
THE SECOND “BECOMING” OF CHRIST

by Ed Marks

I would ask the reader to take note of two great “becomings” in the New Testament. The first becoming is in John 1:14: “The Word *became* flesh.” The second becoming is in 1 Corinthians 15:45: “The last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.” These “becomings” involve the two greatest events in the history of both man and God—incarnation and resurrection. They embrace the history of the Triune God coming out of eternity and passing through processes in time to accomplish His heart’s desire. Let the reader take note that we are not speaking of the essential Trinity here but of the economical Trinity—the aspect of the Trinity in His coming forth in His move in time to accomplish His desire.

(See “A Biblical Overview of the Triune God” in *A & C*, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 29-30.) The desire of the Triune God’s heart is to dispense Himself as life into man for the building up of the Body of Christ to be the bride and wife of Christ for His eternal expression as the New Jerusalem, which is the city of life. From Genesis to Revelation we can see what T. Austin-Sparks called “the battle for life.” There is a battle in this universe between God, the One who wants to dispense Himself as life into man, and Satan, the one who wants to dispense himself as death into man. The truth of the second becoming of Christ is a great issue in this battle for life. Indeed, if Christ had not become the life-giving Spirit, the life that expresses God and swallows up death could not be ours. In this article we want to see the intrinsic significance of Christ’s second becoming with His first becoming as the foundation. In particular, we want to see that it is by His second becoming that Christ accomplishes the good pleasure of God. In light of this great truth, we also want to see that our desperate

need today is to know and experience Christ as the Spirit for the building up of His Body.

The First “Becoming” of Christ— The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Word here is the eternal Christ, who is the very God defined, explained, and expressed. John 1:4 tells us that “in Him was life.” This life in Greek is *zoe*, which is the divine, eternal, uncreated, indestructible, indissoluble life of God Himself. It is indeed wonderful that in

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Christ, the Word, is life; but His desire is not that there would be just life in Him but also that there would be life in us. In order to dispense Himself as life into us, He took a major step. John 1:14 tells us that this Word “became” something He had never before been. The Word became flesh. Andrew Murray said, “We know how the Son, who had from eternity been with the Father, entered upon a *new stage of existence* when He became flesh” (38, emphasis added). The self-existing and ever-existing Word came out of eternity into time and with divinity being brought into humanity became the incarnate Word. The invisible, abstract, untouchable God became a visible, physical, tangible man named Jesus. Such a man, as typified by the meal offering being made of fine flour mingled with oil (Lev. 2:4-5), was the mingling of divinity with humanity.

God became a man of flesh and visited man personally and affectionately. He lived a human life full of the divine attributes of God which became His human virtues.

He was God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In John 10:10 He told us why He came: "I have come that they may have life [Gk. *zoe*] and may have it abundantly." He was the embodiment of the divine life, even the divine life itself. What a marvel that the man Jesus declared on this earth, "I am...the life" (John 14:6a)! The Gospel of John reveals Christ as the very God who wants to be life to man. John 2 shows us that life's principle is to change death into life, as illustrated by the changing of water into wine in verses 1 through 11, and that life's purpose is to build the house of God, as illustrated by the building up of the destroyed temple of His body in three days in verses 12 through 22. This spiritual house is the church, the Body of Christ, and consummately the New Jerusalem. Chapters three through eleven reveal that Christ as life meets the need of every man's case. The need of the moral is life's regenerating (3:1-36), the need of the immoral is life's satisfying (4:1-42), the need of the dying is life's healing (4:43-54), the need of the impotent is life's enlivening (5:1-47), the need of the hungry is life's feeding (6:1-71), the need of the thirsty is life's quenching (7:1-52), the need of those under the bondage of sin is life's setting free (7:53—8:59), the need of the blind in religion is life's sight and life's shepherding (9:1—10:42), and the need of the dead is life's resurrecting (11:1-57).

In order for man's need to be universally met by Christ as life for God's purpose, Christ had to pass through the process of death as the Lamb of God to redeem fallen man. Christ became flesh to carry out God's judicial redemption as the procedure to accomplish His desire to dispense Himself as life into His people. God's desire from man's very inception in Genesis is seen in His longing for man to partake of Him as the tree of life (2:9). God warned man that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die (v. 17). This tree of death signifies Satan, the devil, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14). Thus, at the inception of man's existence, we see the battle between life and death, with man as the battlefield faced with the choice of life or death. Genesis records that man chose death and that death pervaded his entire tripartite being. Through one man, Adam, "sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

In spite of sin and death entering into man, God's intention to dispense Himself as life into man remained the same. Because man had become poisoned with sin and death, God had to do something to deal with this poison to clear the way for Him to dispense Himself as life into man. Furthermore, the fall of man violated the legal requirements of God's righteousness with His holiness and glory. These requirements had to be satisfied for the righteous, holy God of glory to impart Himself into the man who had been poisoned with sin and death. The wages of sin is death,

and Christ in our stead paid these wages by His death on the cross. He died that we might live. Through His devil-destroying death He nullified death (2 Tim. 1:10) and satisfied the judicial requirements of God for our redemption. We praise the Lord for the all-inclusive death of Christ! By His death He terminated every negative thing in the universe. He destroyed the devil (Heb. 2:14), took away the sin of the world (John 1:29), terminated the flesh of fallen man (Gal. 5:24), judged Satan's world (John 12:31), abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances (Eph. 2:15), and crucified the old creation represented by the old man (Rom. 6:6). The incarnate Word, Christ in the flesh, went to the cross as the last Adam, the end and conclusion of Adam. Adam, the representative head of the old creation in whom all men of the old creation are included, is no more.

Even more striking, the Lord's death was a grand release for Him! In His earthly life and ministry, He was constrained and pressed until His unlimited divine life and infinite divine being could be released from within Him. In Luke 12:50 He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!" Note 2 of this verse in the Recovery Version says:

The Lord was constrained in His flesh, which He put upon Himself in His incarnation. He needed to undergo physical death, to be baptized, that His unlimited and infinite divine being with His divine life might be released from His flesh. His divine life, after being released through His physical death, became the impulse of His believers' spiritual life in resurrection.

In John 12:24 the Lord likened Himself to a grain of wheat falling into the ground to die. If the grain does not die, it abides alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit, brings forth many grains, in resurrection. The death of Christ as the grain of wheat was a life-releasing death to accomplish God's purpose to bring forth the many sons of God. The release of His life by His death continued with the impartation of His life in His resurrection.

The Second "Becoming" of Christ— The Last Adam Became a Life-giving Spirit

When a grain of wheat blossoms in resurrection, it is clear to all that this grain was indeed wheat; we may say that the grain which died and resurrected has now become "designated wheat." This is a marvelous picture of Christ's being designated the Son of God. Christ was the only begotten Son of God from eternity, possessing only divinity; through incarnation His humanity became the outward shell of His divinity, just like the outward shell of the life-germ of a grain of wheat. By His death the shell of humanity was broken and His divinity, the divine life-germ, was released. In His resurrection His human-

ity was brought into divinity to cause Him to be “designated the Son of God” (Rom. 1:3-4). He thus was born in resurrection to become the firstborn Son of God with both divinity and humanity (Acts 13:33; Rom. 8:29). Furthermore, when a grain of wheat resurrects, it produces many grains. In the same way, when Christ

do must be by the life-giving Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem.

On the evening of the day of His resurrection, Christ appeared to His disciples and did something remarkable. He did not give them a stirring teaching. Instead, “He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). The Greek word for *Spirit* is *pneuma*, which may also be translated as “breath.” A person’s breath is his very essence, his essential being. “Here the Spirit as breath was breathed as life into

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rose from the dead, He brought forth many brothers. In God’s sight, Christ’s resurrection was the regeneration of the many sons of God (1 Pet. 1:3). These many sons, Christ’s brothers, are His reproduction and duplication with His life and nature. First Corinthians 15 is a chapter on the truth of Christ’s resurrection. Paul said, “But someone will say, How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come? Foolish man, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies” (vv. 35-36). As the grain of wheat, Christ had to fall into the earth and die so that He could be made alive in resurrection. When a grain of wheat resurrects, it is transfigured into another form. In the same way, Christ was transfigured into another form in resurrection. He was transfigured from the flesh into the Spirit. Indeed, the last Adam, Christ in the flesh, became a life-giving Spirit (v. 45b).

The unveiled truth of Christ’s resurrection includes these three great things: the birth and designation of Christ as the firstborn Son of God, the regeneration of the many sons of God, and the last Adam becoming a life-giving Spirit (Lee, *Practical Way* 32-35). Christ as the firstborn Son of God is the Head of the Body, the many sons of God are the members of the Body, and the life-giving Spirit is the reality and life of the Body. The product of Christ’s marvelous, all-surpassing resurrection is the desire of God’s heart to have the Body of Christ with the life-giving Spirit as its essence. There is one Body and one Spirit (Eph. 4:4). The one Body is the goal of God’s economy. God’s economy (Gk. *oikonomia*—1 Tim. 1:4) is His household administration, His divine plan according to His heart’s desire, to dispense Himself as life and everything into His chosen and redeemed people to make them His spiritual house, the Body of Christ, which ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem. The one Spirit is the means by which God accomplishes His economy. Whatever we do in our Christian life and work should be governed, not by right and wrong, but by our being able to affirmatively answer two questions: “Is this for the Body?” and “Is this by the Spirit?” Whatever we

the disciples for their life. By breathing the Spirit into the disciples, the Lord imparted Himself into them as life and everything” (Recovery Version, John 20:22, note 1). The resurrected Christ is the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the life-giving Spirit, the holy breath, the holy pneuma. We may desire to know the historical Christ, the objective Christ, the Christ in the flesh, but we need to press on to know the pneumatic Christ, the Christ today, the subjective Christ, the Christ as the Spirit. When Paul expressed his strong aspiration to know Christ (Phil. 3:10a), it was to know the pneumatic Christ in his experience. Paul said, “Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer” (2 Cor. 5:16). Now we know Christ as the Spirit in our spirit.

God breathed Himself into man twice. Both of these “breathings” were of great significance. Genesis 2:7 says, “The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (lit.). The Hebrew word for *breath* here is *neshamah*, the same word used for *spirit* in Proverbs 20:27: “The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.” The breath of life breathed into man’s nostrils became man’s human spirit and made him a living soul. Man’s human spirit is to be the receptacle, the container, of the divine Spirit. On the day of resurrection, God breathed once again into man! This time He breathed *Himself* as the holy pneuma into man. When we believe into Christ, we receive Him as the Spirit, the pneuma, into our spirit. Thus, the divine Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and these two are mingled together as one spirit. The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17) with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22); the Spirit witnesses with our spirit (Rom. 8:16); we worship God who is Spirit in, with, and by our spirit (John 4:24); and he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). Because the divine Spirit dwells in and is mingled with our human spirit to be one spirit, this mingled Spirit is the mark of God’s economy. We do not want to be those who miss the mark. This is why we want to live, walk, move, work, and have our entire

being according to the life-giving Spirit in our spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4; cf. Zech. 4:6).

God's second breathing, the breathing of Christ as the Spirit into man in Christ's second becoming, was prophesied by Christ in John 7. We can see the intensity of the desire of Christ to be man's life and everything in John 7 when He was at the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 2). This was the last feast of the year for the Jewish people, the culmination of their year's labor on the good land. It was a feast in which they enjoyed the rich harvest of the good land in their worship to God (Deut. 16:13-15). Such a feast signifies the enjoyment of the success of human life. But the enjoyment of any success in life, no matter how great, is temporal; it has a "last day."

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Notice that Jesus "cried out" to the people at this feast. This is the cry of life, the cry of Christ, throughout the ages to the "water-seeking" thirsty ones. His cry is for them to come to Him and drink. According to the Lord's word to the Samaritan woman in John 4, we are to drink of something called "living water" (v. 10). When we believe into the Lord Jesus by receiving Him as our Savior, He enters into our spirit as the life-giving Spirit to become in us "a fountain of water gushing up into eternal life" (v. 14). According to the Lord's promise, out of our innermost being (our spirit, cf. Dan. 7:15) will flow the Spirit as rivers of living water.

John 7:39 says that this Spirit, the indwelling Spirit as rivers of living water flowing out of the Lord's believers, was "not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." The word *given* was added to the phrase *the Spirit was not yet* in both the King James and New American Standard Versions, but the word *given* is not in the original Greek. Andrew Murray points out that this expression—*the Spirit was not yet*—"if accepted as it stands, may guide us into the true understanding of the real significance of the Spirit's not coming until Jesus was glorified" (37-38). Although the Spirit of God was there from the beginning (Gen. 1:1-2), the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, the life-giving Spirit, was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified. Jesus'

glorification was His resurrection (Luke 24:26). It was in resurrection that He as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. The glorified Jesus is now the life-giving Spirit who can be received as living water and can flow out of His believers' innermost being as rivers of living water!

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After Jesus' resurrection, the Spirit of God became the Spirit of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Jesus Christ, who was breathed into the disciples by Christ in the evening of the day on which He was resurrected (20:22). The Spirit is now the "another Comforter," the Spirit of reality promised by Christ before His death (14:16-17). When the Spirit was the Spirit of God, He had only the divine element. After He became the Spirit of Jesus Christ through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, the Spirit had both the divine element and the human element, with all the essence and reality of the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. Hence, the Spirit is now the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ as the living water for us to receive. (Recovery Version, John 7:39, note 1)

The only way that Christ can be man's very life is for Him to be glorified in resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit. It is only as the Spirit that He can enter into our spirit to be our very life. This is why the Lord told the disciples in John 16 that it was expedient for Him to go away, for if He did not go away through His death and resurrection, He could not come into them as the life-giving Spirit (v. 7). Christ in the flesh could only be among them. Christ as the Spirit could dwell in them forever.

The promise of Christ's becoming the life-giving Spirit in resurrection is also spoken of by the Lord in John 14: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever" (v. 16). The Lord's promise of *another* Comforter implies that He was the first Comforter who was with the disciples temporarily in the flesh. This other Comforter would be with them forever as "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" (v. 17). Notice that the Lord in verse 17 uses the third person, "He," in speaking of the Spirit of reality who would be in the disciples. But in the very next verse the "He"

changes to “I” when the Lord says, “I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.” This shows that “He,” the Spirit of reality in verse 17, is “I,” the Lord Jesus in verse 18. The “I,” the first Comforter in the flesh among the disciples, would become “He,” the second Comforter as the Spirit in the disciples in resurrection. The Lord continued by telling the disciples that “in that day,” the day of resurrection, they would know that He is in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them (v. 20). This shows that the Spirit of reality who would be in them in verse 17 is the resurrected Christ in them in verse 20. The Christ who was in the flesh as the first Comforter became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection as the second Comforter to be in and with the disciples forever. Andrew Murray said that by Christ’s being glorified in resurrection,

a new era has commenced in the life and the work of the Spirit. He can now come down to witness of the perfect union of the Divine and the human, and in becoming our life, to make us partakers of it. *There is now* the Spirit of the glorified Jesus: He hath poured Him forth; we have received Him to stream into us, to stream through us, and to stream forth from us in rivers of blessing. (40)

When the life-giving Spirit comes into us, He comes as the totality of the Triune God. It is fallacious to say that the three of the Godhead are separate. Yes, they are distinct and coexistent, but they also coinhere; they are eternally inseparable. When we receive Christ as our Savior and life, He enters into our spirit as the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the Son and with the Father. The entire Triune God comes to dwell in the believers. The Father is in us (Eph. 4:6), the Son is in us (Col. 1:27), and the Spirit is in us (Rom. 8:9). The Triune God has come to dwell within as the wonderful Spirit in us! It is helpful to compare what the Lord said in John 14:26 and 15:26 concerning the sending of the Spirit. John 14:26 says, “But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name....” Here the Father sends the Spirit in the Son’s name. *In the Son’s name* means *as the Son*. Thus, the Father sends the Spirit as the Son. John 15:26 says, “But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me.” Here the Son sends the Spirit from the Father. The sense in Greek of the word *from* is actually *from with*. The Spirit comes not only from the Father but also with the Father. These two verses show us that the Father sends the Spirit as the Son, and the Son sends the Spirit from with the Father. Therefore, we may say that the Father as the Son sends the Spirit as the Son with the Father. The Spirit as the reaching and presence of the Triune God comes to dwell in the believers.

The life-giving Spirit also comes into us as the consummation of the processed Triune God. (This subject is treated

in depth in “The Processed and Consummated Triune God” in *A & C*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 4-16.) *Consummation* means completion. The Triune God had to complete His journey on the bridge of time by passing through a series of processes to reach a consummation. His becoming a man of flesh and blood by entering into the womb of a human virgin and being born as a man was a process (Matt. 1:18, 20). His passing through human living for thirty-three and a half years was another great process. In His human living He denied Himself and lived by the Father (John 6:57). He spoke the Father’s word (14:24; 7:16-17; 12:49-50), did the Father’s work (14:10b; 5:17, 19), did the Father’s will (5:30; 6:38), and sought the Father’s glory (7:18). He did not do anything out of Himself (5:19, 30; 8:28); the Father was the source of all that He said and did. Such an indescribable life and ministry are a pattern of what the Christian life should be—a life of a God-man. He also passed through the process of crucifixion to terminate every negative thing in the universe. The process of resurrection followed in which He was consummated to be the life-giving Spirit. The life-giving Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), the Spirit of God’s Son (Gal. 4:6), the Spirit of our Father (Matt. 10:20), and the Spirit of reality (John 14:17). This Spirit is the reality of Christ, who is the embodiment of the Father. God the Father is embodied in Christ the Son, who is realized as the life-giving Spirit.

The life-giving Spirit is the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ spoken of by Paul in Philippians 1:19: “For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Verses 20 and 21 show that Paul enjoyed such a bountiful supply to live Christ for His magnification. *The Bible in Basic English* says that this bountiful supply is “the giving out of the stored wealth.” The life-giving Spirit contains the stored wealth of the unsearchable riches of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and God-exalted Christ (Eph. 3:8). This Spirit is not merely the Spirit of God but *the Spirit of the God-man*, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who gives life to us to make us men of life who magnify Christ in all of our circumstances. This Spirit includes the ingredients of the divinity, humanity, human living, effective death, and powerful resurrection of Christ. In this sense, the life-giving Spirit is like an all-inclusive drink which contains many elements. The supply of such a Spirit is truly bountiful. Whatever we need, He is. All of the person of Christ with His life, nature, accomplishments, attainments, and obtainments is included in and made real by the life-giving Spirit of reality.

Paul needed such an all-inclusive Spirit to be his bountiful supply for his salvation. The Greek word for *bountiful supply* means “*the supplying of all needs [of the chorus] by the Choregus*. So the words here mean *the supplying of all needs [of the Christian] by the Spirit*” (Conybeare and

Howson 727). When we were regenerated, Christ as the Spirit came into our spirit to be our divine Choragus, the One who supplies all our needs. Paul wrote the book of Philippians from Rome, where he was imprisoned (Phil. 1:13), but within him dwelt the all-sufficient Spirit as his divine Choragus to supply all his inward needs. In his imprisonment Paul said that he knew this would turn out to his “salvation” through the saints’ petition and the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit. The salvation spoken of here does not refer to eternal salvation because Paul was undoubtedly saved in this sense. According to the context, for Paul to be saved was for him to not be put to shame in any of his dire circumstances by living Christ for His magnification. In the eyes of the Roman jailers, Paul enlarged, extolled, and made Christ great. How could he do this? He did this by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This Spirit is the Spirit of the man Jesus (Acts 16:7), a man with abundant strength to radiate and express God in the midst of intense suffering. Paul lived out this man by the life-giving, bountiful Spirit of reality, the Spirit of the God-man who makes this man real to us. This Spirit is also the Spirit of the resurrected Christ with the power of resurrection, the surpassing greatness of God’s power toward us who believe, the power that raised Christ from the dead, seated Him in the heavenlies far above all, subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:19-22). To know the power of Christ’s resurrection, we must know the Spirit of the resurrected Christ in our spirit. In the midst of his imprisonment, Paul was enjoying the Spirit of the man Jesus and of the resurrected Christ, with all the ingredients of what He is and what He accomplished. Actually, those who saw him in prison saw Christ because when Paul lived, that was Christ who lived. For him to live was Christ. The following portion from note 1 on Acts 28:9 in the Recovery Version describes the kind of life which Paul lived as seen in his imprisonment-voyage in the book of Acts:

This life was fully dignified, with the highest standard of human virtues expressing the most excellent divine attributes, a life that resembled the one that the Lord Himself had lived on the 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 the 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 (Phil. 1:20-21).

Paul was a pattern to us believers of living and magnifying Christ by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

He also revealed to us a simple way to enjoy and appropriate this Spirit. First Corinthians 12:3 says, “No one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.” Paul said in the same chapter that we were “all given to drink one Spirit” (v. 13). When we say with a proper and exercised spirit, “Jesus is Lord!” we are in the Holy Spirit. Hence, to call on the name of the Lord Jesus is a way to enjoy, participate in, experience, and drink of the bountiful Spirit. When we call, “Lord Jesus,” we are in the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the

Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). This shows that by calling on the name of the Lord we can live in the reality of God’s kingdom to enjoy Him as righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit. David said, “What shall I render to the Lord / For all His benefits toward me? / I shall lift up the cup of salvation, / And call upon the name of the Lord” (Psa. 116:12-13). In Psalm 27:1 David declared that the Lord was his salvation. David then revealed that he could lift up the cup of salvation and drink of the Lord as his salvation by calling on the

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name of the Lord. This matches Paul’s thought in 1 Corinthians 12. In Philippians Paul said that “every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (2:11). This again is to call on the name of the Lord. Paul told us in Romans that the Lord is “rich to all who call upon Him; for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (10:12-13). To call on the name of the Lord is the way to enjoy the riches of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, not just for our initial salvation but for our daily salvation to live and magnify Christ. Calling on the name of the Lord is first mentioned in Genesis 4:26 when Seth named his son Enosh. At that time “men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” It is significant that *Enosh* in Hebrew means “(mortal) man” (Jackson 30). When man realizes that he is mortal and, hence, weak, fragile, worthless, and frail, he begins to call upon the name of the Lord for his daily salvation. Paul said that we are earthen vessels, vessels who are worthless and fragile, but within these vessels is an incomparable, heavenly treasure of worth and strength, the glorious Christ as the all-inclusive

Spirit (2 Cor. 4:7). We can appropriate this treasure by calling on the name of the Lord. He is rich to all who call upon Him. When we call a person's name, we get the person of that name. When we call on the name of the Lord Jesus in prayer, we get His person, and His person, His very presence, is the Spirit. We all need to learn to invoke the Lord's name to enjoy Him continually as the vivifying Spirit throughout the day.

1 O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord!
 Forgive me if I say,
For very love, Thy sacred name
 A thousand times a day.
O Jesus, Lord, with me abide;
I rest in Thee, whate'er betide;
Thy gracious smile is my reward;
 I love, I love Thee, Lord! (*Hymns* 191)

Paul was able to magnify Christ in his imprisonment because he had learned the secret (Phil. 4:12) of enjoying the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ through letting his requests be made known to God in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving (v. 6). Calling on the Lord's name through prayer and petition in everything saves us so that we can be anxious in nothing. It is in this way that Christ's divine attributes in Himself as the Spirit become our human virtues for us to magnify Him, extol Him, and make Him great in the eyes of all those around us. May the Lord as the Spirit of reality guide us into all the reality of Himself for our daily salvation to magnify Him for His glorious expression.

A. B. Simpson wrote a wonderful hymn on breathing in the Lord as the Spirit (*Hymns* 233). This hymn, which describes the continual experience of the Lord breathing Himself as the Spirit into the believers, should be our prayer:

1 O Lord, breathe Thy Spirit on me,
 Teach me how to breathe Thee in;
Help me pour into Thy bosom
 All my life of self and sin.
I am breathing out my sorrow,
 Breathing out my sin;
I am breathing, breathing, breathing,
 All Thy fulness in.

2 I am breathing out my own life,
 That I may be filled with Thine;
Letting go my strength and weakness,
 Breathing in Thy life divine.

3 Breathing out my sinful nature,
 Thou hast borne it all for me;
Breathing in Thy cleansing fulness,
 Finding all my life in Thee.

4 I am breathing out my sorrow,
 On Thy kind and gentle breast;
Breathing in Thy joy and comfort,
 Breathing in Thy peace and rest.

5 I am breathing out my sickness,
 Thou hast borne its burden too;
I am breathing in Thy healing,
 Ever promised, every new.

6 I am breathing out my longings
 In Thy listening, loving ear;
I am breathing in Thy answers,
 Stilling every doubt and fear.

7 I am breathing every moment,
 Drawing all my life from Thee;
Breath by breath I live upon Thee,
 Lord, Thy Spirit breathe in me.

Because the Lord is the holy pneuma, the holy breath, the holy air, we need to breathe Him in continually by calling on His name. Jeremiah experienced this spiritual breathing when he said, "I called upon thy name, O Jehovah, out of the lowest dungeon. / Thou heardest my voice; hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. / Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not" (Lam. 3:55-57, ASV). Many times in our experience we feel that we are in the lowest dungeon, but in that lowest, darkest place of suffering we can breathe in the Lord as the Spirit by calling on His name. We truly sense inwardly His drawing near to us to be our courage, as we breathe the divine pneuma. It is in this way that we experience the life-giving Spirit as the reality of resurrection. Breathing in the Lord Spirit by calling on His name is not a religious form. It is as normal and spontaneous as breathing physically. This is the only way we can obey the New Testament command to pray unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). To pray unceasingly is to breathe unceasingly. If we stop breathing for too long, we will die. This is true both physically and spiritually. We can call, "Lord Jesus," loudly, we can call quietly, or we can even call silently and inwardly. We can call by saying, "Lord Jesus, I love You," or, "Lord Jesus, I need You." We can call, "Lord Jesus," by conversing with the Lord about everything. This is to breathe out what we are and what troubles us, and to breathe in what He is as the unique answer. As the aforementioned hymn says, out of our love for the Lord, we should speak His sacred name a thousand times a day. It is in this way that we can be transformed into His image and live Him for His magnification. This results in our growth in the divine life which builds up the Body of Christ.

Another way that we can breathe in the Lord as the life-giving Spirit is through the Holy Scriptures. Second Timothy 3:16 says that "all Scripture is God-breathed."

We do agree that we should study and read the Scriptures, but we should learn to turn our study and reading into prayer. This makes our study a prayerful study and our reading a prayerful reading, and this causes the Lord's word to become the Spirit, the breathing out of God, for us to breathe in. The words which the Lord speaks to us are spirit (John 6:63), and we need to receive "the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition" (Eph. 6:17-18).

The Spirit is...the very essence, the substance, of the Scripture, just as phosphorus is the essential substance in matches. We must strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire. (Recovery Version, 2 Tim. 3:16, note 2)

The way to strike the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit is to pray with the very words of the Scripture. Then we can catch the divine fire. The Lord said in Jeremiah that His word is like fire (23:29). Furthermore, we need to practice turning God's words into prayer for our personal enjoyment of Christ as the Spirit in God's Word. In this way we gain spiritual food for the great benefit of the Body of Christ. (See the *Autobiography of George Müller*, pp. 206-210, for his morning by morning experience of reading God's Word by means of prayer.) Pray-reading God's Word is a wonderful way to enjoy the riches of Christ as the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

We must remember that the main function of the Spirit is to give life. He is the life-giving, life-dispensing Spirit. Nowhere in the Scriptures is this more apparent than in Romans 8, which unveils to us the law of the Spirit of life. The title *the Spirit of life* implies that the nature of the Spirit is life. The Spirit Himself is life. He functions as the life-giving Spirit to impart Himself as life to the believers for their organic salvation in life. Romans 8:2 and 9-11 speak of the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ, and the indwelling Spirit. These are all interchangeable terms. They all refer to the Spirit who gives life.

The life-giving Spirit is called the Spirit of life, the Spirit

of life is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Christ is just Christ Himself. Furthermore, this Spirit who is of life, of God, of Christ, and Christ Himself dwells in us as the indwelling Spirit to dispense life to us all the time. This is the pneumatic Christ. (Lee, *Divine* 15)

Romans 8 shows that this life-dispensing Spirit imparts life into our entire tripartite being to make us men of life.

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First, He gives life to our spirit to make our human spirit life (v. 10). What a marvel that the regenerating life-giving Spirit came into our spirit to make our spirit life (Gk. *zoe*), the eternal uncreated life of God, which is Christ as the embodiment of God realized as the Spirit of life. A regenerated believer's innermost being, his spirit, is *zoe*! The life-dispensing Spirit goes further in transformation to give *zoe* to the believer's mind. Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the spirit is *zoe*. When we set our mind, the leading part of our soul, on the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, our mind becomes *zoe*. Finally, the Spirit who indwells us, according to Romans 8:11, gives *zoe* to our mortal bodies. All this takes place by the *zoe*-giving Spirit dispensing *zoe* into our spirit, soul, and body to make us men constituted with *zoe* and channels of *zoe* to others for the building up of the Body of Christ. The apostle John points out in 1 John 5:16 that if we see our brother sinning a sin not unto death, we should ask and give him life, *zoe*. This shows that we should be one with the *zoe*-giving Spirit to such an extent that we become *zoe*-giving members of the Body of Christ. How

can we be such? When we see a brother with a weakness of sin in his character or living, we should ask. We need to be askers not criticizers. When we ask as one who is abiding in the Lord in one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17), the Lord gives *zoe* to us to make us channels of *zoe* to the one for whom we ask. This *zoe* can swallow up the death that comes from sin and make a deadened member a living, functioning member of the Body of Christ. We all need to be ministers of *zoe* by being one with the Lord as the *zoe*-giving Spirit. He is the *zoe* and He came that we might have *zoe* abundantly! We can have *zoe* abundantly because He is the *zoe*-giving Spirit.

Christ became a life-giving Spirit in resurrection in order to carry out God's organic salvation to accomplish His heart's desire to build up the Body of Christ which consummates the New Jerusalem. Without Christ's being the life-giving Spirit, we could not be saved organically for the building up of His Body. It is as the

the fellowship of the Spirit which Paul speaks of in the concluding verse of 2 Corinthians.

By being the life-giving Spirit, Christ can be everything to us in our experience. In 1 Corinthians 1 Christ is God's power and God's wisdom as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to us (vv. 24, 30). In chapter two He is the crucified One (v. 2), the Lord of glory (v. 8), and the deep things of God (v. 10). In chapter three He is the foundation of God's building (v. 11). In chapter five He is the

**In order to know the things of Christ,
the God-man, we must live, walk, move,
and have our being according to the Spirit of the God-man,
the life-giving Spirit, in our spirit.**

Spirit that Christ can give life to and indwell our spirit in regeneration (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16). It is as the Spirit that He can nourish us with Himself as the green pasture of life to be our spiritual food in His organic shepherding (1 Cor. 10:3). It is as the Spirit that He can make us holy partakers of the divine nature for our sanctification so that ultimately we can be His holy wife, the holy city (1 Thes. 5:23). It is as the Spirit that He renews us to make us a new creation (Titus 3:5). It is as the Spirit that He transforms us into precious stones for God's building (2 Cor. 3:18). It is as the Spirit that He shapes us, conforms us, into the image of Himself as the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29). Finally, it is as the Spirit that He glorifies us with the glory of God so that we become exactly like Him in life, nature, and appearance, but not in the Godhead (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

It is as the life-giving Spirit that Christ can be everything to us as the solution to all the problems in the church. The church in Corinth was full of serious problems, such as division (1 Cor. 1:10-13), incestuous fornication (5:1), and even lawsuits (6:1-8). How would we write to help such a church? Paul as our pattern ministered the all-inclusive Christ as the life-giving Spirit to them. Paul addressed his Epistle in this way: "To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours" (1:2). Christ is "theirs and ours"; that is, He is our God-allotted portion, the "portion of the saints" (Col. 1:12). We have been "called to call"; that is, we have been called to enjoy Christ as our portion by calling upon the name of our Lord in every place. Paul told the Corinthians that God had called them into the fellowship of His Son, who was their God-given portion (1 Cor. 1:9). The Greek word for *fellowship*, *koinonia*, means "joint or common participation." We were called to participate in Christ, to partake of Him daily as our portion in the most intimate relationship with Him so that He can be life and everything to us. This fellowship of God's Son is

real Passover (v. 7) and the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (v. 8). In chapter ten He is our spiritual food, our spiritual drink, and our spiritual rock (vv. 3-4). In chapter eleven He is the Head of every man (v. 3), and in chapter twelve He is the Body of the Head (v. 12). In chapter fifteen He is the firstfruits (vv. 20, 23), the second man (v. 47), and the last Adam (v. 45). Finally, He is the life-giving Spirit (v. 45). The life-giving Spirit is the totality of all that Christ is as the all-inclusive One. We should focus our entire being on Christ as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit. We should focus on Him as such a One, not on any persons, matters, or things other than Him so that all the problems of sin and death among the believers may be solved.

First Corinthians shows that Christ the Lord is the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit and that He dwells in our spirit, where we are joined to Him to be one spirit with Him (6:17). The apostle Paul wrote this Epistle to the Corinthians in order to motivate them to aspire to the growth in life that they might be spiritual men. This book reveals that we can be one of three kinds of men: fleshly men, soulish men, or spiritual men. Paul told the Corinthians that they were fleshly, even fleshy. Not only did some among them live by the flesh, but also some among them were totally of the flesh, that is, fleshy (3:1, 3). Others of them were soulish (2:14). This means that their soul was the predominant, most powerful part of their being. Paul said that such persons do not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are discerned spiritually (v. 14). Paul indicated that the Corinthians should aspire to be spiritual men who live and walk according to the spirit (v. 15), men who are dominated, governed, directed, led, and moved by their mingled spirit, their human spirit mingled with the life-giving Spirit as one spirit. Only the spirit of man knows the things of man, and only the Spirit of God knows the things of God (v. 11). In order to know the things of Christ, the God-man, we must live, walk, move, and have our being according to the Spirit of the God-man,

the life-giving Spirit, in our spirit. Which part of our tripartite being will dominate us, and what kind of men will we be? May we pray daily for the Father to strengthen us with His divine power into our inner man (Eph. 3:16), our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life, that we may be spiritual men, men of Christ as the life-giving Spirit, for the building up of His Body.

Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians may be considered his autobiography and shows that he was a spiritual man whose life and ministry were focused on Christ as the Spirit who gives life. Paul said that his ministry, the New Testament ministry, was the ministry of the Spirit (3:8). He said that God had made him and his co-workers "sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (v. 6). Paul did not minister the letter of the law to the saints. Instead, he ministered the life-giving Spirit to them. He went further to say in verse 17 that "the Lord is the Spirit." According to the context of this verse, the Lord here is Christ the Lord (2:12, 14-15, 1; 3:3-4, 14, 16; 4:5). Paul is most emphatic when he says, "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord" (4:5). It is abundantly clear from 2 Corinthians 3:6 and 17 that the Lord, Christ Jesus, is the Spirit who gives life, the life-giving Spirit. In verse 18 Paul speaks of Him as "the Lord Spirit." This is a compound title like *the Father God* and *the Lord Christ*. The Lord Christ indwells us as the transforming Lord Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 1 the Spirit is revealed as the anointing Spirit (v. 21), the sealing Spirit (v. 22), and the pledging Spirit (v. 22). In chapter three He is the inscribing Spirit as the divine ink ministered by the apostles into the believers' hearts to make them living letters of Christ so that others can read and know Christ in their being (v. 3). In this chapter He is also the life-giving Spirit (v. 6), the ministering Spirit (v. 8), the liberating Spirit (v. 17), and the transforming Spirit (v. 18). Finally, in chapter thirteen He is the transmitting Spirit (v. 14). As the Spirit of fellowship, He transmits into the believers the reality of the grace of Christ and the love of God with all their mysterious import. This was prophesied by the Lord Jesus in John 16:13-15:

But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; for this reason I have said that He receives of Mine and will declare it to you.

These verses reveal the Spirit as the transmission of the Divine Trinity to the believers. All that the Father is and has

is the Son's and is embodied in the Son (Col. 2:9); all that the Son is and has is received by the Spirit, who declares it to the believers and, in so doing, guides them into all the reality of the Triune God. This is our joint participation in the Spirit's transmission of the grace of Christ with the love of God for the building up of the Body of Christ.

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In John 14 the Lord Jesus reveals the Triune God dispensing Himself into the believers. The Father is embodied in the Son and seen among the believers (vv. 7-14). Then the Son is realized as the Spirit to abide in the believers (vv. 15-20). It is in this way that the Triune God makes His abode with the believers (vv. 21-24). This revelation is expressed deeply and poignantly in the following hymn of praise to the Lord by Watchman Nee (*Hymns* 446):

- 1 Lord, when the Father ne'er was known,
The Father came through Thee below,
That we who lived in ignorance
Might through Thyself the Father know.
- 2 But, Lord, when Thou wast here on earth,
How scarce were those Thyself who knew;
A veil there was 'twixt Thee and them;
They crowded 'round, but saw not through.
- 3 Now as the Spirit Thou hast come
E'en as the Father came in Thee;
As we through Thee the Father know,
Now through the Spirit we know Thee.
- 4 Not with the flesh Thou now art clothed—
Then must Thou walk with toil around;
But as the Spirit in our heart
Thou dost supply Thyself unbound.
- 5 Thou, Lord, the Father once wast called,
But now the Holy Spirit art;
The Spirit is Thine other form,
Thyself to dwell within our heart.
- 6 By knowing Thee as Spirit, Lord,
We realize Thy life's outflow,
Thy glory and Thy character,
And all Thy being's wonders know.
- 7 Praise to Thy Name now floods our heart;
There is no one as dear as Thee;
For since we know how real Thou art,
No other one could lovelier be.

Our Desperate Need Today

There is a desperate need for all of the Lord's children to know Him as the vivifying Spirit. This is because the attack on the church is the attack of death. There is truly an ongoing battle for life in this universe. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord said that the gates of Hades, the power of death, shall not prevail against the church. *Shall not prevail* indicates an ongoing attack of Satan, who has the might of death, on the church as the Body of Christ, the corporate vessel to contain, experience, enjoy, minister, and express Christ as life. Through Christ's wonderful death, He destroyed the devil, who has the might of death (Heb. 2:14). But the controversy between life and death is not yet concluded because the sentence of Satan's destruction must be executed in time through the Body of Christ. We must be those who pay the price in this age to enjoy the life-giving Spirit as the reality of Christ's resurrection life. "To deny that Christ is the life-giving Spirit is equal to denying the reality of resurrection. The life-giving Spirit is the life pulse of Christ's resurrection" (Lee, *Conclusion* 797-798). If resurrection life is to prevail in the church today, we must know Christ as the life-giving Spirit. We must be daily filled in our spirit with the life-giving Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

We are deeply grieved by today's aberrations in relation to the truth and experience of Christ as the life-giving Spirit. There is a markedly distorted view of the truth and experience of the Spirit in much of today's charismatic movement, as John F. MacArthur, Jr., has factually pointed out in his book *Charismatic Chaos*. But there has also been a missing, an avoidance, and a neglect of the truth and experience of Christ as the Spirit in today's Protestantism. Some, because of their tradition or incomplete view of the whole truth of the Divine Trinity in both His essential and economical aspects, have even twisted the clear word of the Bible in 1 Corinthians 15:45 and 2 Corinthians 3:17 to virulently oppose the truth that Christ is the vivifying Spirit. (Please see the sidebar on this page and the next for an answer to such distortion and twisting.) If we remain merely in the truth and realization of Christ's first becoming, we have merely an objective Christ who is sitting at the right hand of God. Romans 8 reveals that Christ is not only sitting at the right hand of God (v. 34) but also that Christ is in us (v. 10). He is in us as the pneumatic Christ, the life-giving Spirit as the reality of resurrection. It is as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit that He can be subjectively real to us to swallow up all that is of death.

If we deny the truth of Christ being the Spirit in our spirit, all that is left for us is to live by the soul, to be soulish men to whom the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness (1 Cor. 2:14). Indeed, the source of much of the work we see today is from the soulish ability of man with his

TWO LIFE-GIVING SPIRITS?

Let us now turn to 1 Corinthians 15:45. This verse says, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." According to this verse, the last Adam, who is Christ, became a life-giving Spirit. Some twist this verse, saying that it speaks of "a life-giving Spirit," not "the life-giving Spirit." But besides the Holy Spirit who gives life is there another Spirit who gives life? To say that there are two Spirits giving life is to teach another great heresy. Whether the article is definite or indefinite, the last Adam, who is Christ Himself, became a Spirit, a life-giving Spirit. At this point we must refer to John 6:63, where the Lord says, "It is the Spirit who gives life." In this chapter the Lord Jesus said that He was the bread of life to give life to people. Eventually, He indicated that in order to be life to people as the bread of life, He must be the Spirit, for it is the Spirit who gives life. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 3:6 says, "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." Is not the Spirit in this verse the Holy Spirit? Can we say that besides this Holy Spirit who gives life there is also another Spirit who gives life? No, we dare not say this.

A second way of twisting this verse is to say that the life-giving Spirit here is not the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit of Christ as a person. Those who twist the verse in this manner say that just as we have a spirit, so Christ also has a spirit. Then they proceed to say that the spirit here is the spirit of Christ, not the Holy Spirit. Certainly, the Spirit in this verse is the Spirit of Christ. But do you believe that besides the Holy Spirit there is another Spirit called the Spirit of Christ? Or, to put the matter another way, do you believe that besides the Spirit of Christ there is another Spirit called the Holy Spirit? If you believe this, your mind must be darkened. No one with an enlightened mind would believe this.

Those who twist 1 Corinthians 15:45 in this manner do not know that the Holy Spirit today is not only the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) and even the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7). Romans 8:9 testifies that the Spirit of God today is the Spirit of Christ, and Phillipians 1:19 testifies that the Spirit of Christ is also the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In a chapter entitled, "The Spirit of the Glorified Jesus," in his book *The Spirit of Christ*, Andrew Murray says that after Christ's ascension the

Holy Spirit did not come as before. In the Old Testament, He came only as the Spirit of God, but after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Spirit came not only as the Spirit of God, but also as the Spirit of the man Christ. Furthermore, John 7:39 says that prior to Christ's death and resurrection this Spirit was "not yet." However, the Spirit of God was already there. The critics apparently do not know that the Holy Spirit today is not only the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of Christ. This Spirit, who is the Spirit both of God and of Christ, is the life-giving Spirit. After and through His resurrection, Christ became such a life-giving Spirit. Undoubtedly, this Spirit is the Holy Spirit.

Paul was careful in writing 1 Corinthians 15:45. He did not say, "The last Adam became a Spirit." He added the modifier, "life-giving," saying, "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." There is no ground for argument. Who is the Spirit who gives life? Do you believe that besides the Holy Spirit there is another divine Spirit who gives life? This is impossible.

A third twisting of this verse says that the spirit here is the human spirit of Christ. But if the spirit here merely denotes the human spirit of Christ, then there was no need for Him to become a spirit because he had a human spirit already. Several times in the Gospels there are references to Christ's human spirit. For example, He knew "fully in His spirit" (Mark 2:8); He "groaned deeply in His spirit" (Mark 8:12); He "was moved with indignation in His spirit" (John 11:33); and He "became troubled in His spirit" (John 13:21). Hence, there was no need for Him to become a human spirit.

A fourth twisting claims that Adam, as a whole, became a soul; that Christ, as a whole, became a Spirit; and that this Spirit is not the Holy Spirit who gives life. I definitely agree that Adam became a soul, for the Bible says so. I also believe that Christ altogether became a Spirit. But I cannot believe that this Spirit is something other than the life-giving Holy Spirit. Do you believe that besides the Holy Spirit there is another Spirit who gives life? This is illogical. Which will you accept—the twistings or the clear word of the Bible? We all should be simple and should say, "Amen" to whatever the Bible says.

Lee, Witness. *The Truth Concerning the Trinity*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1994.

natural gift, eloquence, or enthusiasm, instead of being the demonstration of the Spirit with His power (1 Cor. 2:4). Watchman Nee points out that the work of the Spirit can be counterfeited by what he refers to as the latent power of the soul (457-516). The soul of man is living, but it cannot give life. Adam became a living soul, but Christ became a life-giving Spirit. The soul is the center and life pulse of the old creation, but the life-giving Spirit is the center and life-pulse of the new creation. It is Christ as the Spirit and Christ as the Spirit alone who gives life to produce the new creation (John 6:63). The coming Antichrist, whom the Scripture calls the man of lawlessness (2 Thes. 2:3), will be a charismatic man with a powerful soul who will be able to perform wonders and signs which are according to Satan's operation and are a lie (vv. 9-10). This Antichrist, who is the embodiment of Satan, is likened to a beast in Revelation 13. Today's apostates are also likened by Jude to beasts, "animals without reason" (v. 10). Jude goes on to say, "These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit" (v. 19). Henry Alford points out that these ones

have not indeed ceased to have a spirit, as a part of their own tripartite nature [1 Thes. 5:23]: but they have ceased to possess it in any worthy sense: it is degraded beneath and under the power of the psyche [soul], the personal life, so as to have no real vitality of its own. (1777)

If we do not use our spirit or care for our spirit by exercising our spirit to enjoy Christ as the vivifying Spirit, we are doomed to be soulish brutes. Job 12:10 says that in God's hand is "the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all mankind" (lit.). The beasts have a soul, but only man has a spirit in which Christ as the life-giving Spirit can dwell. It is through the soul of man that Satan can attack the church with death. In Matthew 16 Peter rebuked the Lord after the Lord revealed that He must go to the cross. The Lord then turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (v. 23). He went on to reveal that if we want to follow Him we must deny ourselves, rejecting our soul-life (vv. 24-26). Satan as death can come out through the opinion of man's soul. Because of the fall, the life of man's soul has been contaminated by Satan and must be denied so that the faculties of the soul can be used by and subjected to the Lord as the life-giving Spirit in man's regenerated spirit. In this way the soul with its faculties is filled, enriched, and uplifted by the life-giving Spirit for Christ's magnification.

Satan as death is also spread by the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). Death is spread in the church in a prevailing way by gossip, criticism, slander, and an unwillingness to forgive and seek to be forgiven by others. This is why Paul said in Galatians,


If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another. But I say, Walk by the Spirit

and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire. (vv. 15-17)

This shows the war between the flesh and the Spirit, which is the war between death and life. The mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace (Rom. 8:6). “For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live” (v. 13).

Our eyes need to be opened by the Lord to see that there are two different worlds in this universe. There is the physical world, the kingdom of Satan, built up by the satanic trinity—Satan, sin, and the flesh (Rom. 5:12; Gen. 6:3; Matt. 16:23). There is also the spiritual world, the kingdom of God, built up by the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. This kingdom is the Body of Christ which will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Ephesians 4:4-6 reveals the one Father as the Originator and source of the Body; the one Lord, the Son, as the Creator and element of the Body; and the one Spirit as the Executor and essence of the Body. Just as the blood in our physical body is the life essence of our body, the life-giving Spirit is the “blood,” the life essence, of the Body of Christ. The circulation, the flow, of this “blood,” is the fellowship of the Spirit. Without the flow of the life-giving Spirit, we cannot have the reality of the Body of Christ; all that is left is a corpse and a theory of the Body of Christ. The fellowship of the Spirit and the ministry of the Spirit build up the organic Body of Christ, which is God’s spiritual world. Satan’s world, the old creation, is altogether physical; God’s world, the new creation, is altogether spiritual.

We thank the Lord for the first becoming of Christ. It is marvelous that the Word became flesh. This Word become flesh was the physical Jesus, the Lamb of God, for God’s judicial redemption of man as seen in the Gospels. Because of His satisfying God’s righteous requirements to redeem us, we now have the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7), the washing away of our sins (Heb. 1:3), justification (Rom. 3:24), reconciliation (Rom. 5:10a), and positional sanctification (Heb. 13:12; 10:29). We are His redeemed people who belong to Him. But is this all? Many Christians stop with the Lord’s first becoming, but the Lord did not stop. He went on to have a second becoming. As the last Adam, He became the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ, in resurrection. His first becoming was for His second becoming, and His second becoming was the goal of His first becoming. His first becoming was for His earthly ministry to carry out the procedure of His salvation as a foundation. His second becoming is for Him to carry out His heavenly ministry to accomplish the purpose of His salvation. In His

heavenly ministry, Christ as the life-giving Spirit saves us to the uttermost organically from the regeneration of our spirit, through the transformation of our soul, and unto the glorification of our body. We need to press on to come out of the earthly and physical realm into the divine and mystical realm of the pneumatic Christ, the life-giving Spirit. If we miss, neglect, or oppose the truth of Christ being the life-giving Spirit, we will come far short of the desire of God’s heart to complete His eternal economy by dispensing Himself as the life and life supply into His chosen and redeemed people to build them up as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem. It is by our knowing, experiencing, and ministering Christ as the life-giving Spirit that the desire of God’s heart will be fulfilled and that we will be fully satisfied. 

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