

The WORKING of the LAW of the SPIRIT of LIFE to DISPENSE the LIFE of the TRIUNE GOD into the TRIPARTITE MAN

by Ed Marks

God's eternal intention according to His heart's desire is seen as a line of thought throughout the entire sixty-six books of the Bible. This is what Paul refers to as "the economy of the mystery," which was hidden in God throughout the ages (Eph. 3:9). Paul's commission from God was to enlighten all that they might see this economy. (For a full definition of God's economy, see Kerry S. Robichaux's article "The Divine Economy" in *A & C*, Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 3-12.) The Greek word for *economy* here is *oikonomia*. This word is composed of two words: *oikos*, meaning "house" or "household," and *nomos*, meaning "law." God's economy is His household law, or household administration, to impart Himself, to dispense Himself, as life into man's entire being to make man His glorious expression in the universe, which is the church as the house of the living God (1 Tim. 3:15), the Body of Christ, in this age and the New Jerusalem in the coming age and for eternity (Rev. 21:2-3).

In any book the author's thesis and intent are principally seen in both his introduction and conclusion. It is the same with God's book, the Bible. Genesis 1 and 2 show us the desire of God's heart before sin poisoned man, and Revelation 21 and 22 show us the fulfillment of His heart's desire after sin has been fully dealt with and eradicated. These two portions of God's Word reflect each other, bringing us into the depths of God's purpose for man. Genesis 1 and 2 may be considered as the blueprint of God's intention and Revelation 21 and 22 as the photograph of the finished product. Genesis 3 through Revelation 20 reveals the process which is taking place to arrive at this ultimate product, which is the New Jerusalem, the bride, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:2, 9).

Genesis 1 shows us the desire of God's heart, and Genesis 2 shows us the way He fulfills His desire. In Genesis 1 God spoke His creation into being. He called the things not being as being (Rom. 4:17). To bring forth the old creation, He spoke and it was done (Psa. 33:9). After creating many things, the Lord came to the pinnacle of His creating work, the creation of man. Man's creation was unique in that the Lord did not speak him into being. Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" Man's creation required a council of the Divine Trinity, as indicated by the words *Let Us* and *Our image*. The other created things

were made according to their kind, but man was made in God's image and according to God's likeness. This means that man was created according to God's kind. He was created in the image of God to contain God and express God. Just as a glove is created in the image of a hand in order to contain and express a hand, so man was created in the image of God in order to contain and express God. This is God's purpose for man, apart from sin.

Genesis 2 goes on to show us the procedures God took to fulfill His purpose. Verse 7 says, "Then 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.). This verse shows us that God created man as a tripartite being, with a spirit, a soul, and a body (1 Thes. 5:23). Man's body, composed of the dust from the ground, possesses world-consciousness. It is the means by which man can contact and experience the things in the material world. Man's soul, the seat of his personality, possesses self-consciousness. It is the means by which man can contact and experience the things in the psychological world. Man's spirit, the breath of life, possesses God-consciousness. It is the organ by which man can contact God (John 4:24) and the receptacle, the receiver, for man to contain God (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom.

1 Pet. 2:5) and ultimately the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:18-21).

At the end of Genesis 2, we see the goal of the Triune God in dispensing Himself as life into man. Adam desired a counterpart to express him, so God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him "and the Lord God built into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man" (v. 22, lit.). Romans 5:14 says clearly that Adam is a type of Christ, and Ephesians 5 tells us that Adam and Eve are a type of Christ and the church (vv. 31-32; cf. Gen. 2:24). Just as Adam was put to sleep, Christ was "put to sleep" on the cross, sleep having the meaning of death (1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16). Just as a rib was taken out of Adam's side to build a woman, blood and water flowed out of Christ's side for the purchase and building of the church (John 19:34). The Lord shed His blood for our redemption (Heb. 9:22) to purchase us (Acts 20:28). He also released and imparted His life into us, signified by the water that flowed out of His side (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4), to build us into a woman, His bride. Blood is not mentioned in Genesis 2:22 because sin had not yet entered into man and redemption was not needed. After man fell, the blood of Christ is needed for his cleansing and redemption. This is why the

After God created man with the potential to be filled with Him to express Him, He placed man before the tree of life. The tree of life signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit to be the tripartite man's life and life supply so that he can be filled with God to express God.



8:16). The Hebrew word for "breath" in Genesis 2:7 is also the word for "spirit" in Proverbs 20:27, which says, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, / Searching all the innermost parts of his being."

After God created man in such a marvelous way with the potential to be filled with Him to express Him, He placed man before the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). The tree of life signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ (Col. 2:9) and realized as the Spirit (John 14:17) to be the tripartite man's life and life supply so that he can be filled with God to express God. God the Father is the origin and source of life (John 5:26), God the Son is the embodiment and manifestation of life (John 1:4; 10:10), and God the Spirit is the essence and Giver of life (Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 15:45). Genesis 2:10 through 12 tells us that a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and the issue of this flow was gold, bdellium, and onyx stone. This river signifies Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17) flowing the life of God into us (John 7:37-39) to transform us into precious material for God's building, which is the church (Matt. 16:18;

blood is mentioned in John 19:34. The rib in Genesis 2:22 and the water in John 19:34 signify the same thing—the flowing, indestructible, unbreakable, resurrection life of Christ (cf. John 19:36). By imparting His life into His chosen and redeemed people, God builds them into a woman as the counterpart of Christ, "the Eternal Companion of the God-Man" (Billheimer 25). The built-up church is Christ's counterpart in this age to consummate in the New Jerusalem as His eternal wife, the ultimate and consummate Eve.

Revelation 21 and 22 show us a photograph of the finished product of God's building by the dispensing of Himself as life into man, according to the blueprint in Genesis 1 and 2. This product is the New Jerusalem as the masterpiece of the Triune God (Eph. 2:10), the One who is its organic Architect and Builder (Heb. 11:10). This holy city is a person, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:2, 9). This wife is a corporate man as the fulfillment of Genesis 1:26, fully expressing God in His image. The entire city has the glory of God and "her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, like clear as crystal"

(Rev. 21:11). Revelation 4:3 tells us that the One sitting on the throne also has the appearance of a jasper stone, showing that the entire holy city bears the appearance of God. Within the city, the Lamb's wife, is the tree of life and the river of water of life for her eternal supply. Furthermore, she is a miraculous structure of treasure—gold, pearl, and precious stones. These priceless materials are the regenerated, transformed, and glorified sons of God built up into a spiritual house for God's eternal habitation (21:3, 22) and into a wife for His eternal delight (v. 2).

We want to emphasize that God's intention to dispense His life into man is His original intention, apart from sin. God placed man before the tree of life with the view that man would receive Him as his life. Redemption was needed after sin entered into man, but redemption is not God's goal. Christ's marvelous redemption is the procedure to bring us back to God's original intention to dispense Himself as life into us. Thus, after Satan and sin have been put away, we see a transformed corporate man, the wife of Christ, enjoying God as the tree of life and the river of water of life eternally. Even if man had never fallen, he still would have needed to receive God into him as life. Although Adam was sinless, he was empty, devoid of God as life. God does not merely desire sinless man but a man filled with God, a man filled with the life of God, with the treasure of the divine life in his human, earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7).

There are three Greek words for *life*. *Bios*, from which we get the word *biology*, is the word for the physical life. *Psuche*, from which we get the word *psychology*, is the word for the psychological life, the life of the soul. *Zoe* is the Greek word for the uncreated, indestructible, eternal life of God Himself. In John 10:10 the Lord said that He came that we might have life and have it abundantly. He also said, "I am...the life" (14:6). The life mentioned here is not *bios* or *psuche* but *zoe*. Man has *bios* and *psuche*, but man needs another life—*zoe*. Man was created with *bios* in his body and *psuche* in his soul, but God's intention is to dispense Himself as *zoe* into man's spirit and from man's spirit spread into man's soul and body so that man may become *zoe* in his entire tripartite being for the full expression of the Triune God.

How the Triune God Dispenses Himself as Life into the Tripartite Man

Now that we have seen something, albeit in a succinct way, of God's heart's desire for man, we want to focus our fellowship on one of the greatest chapters in the New Testament—Romans 8. Paul's fellowship in this chapter is the key to our entire Christian life. This chapter is a revelation of how the Triune God dispenses Himself as life into the tripartite man. Romans 8:10 shows us that after we receive Christ as life into us, our spirit becomes life,

zoe. Then verse 6 says that when our mind, the leading part of our soul, is set on the spirit, our mind is *zoe*. Finally, verse 11 says that as the Spirit indwells us, housing Himself within us, He gives *zoe* to our mortal bodies. This makes us *zoe* in our entire tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—for the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose in building up Christ's Body to prepare His bride, the New Jerusalem. Romans 8 shows us that the way God dispenses Himself as life into our being is by becoming the law of life, the law of the Spirit of life, within us (v. 2). This is a scientific law, an automatic principle:

We have to see how the law of life works in a scientific way. Even in such an ancient time, two thousand years ago, this scientific word, *law*, was used by the Apostle Paul. The goal of modern science is mostly just to find out the natural law of certain things. For example, the earth has the greatest attracting power, and eventually the law of gravity was discovered. Today, even the elementary students know about the law of gravity. All the scientific studies are studies of natural laws. Is it not a wonder that two thousand years ago such a writer as Paul used the word *law* in this way? He did not use it in the way of the Ten Commandments, but in the way of a scientific principle. (Lee, *Perfecting* 371, emphasis added)

The law of the divine life is the spontaneous power of the divine life; it is the natural characteristic and the innate, automatic function of the divine life. Every life has a law and even is a law. For example, it is the law of the bird life to build up a bird in the shape of a bird and with the function of a bird according to the bird's kind, or species. This is the spontaneous power of the bird life, which automatically functions as the bird life grows. In the same way, it is the function of the law of the divine life in our spirit to spontaneously build us up to be the corporate Christ, the Body of Christ, and to be its functioning members (1 Cor. 12:12), conforming us, shaping us, into the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God, according to God's kind, God's species (Rom. 8:29). Ultimately, by the working of the law of the divine life within us, "we will be like Him" (1 John 3:2), we will "bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49), and God will be all in all (v. 28).

God accomplishes His economy by dispensing Himself into us as the law of life. Jeremiah 31:33 says, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it." Hebrews 8:10 says, "I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them." The words *impart* and *inscribe* convey the thought of dispensing. By imparting His divine life into us, God puts the highest law of this highest life into our spirit. From our spirit this law spreads into our inward parts—our mind, emotion, and will—to become several laws. This is why

Jeremiah 31:33 speaks of “law” (singular), whereas Hebrews 8:10 speaks of “laws” (plural). This is similar to the one river of water of life (Rev. 22:1) becoming many rivers flowing out of our innermost being (John 7:38). These many rivers are the different aspects of the one Spirit of life as the unique river of water of life. The spreading of the law of the Spirit of life into our inward parts is God’s imparting Himself as the law of life into us. This imparting is the inscribing of Himself on our hearts to make us living letters of Christ (2 Cor. 3:3). As we become living letters of Christ, others are able to read and know Christ in our being. By the working, the spreading, of the law of life within us, we are transformed and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God for His glory, His expression (Rom. 8:29).

The spontaneous power and the innate, automatic function of the indwelling Spirit of life is to dispense life into our being. Electricity is a good illustration because it functions according to a law. When we turn on the switch, the electricity automatically flows and is “dispensed” into various appliances and devices to cause them to function accordingly. In like manner, when we contact the Lord as the indwelling Spirit of life, the divine life as the “divine electricity” automatically flows and is dispensed into our being

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to cause us to be the functioning members of the Body of Christ. This is why the Spirit is called “the life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). The automatic function, the spontaneous capacity, the law, of the Spirit is to give life, first to our spirit, then to our soul, and ultimately to our mortal body.

The function of the law of a certain life can be seen with a peach tree. There is a law of the peach tree life that will spontaneously and automatically produce peaches. There is no need to worry that it will produce anything else because its life-law is an automatic principle. Similarly, we have the divine life in us. “He who has the Son has the life” (1 John 5:12). This life within us also has its law. As the peach tree life grows according to its law, it produces peaches. As the divine life grows in us according to its law, it produces us to be the sons of God. By the working of the law of the divine life in us, we may say that we are “sonized” for the building up of the Body of Christ. What do we mean when we coin such a new term? When the Spirit of God’s Son entered into our spirit, we became the sons of God (John 1:12; Heb. 2:10). But what about our

unrenewed soul and our corrupted body? This is why we need the operation of the law of the divine life in us. This automatic law dispenses the divine life, which is the Son Himself (John 14:6), into all the parts of our soul. Eventually, according to Romans 8:23, we will enter into the full sonship when our mortal body is redeemed. To be “sonized” then is to pass through the process of regeneration in our spirit (John 3:6), transformation in our soul (Rom. 12:2), and glorification in our body (Phil. 3:21), making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being. At that time the entire creation will behold the revelation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19). Although we are the sons of God, we have not yet been fully revealed or manifested as the sons of God. This is why we need to go through a “sonizing” process in this age. Today we are the children of God; however, “it has not yet been manifested what we will be,” but when He is manifested, we will be like Him (1 John 3:2). We are “sonized” for the accomplishment of God’s purpose by the working of the law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:29 says, “Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” From eternity Christ is God’s only begotten



Son (John 1:18), possessing divinity. Through His incarnation, He came out of eternity into time and with His divinity into humanity. He put on human nature, which was not a part of the divine sonship. Through His crucifixion and in His resurrection, He brought His humanity into the divine sonship. Now in resurrection He is the designated firstborn Son of God, possessing both divinity and humanity (Rom. 1:3-4; Acts 13:33). As the firstborn Son of God, He is the prototype for the mass reproduction of the many sons of God, who are His many brothers and the many members of His Body for His corporate expression. God’s way to mass reproduce this prototype is to work this living prototype, the firstborn Son, into our being. If we cooperate with and open up to this wonderful prototype, He will spread outward from our spirit into our soul. As we contact this indwelling prototype, fellowship with Him, and touch Him, He automatically works in us as the law of life to conform us to His image, to “sonize” us. As this law operates within us, life is dispensed into our being to constitute us the members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions (Eph. 4:11, 16).

Paul Billheimer points out God's purpose in His plan of redemption:

Those who have worked on an assembly line know that a prototype is first designed, handcrafted, and tested before it is committed to the assembly line. They also know that the purpose of the assembly line is to produce exact duplicates, perfect copies of the original. This is God's purpose in the plan of redemption—to produce, by means of the new birth, an entirely new and unique species, exact replicas of His Son with whom He will share His glory and His dominion, and who will constitute a royal progeny and form the governing and administrative staff of His eternal kingdom.

While we recognize the infinite distinction between the Eternal Son and the "many sons" born into the family, yet such is their heredity as the result of the new birth that He recognizes them as bona fide blood-brothers. And according to 1 John 3:2 that is just what they are, true genetic sons of God and therefore blood-brothers of the Son. Christ is the divine Prototype after which this new species is being made. They are to be exact copies of Him, true genotypes, *as utterly like Him as it is possible for the finite to be like the Infinite.* (37)

To be Christ's "blood-brothers" means that we have been born of God and are actual, generated sons of God, with the seed of our Father God abiding in us (1 John 3:9). It means that we have Christ's life (John 1:12-13; Col. 3:4) and that we partake of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), but we do not share in His Godhead, nor do we ever become an object of worship. We need to see the great revelation, as seen by the early church fathers, especially Athanasius, that we are being deified, "sonized" by the automatic power of the law of the Spirit of life within us to be God's royal family (Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

How the Law of the Spirit of Life Operates within Us

Now we want to consider how this law operates in our being. Romans 7 and 8 show us four laws: the law of God (7:22, 25), the law of good in our mind (v. 23), the law of sin and of death (v. 23; 8:2), and the law of the Spirit of life (8:2). The written law of God is outside of us. This law shows us who God is and what God requires of us. The law is a portrait of God, showing us that God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. The law shows us what God is and what we are not. God's desire is that we become His portrait, His expression, but it is impossible for us to express God in our fallen human life. "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am fleshly, sold under sin" (7:14). The law makes demands on us according to what God is, but we find it impossible to meet these demands.

Now we come to the laws inside of us. These are subjective

laws which match the life within us. All of the laws within our tripartite being are innate, automatic functions with spontaneous power. There is a law which operates in our corrupted body, a law which operates in our God-created soul, and a law which operates in our regenerated spirit. Through the fall, sin as the evil element of Satan, was injected into man, and man's pure, undefiled body was transmuted into the flesh. Romans 6:6 refers to our body as "the body of sin." This is "the body indwelt, occupied, corrupted, possessed, utilized, and enslaved by sin, so that it does sinful things" (Recovery Version, v. 6, note 4). In Romans 7:24 Paul calls our corrupted body "the body of this death." This is the death of being defeated, weak, desensitized, and disabled in the things of God. Thus, our corrupted body is the flesh, full of sin and death. Indeed, Satan as the law of sin and death resides in our flesh. Our flesh is the "meeting hall" of Satan, sin, and death. In Romans sin is portrayed as a personified element within us. Sin can reign over us and lord it over us through the lusts of our body (6:12, 14). Sin can work out in us coveting of every kind (7:8). Sin can deceive us and kill us (v. 11). Paul concluded that because he did the things which he did not will to do, "it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me" (vv. 17, 20). This is the opposite of what he said in Galatians 2:20: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Just as Christ is a person residing in our spirit, sin is a person, the embodiment of Satan, living, acting, and operating in our flesh. Thus, Paul said, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells" (Rom. 7:18). He also said that he became a captive to "the law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23). How terrible this law of sin and death is! Because we all were brought forth in iniquity and conceived in sin (Psa. 51:5), we spontaneously and automatically sin without being taught to sin. Sin is a law. No child goes to a "school of lying," but every child lies spontaneously because the law of sin dwells in his flesh. Whenever we live and act according to the flesh, this law operates spontaneously and automatically.

There is another law in our God-created soul, the seat of our personality, which Paul calls "the law of my mind" (Rom. 7:23). Our soul, with the mind as the leading part, has a desire to keep the law of God, to be good and to do good. The Lord Jesus, however, said that only God is good (Matt. 19:17). The law of good in the mind of our soul desires to be good as God is. When we act according to the law of good in our mind apart from the Lord, we try to keep the law of God. Then the sin in our flesh fights against the good in our natural being, and sin wins every time. Paul said,

I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind

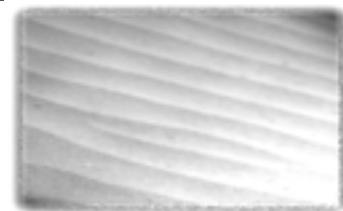
and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom. 7:21-23)

These verses show that our will cannot conquer the law of sin and death. It can only be conquered by this law. In our mind we want to do good, but when we will to do the good, we practice the evil which we do not will to do (v. 19). This evil is “the evil life, nature, and character of Satan himself, who is the indwelling sin in us” (Recovery Version, v. 21, note 2). Our will cannot overcome a law. For example, a person can hold a book on the palm of his hand with an outstretched arm, and seemingly he is stronger than the law of gravity. For a time he is overcoming the law of gravity with his will. But eventually, no matter how strong he is and no matter how powerful his will is, the law of gravity will defeat him. It is the same with our will trying to overcome the law of sin and death in our flesh. When we try to overcome the law of sin and death with our will according to our desire to do good, defeat is inevitable and automatic. Whenever we try to do good, we have turned on the wrong switch. When the law of good in our mind activates our will to do good, the law of sin and death defeats us every time. It is a great revelation to see that sin is a law in our flesh. It is also a great revelation to see that our will is powerless to overcome this law.

our spirit as a more powerful law than the law of sin and of death.

The law of the Spirit of life is actually the Triune God Himself installed in our spirit. We have to ask the Lord to enlighten the eyes of our heart to see that He lives in our spirit as a law, “the law of the Spirit of life” (Rom. 8:2). The Triune God has passed through a marvelous process to become the automatic law of the Spirit of life installed in our spirit. Romans 8:3 says that God sent His own Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” This speaks of Christ’s incarnation, of God as the Word becoming flesh (John 1:14), and of His crucifixion to condemn sin on the cross, where He “bore up our sins in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). Romans 8:11 speaks of Christ’s resurrection, telling us that the Spirit of the resurrecting Triune God, who dwells in us, raised Christ from the dead. Verse 34 speaks of Christ’s ascension, telling us that He is at the right hand of God interceding for us. On the one hand, Christ is at the right hand of God; on the other hand, He is in us. Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit, verse 2 speaks of the law of the Spirit of life, and verse 10 says that Christ is in us. The Christ who is in us, in our spirit, is the pneumatic Christ,

The Christ who is in us, in our spirit, is the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the Spirit, even the law of the Spirit of life. Christ, the very God, who has passed through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, now indwells our spirit as the Spirit of life, and this Spirit is an automatic law in our spirit.



What then shall we do? We need a greater revelation from God. Becoming desperate to find a way out, Paul concluded, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin” (Rom. 7:24-25). His desperate conclusion to Romans 7 ushered him into the wonderful reality of Romans 8. Romans 8 is a chapter for desperate seekers. When we have failed and have been defeated repeatedly, we will conclude that we are a constitution of wretchedness and that we cannot overcome the law of sin and death by our will. We will realize that with our mind we want to keep the law of God, but whenever we use our will to keep the law, trying to do good and to be good, the law of sin in our flesh overcomes us. Once we try to do good, we have activated the law of sin and of death to defeat us. Our desperate situation will usher us into a higher law, the law in Romans 8. This is the law of the Spirit of life which frees us from the law of sin and of death. It is the greatest revelation to see that the law of the Spirit of life is in

the Christ who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17), even the law of the Spirit of life. Christ, the very God (Rom. 9:5), who has passed through the processes of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, now indwells our spirit as the Spirit of life, and this Spirit is an automatic law in our spirit. In His economical process in time (not in His essential being), the Triune God passed through two great “becomings.” The Word, who was God, *became* flesh (John 1:14). Then the last Adam, Christ in the flesh, *became* a life-giving Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45) in order to give life to our spirit and dwell in our spirit as an automatic law. When this law is activated, life is spontaneously imparted into our inward parts to make us men of life.

From the foregoing assertions, we can see that there are three laws operating respectively in the three parts of our being. The law of sin and death is in our flesh, the law of good is in our mind representing our soul, and the law of the Spirit of life is in our spirit. In this sense, we are a miniature garden of Eden because these three laws represent three parties: God as the tree of life, man as a living soul, and Satan as the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil. Every moment of every day we have a choice, not the choice of right or wrong, good or evil, but the choice of life or death. The tree of life is in our spirit; the tree of death is in our flesh. When we try to do good, evil overcomes us, and we are living according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of death. When we are in our flesh, the law of sin and death is activated, and it spontaneously and automatically overcomes us in our desire to do good, causing us to fail again and again. But thank God that the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit liberates us from the law of sin and death and functions to dispense life into our entire being!

Although our flesh is the “meeting hall” of Satan, sin, and death, there is another “meeting hall” in our being, a wonderful “meeting hall.” This is our regenerated human spirit, which has become the “meeting hall” of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father is in us (Eph. 4:6), the Son is in us (2 Cor. 13:5), and the Spirit is in us (Rom. 8:9). What good news this is! The Lord as the Spirit lives in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 3:17), and now we are one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). The meeting of Satan, sin, and death in our flesh will not be dismissed until we meet the Lord, at which time our body will be transfigured and our vile body, the body of our humiliation, full of weakness, sickness, sin, and death, will be conformed to the body of Christ’s glory (Phil. 3:21). Furthermore, the meeting in our spirit will never be dismissed. We will be one spirit with the Lord all the time, for all eternity.

Why then does God allow the flesh to remain with us? Does it serve any positive purpose? God in His sovereignty uses our flesh to force us to turn to Him in our spirit. If we see how terrible the flesh is, we will be desperate to get into our spirit and remain there in the Lord. Our repeated defeats and failures make us desperate to turn to the Lord in our spirit. Although we should never try to fail, the Lord uses our failures for His purpose. Our failures break us in our natural life, forcing us to depend on, trust in, and look to the pneumatic Christ in our spirit. For this reason Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us into the inner man (Eph. 3:16). The inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God’s life as its life. It is an excellent practice to begin each day by praying this prayer. When we are strengthened with power through the Father’s Spirit into our regenerated spirit, the pneumatic Christ as the law of life can spread into our heart, making His home there (v. 17).

When the law of the Spirit of life is activated within us, we are victorious unconsciously and effortlessly because this law is upholding us, not our own will. Only that which requires no exertion is true victory, and real victory is the victory of which we are unaware. Is the bird aware that it is overcoming the law of gravity when it is flying?

Are we aware of the law of digestion in our physical being after we eat? Digestion takes place spontaneously, automatically, and effortlessly because it is a law. In the same way, when we contact God the Spirit in our spirit, He is activated within us as a law that spontaneously, automatically, and effortlessly, even unconsciously to us, overcomes the law of sin and death and dispenses the Triune God as life into our tripartite being.

How to “Switch On” the Law of the Spirit of Life

This brings us to a crucial point. How is this law activated within us? Electricity provides us with an excellent illustration of how the automatic Triune God as the law of life can be activated within us. Once electricity has been installed in a building, there is no need to implore the power plant for light, air conditioning, or sound. All one has to do is turn on the switch and the “law of electricity” takes over. By turning on the switch, light is here, air conditioning is here, and sound is here. Turning on the switch activates the electrical current to do so many things spontaneously and automatically. The Triune God as the divine electricity has been installed in our spirit. We do not need to implore Him at the “power plant” far away in the heavens to help us overcome our flesh. He has installed Himself as the law of the Spirit of life within us, so we can enjoy His spontaneous and innate operation in us.

We need to cooperate with the installed and operating law of the Spirit of life in our spirit by “switching on” this law. Paul said in Romans 8:2, “The law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.” The “me” here is not a “passive me.” It is a “switching me,” a person who exercises his spirit to “switch on” the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life which works automatically under the condition that fulfills its requirements (Recovery Version, v. 2, note 1, and v. 4, note 2). Philippians 2:12 and 13 tell us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, “for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure.” Salvation here does not refer to our being saved from eternal perdition. This salvation is a daily salvation in the life of Christ (Rom. 5:10) from every negative thing for our sanctification, renewing, and transformation so that we may live Christ for His magnification. It is to be saved from the failure of not living Christ and from the defeat of not magnifying Christ (Phil. 1:19-21). Our working out this salvation is our cooperation with the inward operating God, who operates in us the inner willingness and the outward working to do His will for His good pleasure. Our working out our salvation is our “switching on” the indwelling Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life.

The key to our entire Christian life is to remain in touch with the Lord in our spirit, which causes Him to operate

within us as the automatic law of the Spirit of life. We have to continually contact Him, fellowship with Him, touch Him. This is to turn on the “switch” of our spirit, by exercising our spirit to contact Him. John 4:24 says that God is Spirit and that those who worship Him must worship Him in and with their spirit. To exercise our spirit to contact the indwelling Christ so that we may live Him in our daily life is to exercise ourselves unto godliness (1 Tim. 4:7), which is the manifestation of God in the flesh (3:16). The way to stay in touch with the Lord is to practice speaking constantly to Him. In Philippians 4:12, Paul said that he had “learned the secret” of living and magnifying Christ in any circumstance, whether he was abased or whether he abounded. Paul took the indwelling Christ as the secret of his sufficiency, as seen in verses 6 and 7:

In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

We need to let our requests be made known *to God* in everything. The Greek word for *to* here “denotes motion toward, in the sense of a living union and communion,

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implying fellowship. Hence, the sense of *to God* here is *in the fellowship with God*’ (Recovery Version, v. 6, note 4). To let our requests be made known to God is to practice speaking with the Lord constantly in everything. In other words, tell Him! In “Tell Him,” Watchman Nee said:

We should realize that when we have a thorough talk with the Lord and pour out our heart to Him, our intimacy with the Lord is one step further, and we know Him a little more. Intimate contact with Him at these times is hundreds of times better than our ordinary fellowship with Him. By these contacts we advance in life. We should bring our problems to the Lord and tell Him about them. He can comfort us and help us. If a person has never shed tears before the Lord, if he has never shared his joy or sorrow with the Lord, and if he has never talked with the Lord about his private matters, he has never had any intimate fellowship with the Lord; he has never had any deep acquaintance with Him. We are not saying that you cannot ask others to pray for you or ask others to help you. We are saying that one can only be drawn closer to the Lord through telling Him everything.

Our Lord is happy to listen to our sorrows, and He is happy to listen to our joys. He is the Lord to whom we can tell everything. Since we have such a Lord, why not tell Him all the secrets of our hearts? (329, 331)

Our speaking with the Lord is our prayer and petition with thanksgiving. As we speak with Him, fellowship with Him, we are exercising our spirit and moving toward Him. This activates Him as the law of life within us to move into us by imparting Himself as the peace of God and as the life of God into our entire inner being. This peace in our being, surpassing all understanding, is the counterpoise to our troubles and the antidote to all of our anxieties. The key to our entire Christian life is to keep the “switch” of our spirit on so that the law of the Spirit of life can automatically dispense life into us. The unique way to keep the switch on is to stay in touch with the Lord by fellowshipping with Him to contact Him, to touch Him. The best help that we can render to the Lord’s children is to get them to touch the Lord in their spirit, to bring them into fellowship with the Lord. It is only by exercising our spirit to touch the Lord that the law of the Spirit of life will operate to dispense the life of the Triune God into us and to free us spontaneously from the law of sin and death.



We have pointed out that the law of the bird life is a good illustration of the law of the divine life in our spirit. In Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:11 God likens Himself to an eagle; in Matthew 23:37 the Son likens Himself to a hen, and in Matthew 3:16 the Spirit is likened to a dove. It is the law of the bird life to fly effortlessly and spontaneously. Solomon told us that he marveled at the mysterious “way of an eagle in the sky” (Prov. 30:19). God is such a marvelous, divine, and mystical eagle within us, an eagle who spontaneously, innately, and automatically overcomes the “law of gravity,” that is, the law of sin and of death.

How can the law of this divine eagle life operate within us? The secret is in Isaiah 40:31: “Those who wait for the LORD / Will gain new strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles, / They will run and not get tired, / They will walk and not become weary.” To wait for the Lord, or to wait on Him, is to look expectantly and hopefully to Him. It is the New Testament equivalent of looking away unto Jesus (Heb. 12:2). When we turn our hearts to the Lord in prayer by exercising our spirit,

we are gazing on Him as the eagle in our spirit. Whenever our heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away, and we are beholding and reflecting Him with an unveiled face (2 Cor. 3:16-18). As we behold Him in prayer by opening our being to Him and conversing with Him, we mount up with wings as eagles. The margin of the New American Standard Bible says that an alternate translation for "mount up with wings" is "sprout wings." The Septuagint tells us that this is to "put forth new feathers" or "to grow feathers." It is by looking away unto Jesus, the indwelling eagle in our spirit, that we are transformed into eagles, sprouting eagle's wings. As we gaze on Him, we are being transformed into His image, the image of the One who soars above every difficulty and circumstance. As we look away from everything unto Jesus, we spontaneously and effortlessly are freed from the "gravitational pull" of the law of sin and death. By looking away to the indwelling Christ in prayer, we activate the law of His soaring life within us. Then His soaring life flows into our entire being as a divine electrical current to cause us to sprout wings and become an eagle as He is, to become His duplication in life and in nature, but of course, not in the Godhead.

Romans 8 also presents us with a number of ways that we can "switch on" the law of the Spirit of life. The first way is to walk according to the spirit. Some expositors point out that it is hard to discern in Romans 8 whether Paul is speaking of the human spirit or of the divine Spirit. The spirit mentioned in Romans 8:4 and in other instances is actually the divine Spirit mingled with our human spirit to be one spirit (v. 16; 1 Cor. 6:17). We may call this "the mingled spirit." To walk according to the spirit in New Testament terms is to live, act, move, and have our being according to the spirit. We should ask the Lord to make us such persons. We should not be fleshly or even fleshy men, who are dominated and motivated by the flesh (1 Cor. 3:1, 3). Nor should we be soulish men, who are governed by the natural life and power of our soul (2:14). Instead, we aspire to be spiritual men, those who are governed, directed, led, moved, and controlled by our mingled spirit, by the Lord Spirit in our spirit (v. 15).

We can also "switch on" the law of the Spirit of life by minding the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5), setting our mind on the spirit (v. 6). When we set our mind on the spirit, the law of the Spirit of life is activated to dispense the divine life into our mind to make our mind life, *zoe*. What a great thing it is that our mind can be life! This is the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5). The best help to setting our mind on the spirit is the Bible, and the best means for setting our mind on the spirit is to read the Bible with prayer, in prayer, and by prayer, to "pray-read" the Bible. The Lord Jesus said, "The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). Ephesians

6:17 and 18 say that we can receive the sword of the Spirit, "which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition." When we take the word in this way, our mind is set on the spirit, the law of the Spirit of life is activated, and the life of the Triune God is dispensed from our spirit into our mind to make our mind life.

In his autobiography George Müller tells of his discovering the delight of turning God's word into prayer: "I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord" (206). In order to nourish his inner man with spiritual food, Müller gave the first part of every day to praying over God's word. He testified, "For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into *experimental* fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it) about the things that he has brought before me in his precious word" (208-209). By setting our mind on the things of the Spirit through praying over God's Word, according to Müller's example, we "switch on" the inner operating law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:13 shows us another way by which we can "switch on" this law: "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." To die and to live here are spiritual matters not physical. They are similar to Paul's word in Romans 8:6: "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace." We have the inner sense of the divine life by the operating of the law of the Spirit of life. This inner sense is the feeling or consciousness of the divine life within us. On the negative side, we have the inner feeling of death, and on the positive side, we have the inner feeling of life and peace. The feeling of death is the inner feeling of weakness, emptiness, uneasiness, restlessness, depression, dryness, darkness, pain, disharmony, and anxiety. This inner sense tells us that we are setting our mind on the flesh. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have the inner feeling of strength, satisfaction, peace, rest, release, watering, brightness, comfort, and ease. This is the feeling of life and peace, which tells us that our mind is set on the spirit.

If we live according to the flesh, we have "switched on" the law of sin and death to allow death to reign in us. But if we put to death the practices of our fallen body by the Spirit, we "switch on" the law of the Spirit of life to allow life and peace to reign in us. We do not put our body to death by the practices of our body. Our body will eventually be redeemed by the Lord and brought into the full sonship of God (Rom. 8:23). But today we need to exercise our spirit to put to death all the fallen practices of our corrupted body. We do not do this by our will power, for this does not work. We crucify the passions and lusts of

the flesh (Gal. 5:24) by the overcoming power of the law of the Spirit of life through the exercise of our spirit.

Romans 8:14 says that as the sons of God, we need to be continually led by the Spirit of God. In order to "switch on" the law of life in our spirit, we must follow the leading of the indwelling Spirit. We should not let our outward circumstances dictate what we do and where we go. The indwelling Spirit of God should be our Leader. Paul was such a person. When he came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, a door was open to him in the Lord (2 Cor. 2:12). It would seem that Paul should have gone through this door to carry out the Lord's service, but he said, "I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia" (v. 13). Paul did not let the outward door dictate what he did. Instead, what governed him was the rest in his spirit. He took care of the sense of life and peace in his spirit. The rest in his spirit was the leading of the Spirit. What a pattern Paul is to us! May we also live and act in our spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit under the inner leading of the Spirit of God, just as Paul did. When we cooperate with the Lord in this way, the law of the Spirit of life operates within us to dispense life into our entire being, and we are energized with His energy to carry out His purpose.

May we also live and act in our spirit, caring for the rest in our spirit under the inner leading of the Spirit of God. When we cooperate with the Lord in this way, the law of the Spirit of life operates within us to dispense life into our entire being, and we are energized with His energy to carry out His purpose.

A wonderful means of "switching on" the law of the Spirit of life in our spirit is in Romans 8:15: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!" Galatians 4:6 says, "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" On the one hand, the Spirit of God's Son cries; on the other hand, we cry. He cries in our crying, and we cry in His crying. We need to learn to cry, "Abba, Father" in our daily life:

Abba is an Aramaic word, and *Father* is the translation of the Greek word *Pater*. Such a term was used first by the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane while He was praying to the Father (Mark 14:36). The combining of the Aramaic title with the Greek title expresses a stronger affection in crying to the Father. Such an affectionate cry implies an intimate relationship in life between a genuine son and a begetting father. (Recovery Version, Gal. 4:6, note 4)

Instead of being silent Christians, we must learn to cry out to the Lord and praise Him. According to Psalm 115

those who make idols and trust in them will become like them (v. 8). Such idols "have mouths, but they cannot speak" (v. 5). We should not be like the dumb idol worshippers. The psalmist tells us that "the dead do not praise the LORD, / Nor do any who go down into silence; / But as for us, we will bless the LORD / From this time forth and forever. Praise the LORD!" (vv. 17-18). When we exercise our spirit to cry, "Abba, Father," and to say, "Praise the Lord!" the law of the Spirit of life is "switched on" within us, and the divine life is dispensed into our being to make us living and active members of Christ's Body.

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God." This verse shows that our spirit takes the initiative since the divine Spirit witnesses *with* our spirit. When we exercise our spirit to cry "Abba Father!" the Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are God's children. Such a witnessing limits and restricts us in our living, acting, and moving according to the divine life in our spirit. The Spirit within us witnesses, telling us that as a child of God we should not do certain things, say certain things, or act certain ways. When we contact God in our spirit, there is a marvelous witnessing of the Spirit with our spirit, assuring us that



we are His children and bringing us into intimate fellowship with Him to "switch on" the law of the Spirit of life, which spontaneously infuses us with the divine life and automatically frees us from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:23 and 26 show us a simple way to "switch on" the indwelling law of the Spirit of life. We need to exercise our spirit to groan for the full sonship, the redemption of our body. In verse 23 we groan, but in verse 26 the Spirit groans: "The Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Many times we may feel that we do not know what we should pray for, but this should encourage us because it is scriptural. We may not know what to pray for, but we can cooperate with the Spirit to groan. Actually, our groaning is His interceding. When we groan, the Spirit intercedes with groanings for the saints according to God that they may be conformed to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God. For us to groan is not for us to bemoan our pitiful situation the

way that people in the world do. To groan in the biblical sense is to exercise our spirit, saying from the depths of our being, "O Lord!" We can pray for a brother named John by groaning, "O Lord, brother John." We can pray for the churches by groaning, "O Lord, the churches!" We can pray for God's purpose by groaning, "O Lord, carry out Your heart's desire on this earth!" Many times when we exercise our spirit to groan in the Spirit's groaning, this is the best intercession, the best prayer, to carry out God's economy. Such groaning "switches on" the law of the Spirit of life to spontaneously transform and conform us and those for whom we pray, to the image of the firstborn Son of God.

The Capability of the Spontaneous Power of the Divine Life within Us

The law of life is the spontaneous power of the divine life within us, and we need to see the capability of this power. When this law is "switched on," this power is activated within us automatically. This power is the power which enabled the Lord Jesus to rise from the dead, to ascend to the right hand of God, to have all things subjected under His feet, and to be given as Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:19-23). This resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power operates in us and gives the Lord a way to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think for the church (3:20). This is the power of the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16), which operates within us spontaneously as we contact Him in our spirit. When we exercise our spirit to "switch on" this automatic power in us, this power spontaneously does many marvelous things. Such a power can incline our heart to God (Psa. 119:36; Prov. 21:1), and make us submissive toward God (Phil. 2:13-14). It can cause us to do the good works which God has prepared for us in making the church His masterpiece (Eph. 2:10). These good works are the doing of God's will to live the Body life and bear His testimony in this dark age.

This indwelling power can also make us labor for the Lord with all our heart and strength (1 Cor. 15:10). Paul told us that he labored, "struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power" (Col. 1:29). The Greek word for *power* is *dunamis*, from which we get the word *dynamite*. When we exercise our spirit to "switch on" the law of the Spirit of life, the divine dynamite explodes within us and the Lord's work explodes out from our innermost being so that we may dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ in the life of the Triune God into people (Eph. 3:8). When this spontaneous and automatic power is operating within us, it is impossible for us to remain inactive. We can see this from the book of Acts, a book showing us the acting God operating in and through His disciples. In this book the spontaneous

power of the Spirit of life was operating in the believers to "explode out" their work for the Lord. Such an "exploded-out work" comes from the automatic *dunamis* operating in our spirit. Furthermore, this wonderful spontaneous power causes our service to be living and fresh for the Lord (2 Cor. 3:5-6). With such a power operating within us, how can we be stale and old? When the law of the Spirit of life is operating to dispense the life of the Triune God into us, we are filled with the living God and with the freshness of His present presence to minister Him to others for the building up of Christ's Body (Lee, *Knowledge* 130-134).

The Ultimate Issue of the Law of the Spirit of Life

The New Jerusalem, the aggregate of all the matured sons of God (Rev. 21:7), is the ultimate issue of our being "sonized" by the law of the Spirit of life. The law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8:2 is for our conformation to Christ as the firstborn Son of God in verse 29. While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to Christ's image. The law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong. Instead, it regulates the shape of life. The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do. Rather, while the divine life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, conforming us to the image of Christ (Lee, *Life-study* 769-772). Through the function of the law of the Spirit of life, we all shall become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal corporate expression.

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