the revelation was not outward and objective but inward and subjective, a matter of inward seeing. The Christ who was revealed in Paul became the Christ who lived in Paul: “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (2:20a). The Christ who lived in Paul was the pneumatic Christ, Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This Christ should not only live in us but also be formed in us: “My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you” (4:19). Christ has been born into us, but He still needs to be formed in us, that is, fully grown and matured in us. Christ’s being formed in us goes along with His making His home in us: “That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17a). The more the indwelling Christ occupies every part of our inner being, the more He makes His home in our hearts, especially in the three parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will. This indwelling, homemaking Christ is the believers’ hope of glory. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

These words indicate that we have not only the blessed objective hope of Christ’s coming from the heavens but also the blessed subjective hope of Christ’s coming out from within us to be our glory. Finally, in Colossians 3:11 Paul could say, “Christ is all and in all.” This reveals that the all-inclusive Christ was everything to Paul. He had counted all things loss for the sake of Christ, and then he gained Christ as all things to him. Because Paul experienced the indwelling Christ in all these aspects, he eventually became a person who was constituted with Christ, a Christ-man.

Living a Crucified Life

This Christ-man lived a crucified life. Paul knew that “our old man” had been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), and he had seen the vision that he himself had been crucified with Him: “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). Having seen this fact, Paul did not engage in the vain attempt to crucify himself (an impossible task and a pointless ascetic practice); he knew that he had already “died with Christ from the elements of the world” (Col. 2:20). For this reason he could affirm: “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom

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but He still needs
to be formed in us.
Christ’s being formed in us
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the world [the religious world in particular] has been crucified to me and I to the world” (Gal. 6:14). Boasting in the cross, he determined not to know anything “except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2), and he proclaimed “the word of the cross,” which is “to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1:18). Paul could also testify, “We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (vv. 23-24). Because Paul lived a crucified life, a life of union with Christ in His crucifixion, he actually lived Christ (see sidebar on next page), magnifying Him by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and desiring to be “conformed to His death” (Phil. 1:19-21; 3:10). This Christ-man was one with Christ to such an extent that he bore in his body “the brands of Jesus” (Gal. 6:17):

With Paul, a slave of Christ (Rom. 1:1), physically the brands were the scars of his wounds received in his faithful service to his Master (2 Cor. 11:23-27). Spiritually, they signify the characteristics of the life he lived, a life like that lived by the Lord Jesus when He was on this earth. Such a life is continually crucified (John 12:24), doing the will of God (John 6:38), seeking not its own glory but the glory of God (John 7:18), and submissive and obedient to God, even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). Paul followed

the pattern of the Lord Jesus, bearing the brands, the characteristics of His life. (Lee, *Galatians* 272-273)

These “brands” and the prospect of bearing them today are one reason so few Christians in the United States are willing to take the pattern of Paul.

Having No Confidence in the Flesh

As one who bore the brands of Jesus, Paul had no confidence in the flesh. “We are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). We should not think that by *flesh* here Paul means the fallen human nature and that *no confidence in the flesh* means no confidence in our fallen human nature. Our human nature is, of course, fallen and we should not trust it, but, as the context makes clear, this is not Paul’s point in this verse. Paul continues by saying, “I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh” (v. 4), and then identifies seven aspects of his flesh: circumcised the eighth day; being of the race of Israel; being of the tribe of Benjamin; being a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, persecuting the church; and as to the righteousness in the law, becoming blameless (vv. 5-6). If we consider these matters in relation to Paul’s word about having no confidence in the flesh, we will see that, for Paul, the flesh includes the totality of one’s natural being, good as well as evil, superior as well as inferior, honorable as well as dishonorable. To Paul, everything he was according to his natural birth was the flesh. For Paul to “have no confidence in the flesh,” therefore, was to have no confidence in what he was by nature or in what he had become through education and training. Paul had no confidence in anything—ability, intelligence, culture, nationality, religion—that was not of Christ and of the Spirit. In brief, Paul had no confidence in himself.

It was through actual, concrete experience that Paul learned not to trust the flesh, the self, and the natural constitution but to trust the God of resurrection. “Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9). The God who raises the dead is the God of resurrection in one’s personal experience. Resurrection is versus the natural realm, especially our natural being. The only way to know the God of resurrection experientially is through the experience of the death of the cross, which ushers us into resurrection. The deeper is our experience of the cross, the richer will be our experience of the God of resurrection. The cross destroys our trust in ourselves; resurrection causes us to trust solely in the God of resurrection.

The “response of death in ourselves” is our acceptance of

AN ILLUSTRATION OF LIVING IN UNION WITH THE TRIUNE GOD

In his teaching as recorded in his Epistles Paul emphasized the matter of walking in the Spirit. Throughout the voyage [Acts 27:13-44] and now on the island of Malta [28:1-10] Paul certainly was walking in the Spirit. He surely lived a life that was the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ. Paul’s living was actually the expression of the life-giving Spirit. In every situation of his daily living, Paul was the expression of the very Christ he preached. He preached the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ as the life-giving Spirit, and on the island of Malta he lived such a Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit. This is indicated by Paul’s word, written later, in Philippians 1:20 and 21a: “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death; for to me to live is Christ...” Paul cared only to live Christ and to magnify Him. On the island of Malta Paul lived Christ and magnified Him as the life-giving Spirit. As we read Luke’s account of Paul’s living, we see that his living was the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and God-exalted Christ....

...All during his long and unfortunate imprisonment-voyage, the Lord kept the apostle in His ascendancy and enabled him to live a life far beyond the realm of anxiety, but fully dignified with the highest standard of human virtues expressing the most excellent divine attributes, a life that resembled the one that He Himself had lived on earth years before. This was Jesus living again on the earth in His divinely enriched humanity! This was the wonderful, excellent, and mysterious God-man, who lived in the Gospels, continuing to live in Acts through one of His many members! This was a living witness of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and God-exalted Christ. Paul in his voyage lived and magnified Christ. (Lee, *Acts* 616-617)

God's verdict, God's judgment upon our flesh, self, and natural man. It is a testimony that we recognize and realize that God's intention is not to mend the natural life but to bring it into death. "The natural life and the old life

are the very sphere of the cross's operation. God's intention is to give the natural life and the old life a fundamental and final blow" (Nec 1113). Paul received such a blow; his self-confidence was forever shattered; and he could not return to his former condition, even if he had wanted to do so. This is the need of every believer in Christ. "We need a fundamental dealing, a genuine shining, and a thorough blow from the cross. Only the verdict of death will result in the genuine denial of the self; only then will we trust in God, not in ourselves" (1119). Sooner or later, this will be the experience of every Christian. One day God, through the operation of the cross, will touch the root of our self-confidence so that we will no longer trust in ourselves. "A day will come when God will deal with us in a severe way. He will pronounce a verdict of death on us. Then we will be able to say that everything is of God" (1114-1115). Then we will base our confidence not on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

Enjoying the Grace of God

If, by the Lord's mercy, we receive a blow that shatters our trust in ourselves and that causes, even constrains, us to trust in the God of resurrection, we will begin to realize that we desperately need and are utterly dependent upon the grace of God, not only for our justification but also as our moment-by-moment supply in our daily living under the cross. As the God of resurrection operates in us, He supplies grace to us. This is indicated by the fact that Paul speaks of the grace of God immediately after speaking of the God who raises the dead, saying that "not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you" (2 Cor. 1:9, 12). Here *the grace of God*, which is actually God Himself, is in opposition to *fleshly wisdom*, which is human wisdom in the flesh, the practical expression of the self. Evidence that grace is not merely "unmerited favor" (the conventional definition) but God Himself is found in 12:9, where, in response to Paul's request regarding "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan," the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you" (v. 7). To be sure, this grace is more than unmerited favor—something too objective to comfort one with a "thorn"; it is the Triune God in Christ as the sweet, soothing, all-sufficient

"By the grace of God I am what I am"
reveals that Paul was no longer living according
to his natural constitution but according to his
constitution as a new creation with the
Triune God wrought into the fiber of his being.

supply—something altogether subjective and experiential, fully able to energize one to live with "a messenger of Satan."

The Bible speaks of "the God of all grace" (1 Pet. 5:10), "the grace of the Lord Je-

sus Christ" (2 Cor. 13:14), and "the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29), revealing that grace is nothing less than the Triune God imparted to us. If we see this, we will realize that grace is not merely something given to us by God—grace is God giving Himself to us by dispensing Himself into our spirit. Because Paul knew what grace was and where grace was, he could say, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (Phil. 4:23). It is by this subjective grace and even as this grace that we enjoy the Triune God. Therefore, with a most blessed assurance we can say, Grace is the processed and consummated Triune God in Christ as the life-giving Spirit being our all-sufficient supply for our experience and enjoyment. Those who have tasted this grace can sing: "All sufficient grace! / Never powerless! / It is Christ who lives in me, / In His exhaustlessness."

Paul enjoyed grace and greeted his readers with grace (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philem. 3). In 1 Corinthians he extended not only his customary salutation but also offered a remarkable testimony to what the grace of God meant to him personally: "By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me" (15:10). Here we find a number of matters that require our attention. *By the grace of God I am what I am*: This is grace becoming Paul's intrinsic constitution, grace making him into a certain kind of person—a Christ-man with a particular function in and for the Body of Christ. *By the grace of God I am what I am* reveals that Paul was no longer living according to his natural constitution but according to his constitution as a new creation with the Triune God wrought into the fiber of his being. *His grace unto me*: This points to a particular imparting, a definite dispensing, a specific transmission, of grace to Paul. The grace that was sufficient for Paul was the grace dispensed to him. *His grace...did not turn out to be in vain*: This shows us that the grace dispensed into Paul was adequate and effective, accomplishing the purpose for which it was imparted. *I labored more abundantly*: Here we see that, on the one hand, grace is given so that we may labor for God's interests and that, on the other hand, grace is supplied as we are engaged in such labor. By God as grace we can do what we could never do in ourselves. *Yet not I but the grace of*

God: This unveils the fact that the grace that made Paul what he was, the grace that was sufficient and effective, the grace that energized him to labor in coordination with the Triune God, was the very Christ who lived in him. Compare Galatians 2:20—"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me"—with 1 Corinthians 15:10—"Not I but the grace of God"—and see that *not I but the grace of God equals no longer I...but...Christ*. The grace by which Paul labored was the Christ by whom he lived. As the context of 1 Corinthians 15 makes evident, the Christ who was Paul's grace was the resurrected Christ who had become the life-giving Spirit (v. 45). The life given was the grace imparted, and this grace made Paul what he was for God's economy.

Receiving the Divine Dispensing

As one who was governed by the heavenly vision, who was faithful to God's economy, who was focused on the all-inclusive Christ and counted all things loss for Him, who knew the pneumatic Christ, who experienced the indwelling Christ, who lived a crucified life, who had no confidence in the flesh or in the self but in the God of resurrection, and who lived and labored by the grace of God, Paul became a person who was continually receiving the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. God's dispensing is His imparting, His distributing, of Himself to us as our life, our life supply, and our everything. Romans 8 demonstrates that Paul was continually receiving the dispensing of the divine life into his tripartite being. Life was imparted to his spirit (v. 10), to his mind (v. 6), and even to his mortal body (v. 11).

Paul received the dispensing of the processed and consummated Triune God by drinking the Spirit: "For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Paul surely enjoyed the dispensing of the Triune God as living water, with the Father as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13), with the Son, the embodiment of the Father, as the spring of water gushing up into eternal life (John 4:14), and with the Spirit as the flow, the river of water of life (Rev. 22:1; John 7:38-39). Paul was immersed and filled with the Triune God as life, and through him the living water flowed to supply the believers with the inexhaustible supply of the all-inclusive Spirit.

Living in the Mingled Spirit

In his ministry Paul strongly emphasized the two spirits—

the divine Spirit (e.g., Rom. 5:5; 8:2, 9, 11, 13-16, 26-27; 14:17; 15:16, 30) and the human spirit (e.g., Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 8:6, 10, 16; 12:11; 1 Cor. 2:11; Gal. 6:18). In his daily life Paul lived according to *the mingled spirit*—the divine Spirit joined to and mingled with the regenerated human spirit. In regeneration our spirit was born of the Spirit (John 3:6b), and thereafter "the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). The Lord who is with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) and one with our spirit is the Lord Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18). The union and mingling of these two spirits is so complete that Paul could say that "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

This "one spirit" is the mingled spirit in which Paul lived and served God and according to which he walked. From his experience he could say 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" (Rom. 8:4). So to walk is to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). In the mingled spirit Paul did and experienced all manner of things: served God (Rom. 1:9), was provoked (Acts 17:16), exercised discipline (1 Cor. 5:4), prayed (14:14), sang (v. 15), was refreshed (16:18), received revelation (Eph. 1:17; 3:5), was built into God's dwelling place (2:22), was renewed (4:23), had fellowship (Phil. 2:1), and enjoyed the Lord's grace (Gal. 6:18). The last word he wrote was about the human spirit indwelt by the Spirit: "The Lord be with your spirit" (2 Tim. 4:22). A spiritual man who discerned all things (1 Cor. 2:15), Paul experienced and enjoyed a living, vital, organic union with the processed and consummated Triune God as the Spirit in his regenerated spirit. As a result, he became a pattern of one who lived, moved, and had his being in the mingled spirit.

Having a Renewed Mind

This spiritual man had a renewed mind. The more Paul lived in the mingled spirit, the more this spirit spread into his mind, becoming the spirit of the mind and thereby renewing the mind. Knowing the vast difference between the vanity of the mind and the renewing of the mind, Paul

wrote: "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.... Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:17, 23). According to Paul's understanding, one can be a real believer in Christ and a genuine child of God regenerated in the spirit and yet continue to live, as unbelievers do, in the vanity of the mind. If we would avoid such a living, we

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need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind by allowing the mingled spirit to spread into our mind.

In the book of Romans Paul deals with the human mind in five different conditions. “Even as they did not approve of holding God in their full knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mind” (1:28). The Greek word rendered *disapproved* “means ‘rejected after testing.’ Since they rejected God, He rejected them” (Earle 139). A disapproved mind is “a mind of which God cannot approve, and which must be rejected by Him” (Vine 283). “They rejected God and God rejected their mental attitude” (Robertson IV:331).

In 7:25 Paul declares, “With the mind I myself serve the law of God.” Here we have not the disapproved mind—the mind that rejects God—but the independent mind—the mind that tries on its own, without God’s grace and life supply, to serve God and to please Him. Consider the words *with the mind I myself*: They indicate that the mind, as the leading part of the soul (the human person), represents the self in its independent activity.

In chapter eight Paul goes on to say, “Those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh....For the mind set on the flesh is death....Because the mind set on the flesh is enmity against God” (vv. 5a, 6a, 7a). The “things of the flesh” comprise everything in the realm of the flesh, including the things mentioned in Philippians 3. The mind set on the flesh is characterized by two dreadful elements—death and enmity. In contrast, “the mind set on the spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6b). The regenerated human spirit is life because of righteousness (v. 10); thus, the mind set on the spirit is life, for the life which is in the mingled spirit, and which is the mingled spirit, spreads into the mind and imparts life to the mind, resulting in the sense of peace.

Finally, in 12:2 Paul says, “Do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.” When the mind is set on the mingled spirit, which is life, the mind is renewed by the divine life in the mingled spirit, as the spirit gradually becomes the spirit of the mind (Eph. 4:23). A renewed mind then becomes the base for the Spirit’s transformation of a believer’s soul (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). The more we are transformed by the renewing of the mind, the more we can “prove what the will of God is.” According to the context of Romans 12 in particular and of Paul’s Epistles in general, *the will of God* is God’s intention to have the Body of Christ. Moreover, in addition to proving that God’s perfect will is the Body, one with a renewed mind will be trained by God “not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith” (v. 3). Those who think of themselves more highly than they

ought to think, having no proper consciousness of their measure and standing in the Body of Christ, cannot live the Body life. For the Body life we need to be sober-minded:

This requires that our mind be renewed by having all the negative elements within it swallowed up by the life of Christ. Then we will esteem ourselves according to the faith that God has apportioned to us, that is, according to the measure of God’s element that has been transfused into us. (Recovery Version, Rom. 12:3, note 1)

Paul understood the workings of the human mind in its various conditions: the disapproved mind, the independent mind, the mind set on the flesh, the mind set on the spirit, and the renewed mind. If we would learn of Paul, we need to realize that as wonderful as regeneration is—it has been called the greatest miracle—we urgently need a further work of the Spirit—the renewing of the mind for proving the will of God.

Burdened for the Body of Christ

I wish to emphasize the fact that, according to the revelation received by the apostle Paul, the will of God is the Body of Christ. Paul knew this and he lived for this. As a man of revelation who was governed by the heavenly vision, Paul was burdened for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ. He lived in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body. He had a vision of the Body (Eph. 1:17-23; 3:5-6); he honored Christ as the Head of the Body (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16); he cared for the unique oneness of the Body (vv. 3-4; 1 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 12:5); he submitted to the authority of the Body (Acts 9:6-19; 22:11-16); he lived in the fellowship of the Body (Phil. 4:14); he regarded every member of the Body (1 Cor. 12:14-27); he perfected others for the building up of the Body (Eph. 4:11-12); he appreciated the function of every member of the Body (Rom. 12:4-5); he labored for the growth of the Body (Eph. 4:11-16); and he poured himself out in love for the churches as the practical expression of the Body (Phil. 2:17-18; 2 Cor. 12:15). In his ministry Paul suffered for the sake of the Body: “I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church” (Col. 1:24). Knowing that the Body can grow and be built up only through the ministry of life, Paul experienced death for the benefit of the Body:

Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death operates in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:10-12)

Death operates in us, but life in you: This was a major theme

in Paul's ministry. In order that resurrection life might be ministered to the Body, Paul was always willing for the death of the cross to operate in him.

Paul's Christian life began with a vision of the corporate "Me"—"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4)—the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), comprising Jesus the Lord and all His believers, Christ the Head and all His members. From the very beginning Paul was gained by the Head for the sake of the Body, and he gave himself without reservation for Christ, "the Savior of the Body" (Eph. 5:23), and for the church, "which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all" (1:23). For this Paul lived, and for this he died. What began with a vision on the way to Damascus consummated with a drink offering poured out in Rome. At the very end, Paul, a faithful overcomer and a pattern for us all, could say:

I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

The Religion of James

In contrast to Paul, who was a person who lived Christ, James, a flesh brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 13:55), was very religious. In his Epistle he is deeply concerned about pure religion:

If anyone thinks himself to be religious and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this one's religion is vain. This is pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (1:26-27)

The Greek word for *religion* in these verses means "religious worship in its external observances, religious exercise or discipline, but not to the exclusion of reverence" (Robertson VI:25). In verse 26 the word "carries its primary sense of outward observances, but in verse 27 it seems to include more. It consists not only of righteous acts but also of pure character" (Earle 433). For James religion was largely a matter of a ceremonial service and worship to God, which implied the fear of God. External observances, religious discipline, righteous acts, pure character, the fear of God—these are the basic constituents of the religion of James.

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A careful reading of the book of James will show that he was religious in this way. He surely was a man of endurance, wisdom, stability, humility, self-control, prayer, righteousness, and ethical action; he was a man whose religion was "pure and undefiled" and who kept himself "unspotted from the world." His emphasis on endurance and wisdom suggests that in his person he was a combination of the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon. In brief, James was a "godly" and "weighty" man who devoted himself to the cultivation of what has been called "practical Christian perfection." This "godliness," "weightiness," and "Christian perfection" may account for the fact that James was reputed to be a pillar in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9).

At this juncture I wish to propose a succinct definition of the religion of James: *"godliness" apart from God's New Testament economy*. In this definition the word *godliness* is set in quotation marks as an indication that the godliness of James differs in nature and expression from that revealed in the life of the Lord Jesus and the writings of Paul, where we see that godliness is a mystery because it is God "manifested in the flesh" (John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 3:16). The "godliness" of the religion of James is not primarily a manifestation of the processed and consummated Triune God embodied in Christ as the life-giving Spirit in a human life that denies the self; rather, the godliness of James is mainly an expression of a religious person who fears God, endeavors to keep the law, visits widows and orphans in their affliction, is exercised to avoid contamination from the world, and, perhaps unintentionally, tries to perfect the self. This sort of "godliness" is not a mere pretense or form (2 Tim. 3:5); in its own particular way it is genuine. But—and this is a very big *but*—the "godliness" of the religion of James is something apart from God's New Testament economy; that is, it is something that is not the product of the Triune God, in His life-dispensing, wrought into and expressed through redeemed, regenerated, and transformed tripartite humanity. This defective and abnormal "godliness" is a sign that James, unlike Paul, was deficient in revelation:

[James] was not strong in the revelation of God's New Testament economy in Christ but was still under the influence of the background of the old Judaic religion, the primary elements of which were to worship God by ceremonies and to live a

life in the fear of God....Because his spiritual sight was covered by Judaism, he could not fully enter into the revelation of God's New Testament economy as Paul, Peter, and John were able to do. (Recovery Version, James 1:26, note 1)

The Influence of James

Perhaps because of his “godliness,” James emerged as the leader of the church at Jerusalem and exerted a tremendous influence upon the church there. After Peter recounted to those assembled in the house of Mary how he had been released from prison, he said, “Report these things to James and the brothers” (Acts 12:17). *James and the brothers*: This indicates that James, who alone is mentioned by name, was quite prominent. In the conference of the apostles and elders held in Jerusalem, it was James who gave the concluding word (15:13-21), another proof of his prominence. In Galatians Paul mentions James three times: in 1:19, where he tells us that, apart from Cephas, he saw “none of the other apostles except James”; in 2:9, where he says that James was one “reputed” to be a pillar; and in 2:12, where he informs us that “before some came from James,” Cephas “continually ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to shrink back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision.” Peter was evidently so afraid of James that those who “came from James” frightened him and caused him, in violation of the vision in Acts 10, to shrink back from eating with the Gentiles. James, a man of pure religion, inspired fear in Peter. The epitome of James’s influence is in Acts 21, where Paul “went in...to James” and was told that thousands among the Jews who had believed, were “zealous for the law,” and would be concerned about his presence in Jerusalem (vv. 18, 20). Then, in order to prove that he did not teach “apostasy from Moses” but walked “orderly, keeping the law,” Paul was charged to go to the temple and pay the expenses of four men who had a Nazarite vow on themselves (vv. 18-24). When Paul attempted to comply, God intervened, and there was a great disturbance, which led to Paul’s arrest, imprisonment, and voyage to Rome. The Lord interrupted that religious observance in the temple because that “mixing of Judaic practices with God’s New Testament economy was not only erroneous in relation to God’s dispensation but also abominable in the eyes of God. This gross mixture was [later] terminated by Him” (Recovery Version, Acts 22:26, note 1).

The Mixture of James

The crucial word here is *mixture*. The religion of James is a religion of mixture—a mixture of God’s New Testament economy with the Old Testament dispensation (see Lee, *Crystallization-study; James* 113-133). If we read the book of James in light of the revelation of God’s economy found elsewhere in the New Testament, practicing the principle of interpreting Scripture with Scripture, we should be able to discern this mixture. (Of course, the clearer our vision of God’s economy is, the keener our discernment will be.) On the one hand, James says some very good things about matters related to the New Testament economy. He refers

to “the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1); he speaks of holding “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1); he mentions God’s begetting of the believers to make them “a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (1:18); he makes reference to “the Spirit, whom He has caused to dwell in us” (4:5); he alludes to the kingdom reward when he talks about “the crown of life” (1:12); and he exhorts his readers to “be long-suffering...until the coming of the Lord,” reminding them that “the coming of the Lord has drawn near” (5:7-8). On the other hand, his Epistle, which “has a markedly Jewish flavor” (*Geneva* 1959), contains many elements of the Old Testament dispensation. James addresses his readers as “the twelve tribes in the dispersion” (1:1) and uses the term *synagogue* instead of the word *church* (2:2). He presents

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himself as one who is devoted to the law, revering it and trying to fulfill it (1:25; 2:8-12; 4:11), and his words about wisdom exude an Old Testament flavor (1:5; 3:13, 15, 17). James’s way of praying (1:5-6; 5:14-18), his words about enduring trial (1:12; 5:11), his ethical admonitions (1:27; 2:1-13; 3:13), and his method of bringing a backsliding brother to repentance (5:19-20) are all according to the Old Testament way and with an Old Testament atmosphere. When we consider all these matters, we cannot avoid the following conclusion: James was a man of mixture, and his “godliness” was a mixture of God’s New Testament economy with things of the Old Testament dispensation. The religion of James might have been “pure and undefiled” in his eyes, but in the eyes of God it was an intolerable mixture.

Was James, then, not a true believer, a real brother, a genuine regenerated child of God? Was he not a Christian? Of course, James was a believer in Christ, a brother in the Lord, and a child of God, and he certainly was a Christian. But a question remains: What kind of Christian was James? The answer is that James was *an Old Testament Christian*. The expression *Old Testament Christian* denotes a believer in Christ and child of God who, lacking the vision concerning God's New Testament economy, lives a Christian life, even a "godly" and "pious" life, that is according to Old Testament principles and is imbued with an Old Testament flavor. Such Old Testament Christians may follow the religion of James, but those who want to be New Testament Christians need to follow the pattern of Paul.

A Contrast and a Choice

Consider some points of contrast between Paul and James. Paul was a man of revelation who was governed by the heavenly vision. James was sorely lacking in revelation and was governed, to a great extent at least, by his view of the Old Testament dispensation. Paul was absolutely faithful to God's New Testament economy. James was, at best, vague concerning God's economy and practiced it only in part. Paul was focused on the all-inclusive Christ. James said very little regarding Christ and nothing regarding the unsearchable riches of Christ. Paul pursued Christ. James pursued his notion of Christian perfection according to the law. Paul knew the pneumatic Christ. James knew Christ in the flesh but gave no indication of knowing Him as the life-giving Spirit. Paul experienced the indwelling Christ. James said nothing about Christ's dwelling in the believers. Paul lived a crucified life, denying the self. James spoke nothing about the cross and tried to improve the self. Paul had no confidence in the flesh. James held to the good things of his flesh, especially his background in Judaism. Paul trusted in the God of resurrection in the midst of trial. James trusted in his endurance to get through trial. Paul enjoyed the grace of God in a rich, abundant, all-sufficient way. James received grace in a very limited way. Paul treasured the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. James treasured the blessings of obeying the law. Paul lived in the mingled spirit. James mentioned neither the all-inclusive Spirit nor the regenerated human spirit and made no reference to the mingled spirit. Paul sought transformation by the renewing of the mind. James sought perfection according to the natural concept. Paul was burdened for the Body of Christ. James said nothing about the Body but instead sent greetings to the twelve tribes in the dispersion. Paul finished the course, going to the Lord in victory as an overcomer and knowing that he would receive the crown of righteousness. James anticipated the Lord's coming back, hoping to receive the crown of life.

This contrast should lead to a choice—a choice between Paul with his vision and James with his mixture. If we long to live in union with the Triune God and to learn how to develop this union, we need to recognize that in this matter Paul, but not James, can help us in a positive way. James can help us mainly in a negative way—by showing us the danger of mixture and by serving as a warning that even a "godly" person can be cloudy and vague concerning God's economy and end up with one foot in the New Testament economy and the other in the Old Testament dispensation. The help provided by Paul is altogether positive, for it leads us into oneness with the Triune God embodied in Christ and into the Body as the corporate expression of the Triune God in Christ. If we want to be a New Testament Christian—a Christ-man like Paul and not merely a "godly" man like James—we need to turn from the religion of James and embrace the pattern of Paul. If, by the Lord's mercy and grace, we follow the pattern of Paul according to the heavenly vision, we will be ushered into the mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh. AFC

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