

THE NEW JERUSALEM— A CORPORATE PERSON

by Ed Marks

In interpreting the New Jerusalem, we must take care of the key, the governing principle, for interpreting the book of Revelation. This key is in the first verse: “The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to His slaves the things that must quickly take place; and *He made it known by signs*, sending it by His angel to His slave John” (emphasis added). The key to interpreting Revelation is that it is a book of signs. Signs are symbols with spiritual significance. Let us consider a few examples of the signs in Revelation. The seven churches are seen as golden lampstands (1:11-12). Of course, the church is not an actual lampstand. The lampstand is a very meaningful sign which signifies that the church, composed of God’s redeemed and regenerated people, should be the very expression and testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is depicted in Revelation as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5). Of course, He is not an actual lion. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is a spiritual symbol, revealing that Christ is the triumphant and victorious King. Christ is also seen as the Lamb (v. 6). Of course, He is not an actual lamb. His being the Lamb is a spiritual symbol that He is the Redeemer to His chosen people. To His enemy Satan, He is an overcoming, victorious, and triumphant Lion, but to us, His people, He is the redeeming Lamb who shepherds us and guides us to springs of waters of life (7:17). There are many other signs in the book of Revelation, such as the seven stars (1:20), the universal woman and the man-child (12:1-2, 5-6), the great red dragon and the beast (vv. 3-4; 13:1-2), the harvest and the firstfruits (14:15, 4), and Babylon the Great (17:1, 5). The last, greatest, and consummate sign in the book of Revelation is the New Jerusalem. This holy city is the greatest symbol with spiritual significance because it signifies the desire of God’s heart and the goal of His eternal plan, His eternal economy.

The unique goal of our Christian life and work should be the great goal of our Triune God—the New Jerusalem.

The total conclusion of the entire sixty-six books of the Bible is the New Jerusalem. The ultimate consummation of all that God is and of all His work and achievements, from eternity past across the bridge of time and into eternity future, is the New Jerusalem. It is both illogical and unscriptural to surmise that the great goal of God, the total conclusion of the entire Bible, and the consummation of all that God is and of all of His work and achievements is a physical city. In this article of fellowship, we will see that the New Jerusalem is a wonderful, mysterious corporate person. This person is the wife of Christ, the aggregate of all the glorified sons of God, and the ultimate consummation of the Triune God to be everything to His chosen and redeemed people. We do not *go to* the New Jerusalem. Instead, we *become* the New Jerusalem. As we fellowship concerning these major aspects of the New Jerusalem, we want to point out with each aspect particular points concerning how we can cooperate with the Lord to become the New Jerusalem.

The New Jerusalem— the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb

The book of Revelation with the entire Bible interprets the New Jerusalem for us. It is very clear from the divine record in Revelation 21 that this holy city is a corporate person. This person is the bride, the wife of the Lamb, composed of God’s chosen and redeemed people. “And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (v. 2). “And one of the seven angels...spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God” (vv. 9-10). The desire of God’s heart, His great goal, is to gain a bride, a wife for His Son Christ. Since the New Jerusalem

is the wife of Christ, the Lamb, it is preposterous to say that the New Jerusalem is a material city. For Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), to marry a physical city is impossible. It is one thing to have a mental understanding of this, but quite another to have a spiritual realization and vision in our spirit. We need to pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that the eyes of our heart would be enlightened to see His goal (Eph. 1:17-18). We need to pray to be “carried away in spirit onto a great and high mountain” to see this bridal city, this “city-lady” (Rev. 21:10).

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate consummation of the divine and mystical romance between God and His chosen and redeemed people seen throughout the entire Scripture. The Bible describes the holy romance of a universal couple—God in Christ is the Bridegroom, and God’s redeemed people are His bride. Immediately after the creation of man, the Bible speaks of a couple—Adam and Eve.

Romans 5:14 says that Adam is a type of Christ. In Ephesians 5:31-32 Paul alludes to Adam and Eve, the husband and the wife, as a type of Christ and the church when he quotes from Genesis 2: “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.” Just as Adam was joined to Eve to be one flesh, Christ is joined to the church to be one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of the church to be the wife of Christ is the ultimate Eve. Scofield says,

Eve, taken from Adam’s body, was truly “bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh” but she was also his wife, united to him in a relation which makes of “twain...one flesh,” (Mt. 19. 5, 6), and so a clear type of the church as bride of Christ (see 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3). (1255)

The Hebrew word for *Eve* means “living.” The church is filled with the living God, and consummately she is a city of life, filled with God the Father as the light of life, God the Son as the tree of life, and God the Spirit as the river of water of life (Rev. 22:1-2, 5).

With this type of Adam and Eve in view, it is illuminating to see how Eve came into being. How she came into being to be Adam’s bride reveals how the church comes into being to be Christ’s bride. Adam, who typifies Christ, needed to have a complement:

And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be

alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart....And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken. (Gen. 2:18, 21-23)

Adam’s being put to sleep by God is a type of Christ’s death. In the Bible sleep means death (1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14). During Adam’s sleep, God took one of his ribs from his side, and He built

this rib into a woman. The word *built* in Genesis 2:22 is very meaningful. God built a woman. Christ said, “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). God in Christ is doing one thing today. He is building a woman, building the church to be Christ’s eternal wife. “As the bride of Christ, the

New Jerusalem comes out of Christ, her Husband, and becomes His counterpart, just as Eve came out of Adam, her husband, and became his counterpart” (Recovery Version, Rev. 21:2, note 1). In Hebrew Adam is *Isb* and Eve is *Isbshah*. Just as Eve was the issue of Adam, the church consummating in the New Jerusalem is the issue of Christ.

A rib issued out of Adam’s side to become his wife. Blood and water issued out of Christ’s side for Him to gain His wife (John 19:34). We can see the significance of the blood and water that flowed out of Christ’s side in Ephesians 5:25-27, which reveals Christ in three stages. In the past Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (v. 25). This is Christ as the Redeemer, shedding His blood for the redemption and purchasing of the church (Acts 20:28). In the present Christ is sanctifying the church, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word (Eph. 5:26). This is Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the water of life, imparting Himself into His believers to sanctify them by saturating them with His resurrection life and holy nature. In the future Christ will present a glorious church without blemish to Himself (v. 27). This is Christ as the Bridegroom being fully joined to His bride to make them one corporate person, the New Jerusalem. Through the washing of the water in the word, Christ’s bride is prepared. She has no spots of the natural life, no wrinkles of the old man, and no blemish of anything of the self or the flesh. She has become the glorious church that Christ desires through the application of the redeeming Christ with His precious blood

and the pneumatic Christ as the life-giving Spirit, the water of life.

The first stanza of the well-known hymn concerning Christ as the Rock of Ages also speaks of the significance of the blood and water that streamed out of the Lord's side:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power. (*Hymns*, #1058)

We should praise the Lord for giving us a "double cure." This double cure can heal all of His children from any spiritual, psychological, or physical malady. The blood saves us from the guilt of sin. The water of life, the resurrection life, saves us from the power of sin. The blood is for our judicial redemption to satisfy the righteous requirement of God. The water of life is for our organic salvation to satisfy the heart's desire of God. By the blood we are reconciled to God. By the water of life we are saved in His life through regeneration, sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification to become His wife for His satisfaction in love (Rom. 5:10).

The rib out of Adam's side and the water out of Christ's side signify the same thing—the resurrection life. In Genesis 2 there is only a rib out of Adam's side. Blood is not mentioned because this was before sin came in through Adam's fall. Blood is needed after the fall to cleanse man from his sin and to redeem him. When the Roman soldiers saw that Christ had already died, they did not break His legs. This fulfilled the prophecy that "no bone of His shall be broken" (John 19:36; cf. Psalms 34:20). Thus, the bone out of Adam's side is a symbol of the Lord's resurrection life, which is unbreakable and indestructible (Hebrews 7:16). Today God builds up the church with Christ as the resurrection life (John 11:25). Just as Eve was the bone of Adam's bones, the church is "the bone of Christ's bones," fully constituted with Christ as the resurrection life. In the book *Bone of His Bone*, F. J. Huegel points out that we have been grafted into Christ and says that the Christian life is not an imitation of Christ but a participation in Christ as described in Hebrews 3:14—"we have become partakers of Christ" (lit.) and 2 Peter 1:4—"you might become partakers of the divine nature" (18-26).

Just as Eve was a part of Adam, the church is a part of

Christ. Genesis 5:2 says, "He blessed them [Adam and Eve] and called their name Adam, on the day when they were created." The God-given name of Adam and Eve was "Adam." This is because Eve as a part of Adam, as the wife of Adam, was Adam. In the same way, the church as a part of Christ, as the wife of Christ, is Christ. Paul says in Ephesians 5:28-30:

The husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church, because we are members of His Body.

The Lord is not building a physical city out in space or in the heavenly stratosphere for us to reside in. This is an unscriptural myth. He is building Himself into His believers so that they may become a bridal city, enjoying a marriage union in love with Him for eternity.

Notice that Paul says, "He who loves his own wife loves himself." For Christ to love the church is for Him to love Himself, because the church as the wife of Christ is His very Body, of which we are members. The church in its ultimate consummation in eternity is the New Jerusa-

lem, which is a bridal city, the wife of Christ, the ultimate built-up, eternal Eve, the great fulfillment of the Lord's greatest prophecy in the New Testament—"I will build My church." The Lord is not building a physical city somewhere out in space or in the heavenly stratosphere for us to reside in. This is an unscriptural myth. He is building His church, composed of His chosen and redeemed believers. He is building Himself into His believers, making His home in their hearts (Eph. 3:17) so that they may become a bridal city, enjoying a marriage union in love with Him for eternity.

God spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament to refer to Himself as the Husband and to His people as His wife. Isaiah declares, "Your Maker is your Husband" (54:5), and "with the joy of the bridegroom over the bride / Your God will rejoice over you" (62:5). God cries out to His people through Jeremiah, saying, "I remember concerning you the kindness of your youth, / The love of your bridal days, / When you followed after Me in the wilderness, / In a land that was not sown" (2:2). God implores them to return to Him, saying, "Return, O apostate children, declares Jehovah, for I am a Husband to you; and I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and will bring you to Zion" (3:14). In speaking of His relationship with His people, God said, "Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by their hand to bring them out from the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was their Husband, declares Jehovah" (31:32). In speaking of His engagement to His

people, God said through Ezekiel, “Then I passed by you and saw you; and then was your time a time of love. And I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness; indeed I swore unto you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord Jehovah, and you became Mine” (16:8). In speaking of His people as a wayward wife, God said through Hosea, “And she will pursue her lovers / But will not overtake them; / And she will seek them but not find them; / And she will say, I will go / And return to my first husband, / For it was better for me then than now” (2:7). God also spoke forth His desire to wed His people by saying, “Indeed I will betroth you to Myself in faithfulness, / And you will know Jehovah” (v. 20). It is evident from all of the foregoing verses that God wanted to have a matrimonial and even romantic relationship with Israel. The realization of God’s heart of love toward His people is the New Jerusalem, which will be His eternal wife. Would God marry an actual physical city? This is totally illogical and unscriptural. Verses 2 and 9 of Revelation 21 clearly state that the New Jerusalem is the wife of the Lamb, the incarnated God. His wife is composed of all His chosen and redeemed people. His wife is the realization of His heart’s desire to marry His people throughout the Scriptures.

Song of Songs shows us the progressive experience of a believer’s loving relationship with Christ. Christ, the resurrected and ascended King, is typified by Solomon, and His lover is His believing seeker drawn by Christ to pursue after Him for full satisfaction.

The romance between God and His believers is portrayed fully in the Song of Songs (see “The Economy of God in Song of Songs,” *Affirmation & Critique* IV:3 (Oct. 1999): 24-35). This book shows us the progressive experience of a believer’s loving relationship with Christ. Christ, the resurrected and ascended King, is typified by Solomon, and His lover is His believing seeker drawn by Christ to pursue after Him for full satisfaction. After we receive the Lord as our life and Savior, we are attracted to pursue Him in a personal and affectionate way. The seeker in Song of Songs says, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!” (1:2), and “Draw me; we will run after you” (v. 4). Notice that the seeker says, “Draw me.” This is personal. We should ask the Lord to draw us to Himself day by day. He is like an immense magnet in the universe, drawing all His seekers to Himself away from so many distracting things in the world. The “me” being drawn to the Lord turns into the “we” running after Him. When the seeker is pursuing the Lord in the most personal way, many others are attracted by the Christ they see in her to run after Him. The seeker also desires an affectionate relationship with Christ. This is seen when she says, “Kiss me.” It is interesting to note that the Greek word for *worship* is *proskuneo*; *pros* means “toward” and *kuneo* means “kiss.” John 4:24 tells us to worship God in

spirit and truthfulness. Our worship of Him is our most intimate and personal contact with Him in our spirit and with the genuineness and sincerity that comes out of our enjoyment and experience of Him as the truth, the unique reality.

We need to be saved from the hypocrisy described by the Lord in Matthew 15:7-9—“Hypocrites! Well has Isaiah prophesied concerning you, saying, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart stays far away from Me; but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commandments of men.’” Man cares for outward appearance, but God cares for our heart. We may honor the Lord with our lips in a formal religious service to Him,

but our hearts may be far away from Him. Daily we need to turn our hearts to the Lord in our fellowship with Him. We should follow the example of J. N. Darby in our loving the Lord. It is reported that near the end of his life, he was alone with the Lord in prayer and said, “Lord

Jesus, I still love You.” His intimate love for the Lord was the source of his lifelong sacrifice in his work for the Lord. If we are to become Christ’s bride, His wife, we should build up the daily habit of turning our hearts to the Lord and saying, “Lord Jesus, I love You.”

The New Jerusalem is “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2). Notice the phrase *for her husband*. A loving bride does not marry someone for what that person can give her or do for her. She marries that one for his very person. She loves him for who he is. Is our relationship with the Lord mostly for what He can give us or do for us? If so, this is tragic. Our having the thought of the New Jerusalem as a physical and literal city with a great mansion awaiting us is in the physical realm and is concerning the Lord giving us great material wealth and pleasure for eternity. But if we love the Lord supremely, we will realize that He is our wealth and all things other than Him are refuse, dung (Phil. 3:8). This is why Paul speaks of the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” and this is why he points out the mystical paradox of his life, a life of having nothing and being poor in the physical realm but possessing all things and making many rich with Christ in the spiritual realm (Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:10).

What is our pleasure in our Christian life? Are we lovers of earthly pleasure? This is degradation. We should be lovers of Christ, lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4). Christ should be our pleasure in our Christian life. We have been called into His fellowship to partake of Him, to enjoy Him as our everything (1 Cor. 1:9). In the spiritual realm, He is our food

(John 6:35), our drink (7:37-38), our air (20:22), our dwelling place (15:5), our light (8:12), our clothing (Gal. 3:27), and our all-inclusive portion (Col. 1:12) to meet our every need. To expect some material and physical bliss in eternity may expose the fact that our present relationship with Christ is merely for what He can give us and do for us in the material and physical realm. Song of Songs shows us that our unique desire should be for Him and nothing else. To have a pure heart (Matt. 5:8) is to have a heart whose unique goal, aim, and desire is Christ Himself.

In speaking of Mary's anointing the Lord with costly ointment in her love for Him and the disciples indignantly querying, "Why this waste?" (Matt. 26:8), Watchman Nee says,

The Lord has to open our eyes to His worth. If there is in the world some precious art treasure, and I pay the high price asked for it, be it one thousand, ten thousand, or even fifty thousand pounds, dare anyone say it is a waste? The idea of waste only comes into our Christianity when we underestimate the worth of our Lord. The whole question is: How precious is He to us now? If we do not think much of Him, then of course to give Him anything at all, however small, will seem to us a wicked waste. But when He is really precious to our souls, nothing will be too good, nothing too costly for Him; everything we have, our dearest, our most priceless treasure, we shall pour out upon Him, and we shall not count it a shame to have done so. (193)

In order to be prepared as Christ's bride, we must love Him the way Mary did by offering our all to Him. Then the fragrance of the ointment, the fragrance of our loving Him with all that we are and have, will make us a fragrance of Christ (2 Cor. 2:15) to attract others to love Him and make Him their unique goal and desire.

Song of Songs reveals that we seeking believers grow in the divine life and are transformed into Christ's bride, the New Jerusalem, by our loving the Lord. In this poem of love, Solomon signifies the resurrected, ascended, and enthroned Christ. The Lord uses a number of symbols to characterize His seeking lover as she passes through the various stages of the growth in life to become His full expression. In her initial pursuit of the Lord, He likens her to a "mare among Pharaoh's chariots" (1:9). Egypt signifies the world and Pharaoh signifies the ruler of this world, Satan (John 12:31). A mare is strong and energetic, signifying the natural strength. Although

the seeker loves the Lord, she is still so strong in her natural life and still very much in the world, being "Egyptian" in her intrinsic constitution. As she grows in her love for the Lord, she is transformed to have the eyes of a dove (S. S. 1:15). A dove is a symbol of the Spirit (Matt. 3:16). Her having dove's eyes signifies that she now has the insight, view, apprehension, and realization of the Spirit. A dove can look at only one thing at a time, signifying that she is now pursuing the Lord with a single eye, a single heart. She is further transformed to become a lily (S. S. 2:2), living a life of trusting in the Lord and not in her natural strength or ability (Matt. 6:28-30). Eventually, she becomes so permeated with the Spirit that the Lord likens her whole person to a dove (S. S. 2:14). She

is further transformed into a pillar of smoke (3:6), signifying that she is moving with God in the unshakable power of the Spirit (cf. Exo. 14:19-20). She eventually becomes a palanquin to bear her Beloved in a triumphant celebration of His victory (S. S. 3:9). Later, she is trans-

formed into a garden to Christ for His private enjoyment (4:12-13).

Finally, she is fully transformed and glorified with all her companions to become the holy city (6:4), the Shulammitte (v. 13). *Shulammitte* is the feminine form of *Solomon*, signifying that she with her companions have become Christ's counterpart, His wife, His duplication for His expression. She is fully transformed by Christ's attributes of beauty becoming her human virtues to make her as "lovely as Jerusalem" (v. 4). The New Jerusalem is the corporate Shulammitte, including all of God's chosen and redeemed people. It is obvious that for two people to marry they must be of the same species. For God to marry man, He had to become a man. For man to marry God, he must become God in life and in nature (but not, of course, in the Godhead and never as an object of worship). This is what Athanasius, the great defender of the Christian faith, meant when he said that God became man that man might become God (65). Christ, the King, typified by Solomon, became a man, even a Galilean, so that He could "court" His chosen ones. Then He imparts Himself into them to become their life and person so that they can be transformed to become His queen (Psa. 45:9), His bride, His wife.

In the Gospels, Christ is revealed as the Bridegroom with the bride (Matt. 9:15). This bride is composed of those who are ill and have need of Him as a Physician (v. 12). Thank the Lord that our Husband is a healing Doctor, who heals our entire being by imparting Himself into our entire

tripartite being. In our spirit, He regenerates us (John 3:6); in our soul, He transforms us (Rom. 12:2); and in our body, He glorifies us (Phil. 3:21). This makes us His duplication, His corporate Shulammitte. John the Baptist declared concerning Christ, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom....He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29-30). According to these verses, the bride is the increase of Christ. She is a living composition of all of God's redeemed and regenerated people. As the Body of Christ and consummately the New Jerusalem, she is the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). The New Testament unveils that Christ's espousal and marriage life cover the church age, the kingdom age, and the eternal age. In the church age we are betrothed to Christ. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ." The genuine New Testament ministry in the church age ministers Christ into God's chosen people and stirs them up to love the Lord and pursue Him in a single, simple, and pure way. According to Paul's view, he was not a mere pastor imparting biblical knowledge to his converts. His career was to betroth people to Christ.

The overcoming believers will enjoy a wedding day with Christ, which will be the age of the millennial kingdom. Revelation 19:7 says, "Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." Note 2 on this verse in the Recovery Version of the New Testament says,

His wife refers to the church (Eph. 5:24-25, 31-32), the bride of Christ (John 3:29). However, according to vv. 8-9 [Rev. 19], the wife, the bride of Christ, here consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium; whereas the bride, the wife, in 21:2 is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity. The readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers. Furthermore, the overcomers are not separate individuals but a corporate bride. For this aspect, building is needed. The overcomers not only are mature in life but also are built together as one bride.

When a woman is married, she is a bride for only one day, her wedding day. All of the overcomers will be rewarded to be Christ's bride and will feast with Him on His wedding day of one thousand years (cf. 2 Pet. 3:8). Consummately, all of God's chosen and redeemed people will be the New Jerusalem to enjoy an eternal marriage life with Him for His satisfaction in love.

Paul E. Billheimer shares the view that this divine and mystical romance between God and His redeemed elect "is at the heart of the universe and is the key to all existence" (23). He continues by saying that the bride of Christ, the holy city, is the goal of all of human history and the finished product of the ages:

From all eternity God purposed that at some time in the future His Son should have an Eternal Companion, described by John the Revelator as "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). John further revealed that this Eternal Companion in God's eternal purpose is to share the Bridegroom's throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 3:21). Here we see the ultimate purpose, the climactic goal of history...."

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If one wants to know the meaning and purpose of history, he must look at the end, the final outcome, the net result. Since prophecy is history written in advance, we have history's final chapter in

the Book of Revelation. Turning to the closing pages, what emerges as the product of the ages? It is one thing and one alone: *the Eternal Companion of the God-Man*. The final and ultimate outcome and goal of events from eternity to eternity, the finished product of the ages, is the spotless Bride of Christ, united with Him in wedded bliss at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and seated with her heavenly Bridegroom upon the throne of the universe—ruling and reigning with Him over an ever increasing and expanding Kingdom. He entered the stream of human history for this one purpose, to claim His Beloved (Rev. 19:6, 9; 21:7, 9, 10). (23, 25-26)

Could the finished product of the ages, the eternal purpose of the Triune God, and the meaning and purpose of all of human history be a material city with "heavenly mansions"? Could it be the fulfillment of all our desires in the fleshly and soulful realm as the culmination of the prosperity gospel? No thoughtful person would affirm this, and neither does God. As Billheimer points out so eloquently, the meaning and purpose of the stream of human history, the great product of all of God's creative, redemptive, and saving work, the total conclusion of the Bible, is a person. This person is the New Jerusalem as the bride, the wife, the eternal companion, of the God-man, Christ.

On the one hand, according to its humanity, the New Jerusalem is the human wife (with the divine life and nature) of the Lamb. On the other hand, according to its divinity, the New Jerusalem is the divine Husband (with His human life and nature) of God's redeemed elect (Lee,

Application 11). As the wife of the Lamb, God's redeemed elect are the tabernacle for God to dwell in (Rev. 21:3). As the Husband, God and the Lamb are the temple for the redeemed saints to dwell in (v. 22). Lenski points out that the temple, "the Sanctuary," is not only God and the Lamb but also the entire holy city:

Now the Lord God, the Almighty, is this city's Sanctuary, he and the Lamb. The eternal union is immediate, absolutely complete. God and the Lamb are not a Sanctuary in the center of this city, to which those in the city must go in order to commune with them. The whole city is the Sanctuary, the whole city filled with the glorious Presence, God and the Lamb are the Sanctuary, we are in union with them, a union to which nothing can be added in all eternity. (643)

We may say that the New Jerusalem is a coinhering couple. The word *coinhere* means that persons are mutually indwelling each other. To coinhere is to exist in one another, to dwell in one another. Our relationship with the Lord is a relationship of union, mingling, and incorporation. We have an organic union with Him, possessing His life (1 John 5:11-12), we are mingled with Him, partaking of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Lev. 2:4-5), and we are incorporated with Him, coinhering with Him as the mutual abode of God and man (John 14:23; 15:5). God is in us and we are in God. God is our dwelling place, and we are His dwelling place. "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations" (Psa. 90:1). "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God" (1 John 4:15). This mutual abode consummately is the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is God and man as one entity, a corporate, great God-man, with God in man and man in God, for the full manifestation and expression of God, shining forth eternally in radiant splendor.

The entire Bible concludes with a divine-human couple with the Triune God as the Husband and His glorified people as His wife. In order for Him to be our Husband and for us to be His wife, He must be processed and consummated, and we must be processed and consummated. The Triune God was processed by becoming a man (John 1:14) to pass through human living, an all-inclusive death, and an all-surpassing resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). This life-giving Spirit is the consummation of the processed Triune God. Then when this wonderful Spirit enters into us, we pass through a process of regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification until we are consummated

to be the bride of Christ. Thus, at the end of the Bible there is a marvelous couple. The Spirit, as the consummation of the processed Triune God, marries the bride, as the consummation of the transformed, tripartite church (Rev. 22:17).

The New Jerusalem— the Aggregate of the Divine Sonship

The New Jerusalem is composed of all of God the Father's redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified sons. Concerning each of the components of the New Jerusalem, God says, "I will be God to him, and he will be a son to Me" (Rev. 21:7). The

New Jerusalem is the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in His selection and predestination of His chosen ones before the foundation of the world: "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us unto

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sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:4-5). The New Jerusalem, as the goal of our predestinating Father God, is the aggregate of all of His sons. Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the expression of God the Father. John 1:18 says that no one has ever seen God but the only begotten Son has declared Him. God's heart's desire, though, was not to have just one Son. He wanted myriads upon myriads of sons to become the brothers of Christ for His eternal expression, His eternal glory. Thus, Christ is not merely the only begotten Son of God, but also through His resurrection, He is the firstborn Son of God among many brothers, who are to be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29). We quote Billheimer again regarding God's heart's desire for many sons:

From all eternity God purposed to have a family circle of His *very own*, not only created but *also generated* by His own life, incorporating His own seed, "sperma," "genes," or heredity. "Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be *his very own* [in a genetic sense], through what Christ would do for us" (Eph. 1:4; also 5:25-27, 32 LB). In order to obtain this personal, organic family relationship, God conceived the infinitely vast and infinitely wise plan of creation *plus* redemption through the new birth, in order to bring "many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10). "For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him...should become like his Son so that his Son would be the First, with many brothers" (Rom. 8:29 LB). In other words, Christ is the Prototype after which all other sons are being fashioned. In John

1:12-13 we learn that the plan of redemption was inaugurated to set up *a unique and original generative method* by which these “many sons” would be born and progressively disciplined by a sanctifying process in order to bring them to glory. “But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). *Here is a distinct reference to two parallel generative methods, one human, the other divine.* In and through Christ alone does God realize and fulfill His paternal longing for a generic family relationship. *But for this plan, God’s family relationship would have been forever confined to the Trinity.* (36-37)

Just as the sons are the expression of their father in the physical realm, possessing his physical life and nature, so those who receive Christ by believing in Him are to be the expression of their heavenly Father in the mystical realm, possessing His divine life and nature.

When we were reborn by receiving Christ who is the divine life, we became the sons of God, the children of God. The apostle John points out that although we presently are the children of God, what we will be has not yet been manifested:

Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are.... Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is. (1 John 3:1-2)

Although we have been regenerated in our spirit, our soul must pass through the process of sanctification and transformation, and ultimately, our physical body will be glorified. When our bodies are glorified, “we will be like Him”:

In my spirit He regenerated me,
In my soul He’s now transforming me.
He will change my body like unto His own,
Wholly making me the same as He. (*Hymns*, #948)

Our being like Him, becoming the same as Him in our spirit, soul, and body, will be our full sonship. At that time we will be fully manifested and designated the sons of God. “This sonship began with the regeneration of our spirit, is continuing with the transformation of our soul, and will be consummated with the redemption of our body” (Recovery Version, Rom. 8:23, note 3). Our spirit

is regenerated the instant that we receive Christ, and our bodies will be glorified in “the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52), but sanctification and transformation are a lifelong process. This is the process of our being “sonized,” a process of our becoming the sons of God in our entire tripartite being for the glorification of our Father.

Hebrews 2:10 says that Christ as the Captain of our salvation is leading God’s many sons into glory. Verse 11 tells us how He does this: “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers.” He who sanctifies is Christ; those who are being sanctified are we believers. Both Christ and we are all of One, that is, all of

one Father, and Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers. The way that our Christ, our elder Brother, leads us into glory is by sanctifying us. In other words, the way God “sonizes” us is by sanctifying us. This matches the thought in Ephesians 1:4-5 which says that God “chose us...to be holy”

unto sonship. To sanctify us is to make us holy, and to be made holy is for our full sonship. To be holy is to be different and distinct from everything that is common. Although God is the unique holy One in this universe, He has chosen us to be as holy as He is. He sanctifies our entire being—our spirit, soul, and body—to make us His holy bride, the holy city, the New Jerusalem (1 Thes. 5:23; Rev. 21:2).

Sanctification has two aspects—a positional aspect and a dispositional aspect. When we accepted Christ as our Redeemer and Savior, we were positionally separated unto God. Although we are separated unto the holy God in our position, our disposition, our very being, is still natural, profane, worldly, and common—“unholy.” We need the holy God to dispense Himself into our being, saturating our spirit, soul, and body with His holy nature until we corporately become the holy city. To be made holy is not only to be separated unto God but also to be saturated with God. Sanctification is the adding of God’s holy nature into all the inward parts of our being.

This divine sanctification for the divine sonship is carried out by the sanctifying Spirit (Rom. 15:16). We were born of the Spirit (John 3:6), and God as the Spirit came into our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22). The sanctifying Spirit, the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal. 4:6), entered into our spirit to make us the sons of God. Paul says that he served God in a holy spirit (2 Cor. 6:6). Here he is referring to his human spirit which has been made holy by the indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Following the regeneration in our spirit, the sanctifying Spirit works further to transform us in our soul. As our soul is being saturated with God's divine and holy nature, there is a resultant metabolic change in our being. This metabolic change is transformation, in which God as the new element is added into our being to discharge and replace the old element of the old man, thus making us a new creation, a new man. Second Corinthians 3:18 says that our being transformed is by the Lord Spirit, who is the sanctifying Spirit, and Romans 12:2 says that we are transformed by the renewing of the mind. Transformation makes us another person in our thinking, our feelings, and our intentions. This transforming sanctification includes our being renewed and conformed to the image of Christ.

Our full transformation will eventually consummate in our being glorified in our body. This is the glorifying sanctification of the Spirit. Our spirit has been regenerated, our soul is being transformed, and our body will be glorified.

Philippians 3:21 calls our fallen body, the "body of our humiliation." This is because our fallen body is full of evil lusts, sickness, weakness, and death. But eventually, this mortal and shameful body will be swallowed up by the sanctifying Spirit of life to become a glorious body. This divine sanctification is the divine "sonizing" of our whole being to make us the mature and revealed sons of God. Through this sanctifying process, we are made the holy bride of Christ.

In order for us to become as holy as the holy city, to be sanctified for our full sonship, we must allow the Lord to have His way to sanctify us day by day. This daily sanctification is a daily preparation for us to be His bride. Through sanctification we become His holy sons, the constituents of His bride. His holy bride and His corporate, holy sonship are the holy city. Ephesians 5:26 tells us how this sanctification can practically take place. This is a most crucial verse in the Bible. Verses 25-27 of Ephesians 5 unveil God's entire New Testament economy. We have seen that verse 25 speaks of Christ as the Redeemer dying for the church in the past. Verse 27 speaks of Christ as the Bridegroom presenting the church as a holy, glorious, and flawless bride to Himself in the future. Verse 26 speaks of what Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) is presently doing to prepare us to be His bride. He gave Himself up for the church "that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word." The cleansing here is the inward, metabolic cleansing of our inward being with the washing Spirit as the water of life, the flowing life of the Triune God (John 7:38-39; Rev. 22:1). This

inward cleansing washes away the spots of our natural life, the oldness of our old man, and all of our fallen defects so that we become glorious, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such things" (Eph. 5:27). This metabolic washing also saturates us with God's holy nature to make us holy and without blemish.

The divine, holy, and sanctifying water of life, the Spirit of life, is "in the word." *Word* here in Greek is *rhema*, which refers to the instant, present, living, personalized word of God to us. *Logos* refers to the constant and written Word of God. What God has spoken is recorded in the written Word. When God speaks this Word a second time to us in a present and personal way, the *logos* is converted to *rhema*.

The Lord Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life;...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). These words spoken by the Lord are also *rhema*.

First, the Lord indicated that for giving life He

would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the Spirit of life. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life. (Recovery Version, John 6:63, note 3)

The best way to exercise our spirit is to pray. This is why Ephesians 6:17-18 says that we should receive the word of God "by means of all prayer." When we pray over the written Word in various ways, God's *logos* becomes *rhema* to us. According to Ephesians 5:26 this *rhema* sanctifies us, "sonizes" us, transforming us to be His bride. How crucial it is for us to "pray-read" God's Word daily so that we can be sanctified by the washing of the water in the *rhema*. It is in this way that we become the New Jerusalem, the bride, the wife, of the Lamb.

Many of the Lord's children have discovered the practice of receiving the word of God by means of all prayer. E. M. Bounds says, "The Word of God is made effectual and operative by the process and practice of prayer" (122). George Whitefield preached the gospel powerfully to thousands of people. Howell Harris, in his diary, testifies of Whitefield kneeling on his knees, "reading and praying over the Scriptures" (265). The following excerpts from Whitefield's journals show how he prayed over God's written Word so that it became *rhema* to him:

My mind being now more open and enlarged, I began to

read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books, and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved meat indeed, and drink indeed, to my soul. I daily received fresh life, light, and power from above. (60)

George Whitefield's practice of pray-reading the Word made a deep impression on George Müller, as recorded by A. T. Pierson:

Particularly was this impression deeply made on Mr. Müller's mind and heart: that Whitefield's unparalleled success in evangelistic labours was plainly traceable to two causes and could not be separated from them as direct effects: namely, his unusual prayerfulness and his habit of reading the Bible on his knees. (138)

In George Müller's journal, we read of his appropriation of Whitefield's practice. The following are a few examples of his practice of praying over the Scriptures morning by morning:

I have spent several hours in prayer today, and read on my knees, and prayed for two hours over Psalm lxiii. (138)

I fell on my knees last Saturday, to read his word with meditation, and to turn it into prayer. Today I spent about three hours in prayer over Psalms lxiv. and lxv. In reference to that precious word, "O thou that hearest prayer," (Ps. Lxv.2,) I asked the Lord the following petitions.... (139)

We need to follow the pattern of Whitefield and Müller in praying over God's Word. In this way we will be sanctified by the washing of the water in the word so that the Lord may have the way to make us His bride, the New Jerusalem, to "present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things" (Eph. 5:27).

The New Jerusalem— the Ultimate Consummation of the Triune God

Thus far, we have seen that the New Jerusalem as the goal of the Triune God is a wonderful person. She is the bride, the wife, of Christ the Lamb, and her constituents are the matured and manifested sons of God who have been led into glory through the process of sanctification and transformation. We need to see further that the New Jerusalem is the ultimate destination of the Triune God and the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. The entire Bible is the autobiography of the Triune God. The history of the

Triune God in carrying out His eternal intention is portrayed in the Bible from eternity past across the bridge of time and into eternity future. In eternity past there is the self-existing and ever-existing Triune God (John 1:1). Then at the beginning of what we know as time, God as the Creator stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth and formed the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1). God then moved with men and among men in the Old Testament.

The New Testament records that one day God came out of eternity into time and with His divinity to enter into humanity. The infinite God became a finite man. The Word, who was God, became flesh (John 1:14). He became the

incarnated God for His direct move in man, seen in the four Gospels, for the accomplishment of His judicial redemption. As the incarnated God He passed through human living and died an all-inclusive death in which He took away the sin of the world (John 1:29), destroyed Satan (Heb.

2:14), and judged the world (John 12:31). In resurrection this incarnated God, who was the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). We pointed out in a previous issue that the life-giving Spirit is the "compound Spirit," the all-inclusive Spirit, typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30 (see "The Compound Spirit," *Affirmation & Critique* II:1 (Jan. 1997): 15-27). The very God who now indwells the believers as the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19) is a compound of divinity, humanity, human living, death, and resurrection. In resurrection the incarnated God became the compounded God, seen in the Acts and the Epistles, for the carrying out of His organic salvation. Because of the degradation of the church, He became the sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit, the intensified God, seen in the book of Revelation (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), for the producing of the overcomers (see "The Seven Spirits of God," *Affirmation & Critique* I:4 (Oct. 1996): 28-44).

In eternity future He will be the incorporated God, the Triune God who is fully incorporated with His regenerated, transformed, and glorified believers to be the New Jerusalem for His eternal, glorious expression. As we have seen, He will be our temple for our dwelling place, and we will be His tabernacle for His dwelling place (Rev. 21:22, 3). The New Jerusalem "is not many houses or palaces with streets, a surrounding wall with portals and angel guards, etc.; it is 'Immanuel,' 'God with us'" (Lenski 631). This shows that the Bible begins with the Triune God and ends with the Triune God: God in eternity past; the incarnated God, the compounded God, and the intensified God

The New Jerusalem is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. The Bible is the autobiography of the Triune God, who is carrying out His eternal intention from eternity past across the bridge of time and into eternity future.

on the bridge of time; and the incorporated God in eternity future. This is God in His economical Trinity “traveling” from eternity past to eternity future to accomplish His heart’s desire by imparting Himself into His chosen and redeemed people to be their life, life supply, and everything, that they may be filled with Him unto His fullness, His full expression, for His eternal glory.

The content of the Triune God’s autobiography is His eternal economy, which is His eternal intention with His heart’s desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen people to be their life and nature that they may become the same as He is for His fullness, His expression (1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19). This eternal intention is the governing principle of the Bible. Psalm 36:8-9 provides us with a good example of this principle: “They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures. / For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.” *Strong’s Concordance* tells us that the Hebrew word for *fatness* refers to the fatty ashes of the sacrifices. These sacrifices point to Christ, God the Son, being the replacement and the reality of all the Old Testament sacrifices for our enjoyment (Heb. 10:5-10). The river of God’s pleasures refers to God the Spirit as the river of water of life (John 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1). God the Father is the fountain, the source, of life and light (John 15:26; 1 John 1:5). These verses show us how God in His Divine Trinity is dispensed into His believing seekers for their experience and enjoyment. This is not only the governing principle of the Bible but also the eternal principle of God’s relationship with man. When we apply this principle to the New Jerusalem, we see that the Triune God is working Himself into His chosen and redeemed people to be their entrance, constitution, existence, enjoyment, living, and expression.

The Triune God as the Entrance into the Holy City

The three gates on each of the four sides of the holy city signify that the Triune God is the entrance into the holy city. The gates on the four sides face the four directions of the earth, signifying that the Triune God as the entrance into the holy city is available to all the peoples on earth, those “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9; cf. Gen. 2:10-14). This matches the Lord’s charge to His believers to disciple all the nations by baptizing them into the name of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19). This baptism is the real entrance into the holy city. The name refers to the person, and the word *into* indicates

union. Thus, we are charged to baptize people into the very person of the Triune God, which is into all that the Triune God is, the sum total of the Divine Being. M. R. Vincent says that this baptism brings people into a spiritual and mystical union with the Triune God (149). To enter into the Triune God is to enter into the holy city.

Luke 15 shows that the three of the Divine Trinity work to bring God’s chosen people into the Father’s house (vv. 22-24), which is the church as the house of the living God in this age (1 Tim. 3:15) and the New Jerusalem as the tabernacle and temple of God in eternity (Rev. 21:3, 22). The first parable in this chapter is that of a shepherd seeking a lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). The Son

The content of the Triune God’s autobiography is His eternal economy, which is His eternal intention to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen people to be their life and nature that they may become the same as He is for His fullness, His expression.

came in His humanity as a Shepherd to seek and to save that which was lost (19:10). He is the good Shepherd (John 10:11), the great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4), who laid down His life for His sheep to redeem each one. The second parable in Luke 15

is concerning a woman, signifying the Spirit, seeking a lost coin, signifying the lost sinner (vv. 8-10). This woman lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and seeks carefully until she finds it. The Spirit sweeps, searches, the inward parts of the sinner and illumines the sinner with the lamp of God’s word (Psa. 119:105) so that he might see his fallen condition and repent. Thus, the sinner is found, gained, by God the Spirit.

The third parable in Luke 15 is concerning a father receiving his profligate son (vv. 11-32). This reveals God the Father with His great love and far-reaching mercy receiving the repentant sinner. The father clothes his son with the best robe, signifying Christ as the God-satisfying righteousness to cover the penitent sinner (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30). The ring the father puts on his son’s finger signifies the sealing Spirit as a mark of divine ownership on the accepted sinner (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The sandals the father gives him signify the power of God’s salvation to separate the sinner from the dirty world. The fattened calf for the son’s feasting signifies the unsearchably rich Christ (3:8) killed on the cross for the repentant one’s enjoyment. We can see from this that Luke 15 unveils the saving love and the operation of the three of the Triune God for sinners so that He can be their triune entrance into the holy city, which is the incorporation of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed ones.

First Peter 1:2 reveals the operation of the Triune God from eternity past into time to bring His chosen ones into Him: “Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the

Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Based upon God the Father’s selection in eternity past, the Spirit works in time to sanctify the foreknown ones so that they might repent and believe in Christ to receive Him as their Redeemer with all the merits of His precious blood. Because we were foreordained by God, the Spirit worked within us and on us in our environment to do whatever was necessary to separate us unto Christ and to cause us to believe in Christ. This is the Spirit’s “seeking sanctification,” before our believing in Christ, signified by the woman’s seeking the lost coin, signifying the lost sinner in Luke 15. Due to the enlightening and searching of the sanctifying Spirit, the prodigal son, “came to himself” (v. 17). The result of the seeking sanctification of the Spirit is that the prodigal ones are convicted of their sinful position and condition, resulting in their repentance and returning to God for their salvation (vv. 18-24).

The work of the Spirit is to convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8) so that people may believe in Christ to receive Him as their righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30), to escape the sin in Adam (Rom. 5:12), and to be delivered from God’s judgment (Matt. 25:41). This sanctification issues in our repentance and faith, which is our obedience. Then we are washed in the blood of Christ, forgiven of our sins, justified before God, and reconciled unto God. Thus, 1 Peter 1:2 shows us the energetic working of the Divine Trinity—the Father’s choosing in eternity past and the Spirit’s seeking sanctification in time so that the chosen ones might be convicted to obey the gospel by repenting unto God and receiving Christ as their life. This once more reveals the Triune God as the entrance into Himself, which is the entrance into the holy city. The Triune God is the holy city, yet not the Triune God alone, but the Triune God eternally united, mingled, and incorporated with His chosen and redeemed people.

The Triune God as the Constitution of the Holy City

The New Jerusalem is built with three kinds of precious materials—gold, pearls, and precious stones—signifying that she is built with the Triune God as her constitution (Rev. 21:18-21). Gold signifies God the Father in His holy nature as the base of God’s organic building. Revelation 21 says that the city was pure gold (v. 18), meaning that she is fully constituted with God’s divine nature. Second Peter 1:4 says that we have become partakers of the divine nature. The divine nature needs to become the basic element of our spiritual constitution. Revelation 21:21 says that the street of the holy city was pure gold. This signifies that we

have to do everything according to the divine nature of God, taking the divine nature as our pathway. Our Christian life should be regulated by the divine nature as our unique street. To take the divine nature as our pathway is to walk by the Spirit, to live, move, and have our being according to the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4).

The golden street is connected to the golden throne (cf. 1 Kings 10:18), indicating that to take the divine nature as our unique street in our daily life is to be under the ruling of God’s golden administration. Furthermore, the river of water of life flowing in the middle of this golden street (Rev. 22:1) means that the divine life flowing in the divine nature is the unique way for our daily life and for our move

in the Lord’s move. When we are living according to the spirit, we can sense the flow of the divine life, the flow of the Spirit, within us. This inner flow of the indwelling Christ as the fountain of living water (John 4:10, 14) brings with it the inner sensation of life, peace, and joy. “The mind

set on the spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). “There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God” (Psa. 46:4). Witness Lee applies this to our daily experience:

Do you have this stream flowing within you? Is it flowing within you at this very moment? Unbelievers do not have it; but alas, there are some believers who, although they have had this stream flowing into them, have not kept themselves within its flow. They have the life of the Triune God within them, but they are not keeping themselves in the flowing of this life. Many times you are conscious that you are out of the flowing of this stream. Then, sometimes you know that you are in its flowing. What have you to do then? It is really quite simple. You just have to keep yourself in the flowing of the stream. Whenever you feel that the flowing of the stream within you is cut off, you must turn to the Lord immediately to seek the reason. Why has the stream within you stopped flowing? You must discover the reason and deal with the Lord about it until the flowing is recovered. Wherever you are going and whatever you are about to do, if there is the sense that the flowing of the stream will be stopped by proceeding in that matter, then you must stop. Stop in order to maintain the flowing. To maintain the flowing you must refrain from all those activities which are not of the Lord, that is, which are not of the flowing of the stream within you. (*Divine Stream* 12)

The inner flowing of the divine life not only supplies us with the Lord but also transforms us into His image. This can be seen in Genesis 2, where the flowing river issues in

The New Jerusalem is pure gold, meaning that she is fully constituted with God’s divine nature. We have become partakers of the divine nature, and the divine nature needs to become the basic element of our spiritual constitution.

gold, bdellium (a pearl-like substance), and onyx stone (vv. 10-12). When we live in the sweet flow of life, we are transformed to be the precious material for God's building, the New Jerusalem.

Whereas gold signifies God the Father in His holy nature, pearls signify Christ the Son in His life-releasing death and life-dispensing resurrection. An oyster is wounded by a grain of sand and secretes its life-juice around the grain to produce a pearl. The oyster typifies Christ coming into the world of death, signified by the salt water, and being crucified and wounded for our transgressions to produce us as pearls by secreting, dispensing, His life element into us. The death of Christ released His life, just as the life of a grain of wheat is released through death (John 12:24). The resurrection of Christ dispensed His life into His many members, just as the life of a grain of wheat is dispensed into many grains in resurrection.

If we are to be produced as pearls, we have to daily experience the death of Christ subjectively by the power of Christ's resurrection that we may be conformed to His death (Phil. 3:10). Paul said, "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31). He testified further that he bore in his body "the brands of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). These brands refer to the marks with which slaves were branded by their owners to show to whom they belonged. As the slaves of Christ, we should bear His brands, His marks, which show that we belong to Him. On the one hand, these brands for Paul were the physical scars he received in his self-sacrificing service to his Master (2 Cor. 11:23-27). On the other hand, these brands were the characteristics of the life that Paul lived, a life which was the duplication of Christ's life. This is a life of denying and dying to the self, of bearing the cross (Matt. 16:24), and of being submissive and obedient to God even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). We need to follow the pattern of Paul by bearing the brands, the characteristics, of Christ's life, magnifying Him in our body to extol Him in His ownership and possession of us (1:20).

The only way we can remain in the death of Christ is by the power of His resurrection. There is a wonderful picture of this in the second chapter of Song of Songs. In this chapter the resurrected Christ is seen as a mountain-leaping gazelle and a hill-skipping young hart (vv. 8-9). He is the One who can overcome and leap over all obstacles, barriers, and difficulties. This resurrected Christ refers to His lover as His dove who is in the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice (v. 14). The clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice signify the cross, the death of Christ. The precipice indicates a high

place that is difficult to reach by a rugged way. Only the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ as the power of resurrection can transport us into Himself as the crucified One. This is wonderfully expressed in a stanza from a hymn by A. B. Simpson:

'Tis not hard to die with Christ
When His risen life we know;
'Tis not hard to share His suff'rings
When our hearts with joy o'erflow.
In His resurrection power
He has come to dwell in me,
And my heart is gladly going
All the way to Calvary. (*Hymns*, #481)

The death of Christ released His life,
just as the life of a grain of wheat is released
through death. The resurrection of Christ
dispensed His life into His many members,
just as the life of a grain of wheat is dispensed
into many grains in resurrection.

By the power of His resurrection we can remain under the killing of His death so that His resurrection life may be released through us into others for them to become a part of the holy city. The apostle Paul said, "Always bearing about in the body the putt-

ing to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body....So then death operates in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:10, 12). There is a picture of this in the Old Testament when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan into the good land. A group of Levitical priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant were to stand in those death waters while all the others passed over into life, into the land of promise (Josh. 3:17). If we want others to enter into Christ as life, we need to die with Christ to the world and self and sin. This will give Him the way to live in us, reign in us, and be testified through us so that others can receive Christ as life to make them pearls for the organic structure of the New Jerusalem.

The precious stones of the holy city signify the Spirit's work to transform the redeemed and regenerated saints for the building of God's eternal habitation that they may express God corporately in His all-permeating glory (Rev. 21:18-20). Transformation is not an outward change or correction, but spiritual metabolism. It is the metabolic function of the life of God in the believers. In this spiritual metabolism, Christ with His riches as the new element is imparted into our being causing our old, natural element to be discharged. Physically speaking, metabolism takes place through the process of eating, digestion, and assimilation. Only that which is expressed outwardly through an inward metabolism is genuine health and real beauty. In the spiritual realm it is the same. We must daily eat, digest, and assimilate Christ as our spiritual food in order to be transformed. The Lord Jesus said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (John 6:57). "To eat the Lord

Jesus is to receive Him into us that He may be assimilated by the regenerated new man in the way of life. Then we live by Him whom we have received” (Recovery Version, note 1). We can receive the Lord Jesus into us day by day through His words, which are spirit and life (v. 63). When we come to God’s Word to contact Christ in a spirit of prayer with our hearts turned to Him, He will become food to our inner man, and we will be nourished with the fresh supply of resurrection life. Spontaneously, as we feed on Him daily, our living will become a beautiful manifestation of the spiritual metabolism of the divine life within us. We will be healthy spiritually, and Christ will be our glory and beauty (cf. Exo. 28:2; Psa. 90:17). Our human virtues will gradually be transformed with the divine attributes so that we can keep the oneness of the Spirit with our fellow believers having Christ as our lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering (Eph. 4:2-3).

While we are daily being transformed by the Lord Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18), we must also learn to minister the Triune God to others for their transformation. In 1 Corinthians 3 Paul tells us that the unique foundation of God’s building is Christ and that we must build upon this foundation. We should build with the experiences of the Triune God as gold, silver, and precious stones (vv. 11-12). Silver is mentioned here instead of pearl because silver signifies Christ in His redemptive work (cf. Exo. 30:11-16). Redemption is needed after man’s fall. When we have been built up with the Triune God to be the New Jerusalem after sin has been put away, redemption will be no longer needed. Thus, we see pearl, which points to the life-releasing and life-dispensing aspect of His death and resurrection for our eternal enjoyment.

The precious materials of gold, silver, and precious stones are in contrast to the worthless materials of wood, grass, and stubble. We must be fearful of building with wood, grass, and stubble, which cannot stand the test of the fire of the Lord’s judgment (1 Cor. 3:12-13). Wood in contrast to gold signifies the fallen nature of our natural man. Grass in contrast to silver signifies our unredeemed flesh (1 Pet. 1:24; Isa. 40:6-7). Stubble in contrast to precious stones signifies the untransformed, lifeless element of our natural man. In our work for the Lord, what matters in His eyes is not mainly the quantity of our work but the quality of our work. A small amount of gold, silver, and precious stones is worth more than a mountain of wood, grass, and stubble. The only thing worth anything in this universe is the priceless person of the Divine Trinity. Anything else is worthless.

Numbers 18:1 speaks of a particular kind of sin related to the priests who serve the Lord—“the iniquity of the sanctuary.” This is a sin particularly related to our work for the Lord, which in the New Testament is to build with wood, grass, and stubble. In order to build with the precious material of the Triune God and not the worthless material of our fallen being, we must care for the initiation, advance, and result of our work. The initiation and origination of any work we do should be of the Lord, not of ourselves. The advance and means of our work should be through the cross and by the Spirit, not by our natural strength and ability. The result and issue of our work should be God’s glory, not our glory and fame. Then Romans 11:36 will be the reality of our work for the Lord—all will

be out from Him as the source, through Him as the means, and to Him for His glory. Furthermore, we do not want to be gilded with gold, pearls, and precious stone for outward display like Babylon the Great, the apostate church (Rev. 17:4). May the Lord save us from superficiality and all hypoc-

risy to make us true men, constituted purely and uniquely with Him.

We must also learn to perfect the ones under our spiritual care with the attributes of the Triune God. This is pictured with the Lord’s loving seeker in Song of Songs 1:10-11: “Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, / Your neck with strings of jewels. / We will make you plaits of gold / With studs of silver.” In this passage, we can see that the seeker is adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones (jewels), just as the wife of Christ, the New Jerusalem, is adorned for her Husband “with every precious stone” (Rev. 21:2, 19). She is transformed by the remaking of the Spirit through some perfecting ones who make her “plaits of gold with studs of silver.” Her hair is plaited with gold, and the plaits are fastened with silver studs. Her plaited hair is a symbol of her submission to the Lord, which is according to God’s golden divine nature under His golden administration. The redeeming Christ, signified by the silver studs, is the holding and stabilizing factor of her submission to Christ. Furthermore, her neck, signifying her will, is transformed to choose the Lord and what He desires. In our work for the Lord we need to learn to perfect others with these attributes of the Triune God.

In order to be constituted with the Triune God and to minister the Triune God into others for their divine constitution, we should pray what Paul prayed for in Ephesians 3:14-19. Paul prayed to the Father as the source for us to be strengthened through the Spirit as the means for the goal of Christ making His home in our hearts that we may be filled

As we are being transformed by the Lord Spirit, we must minister the Triune God to others for their transformation. The unique foundation of God’s building is Christ, and we must build upon this foundation with the experiences of the Triune God as gold, silver, and precious stones.

unto all the fullness of the Triune God, which is the full expression of the Triune God as the New Jerusalem. For Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9), to make His home in our hearts is for Him to build Himself into our being so that all the parts of our heart—our mind, emotion, will, and conscience—are constituted with Him. The way that God builds up the church to consummate in the New Jerusalem is to build Himself in Christ into our being. This is why it is so crucial for us to daily pray for ourselves and for others to be strengthened with power into the inner man. The inner man is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life. We need to be strengthened with power into our spirit through the Holy Spirit. The power through which we are strengthened is the power in Ephesians 1 that raised Christ from dead, that seated Him at God's right hand in the heavenlies, that subjected all things under His feet, and that gave Him to be Head over all things to the church (vv. 19-22). We need to be strengthened with this resurrecting power, ascending power, subjecting power, and heading-up power out of our outer man, our natural man, our old man, and into our inner man. When our being is brought into our spirit, Christ has the way to spread out from our spirit into all the rooms of our heart. If we make Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 our daily prayer, this will give the Lord a way to build Himself into us and into others to make us His divine and mystical building.

The Triune God as the Existence of the Holy City

The river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb signifies that the Triune God is the triune existence of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1). According to our natural understanding, the throne has two sitting on it—God and the Lamb. But Revelation says that the Lamb is the lamp of the holy city (21:23) and that God is within Him as the light (22:5). Out from the throne of the God-Lamb flows the Spirit as the river of water of life. Thus, we see God, the Lamb, and the Spirit. God the Father is our Creator. We owe our created being to God, as David said, "For it was You who formed my inward parts; / You wove me together in my mother's womb" (Psa. 139:13). God is the Father, the source, of all of mankind (Eph. 3:14-15; Luke 3:38). Furthermore, God the Son, the Lamb, is our Redeemer (John 1:29). Having been usurped, captured, and utterly spoiled and corrupted in our created being by Satan, we were repossessed by the Lamb at a great cost, redeemed with the price of His incorruptible, precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19), which Paul referred to as God's "own blood"

(Acts 20:28). God the Father is our wonderful Creator, God the Son is our precious Redeemer, and God the Spirit is our vivifying Regenerator. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Our first birth was for our second birth. We were born, generated with the human life, so that we could be reborn, regenerated, with the divine life. We were born of God in our human spirit by the divine Spirit, the life-giving Spirit. The vivifying Spirit imparted the divine life into our human spirit to make our human spirit life (Rom. 8:10). To be regenerated is to have the divine life in addition to our created, human life. Praise and thank our God, the God to whom we owe our entire existence, the God who in His Divine Trinity is our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator!

The way that God builds up the church to consummate in the New Jerusalem is to build Himself in Christ into our being. This is why it is so crucial for us to daily pray for ourselves and for others to be strengthened with power into the inner man.

Our existence with the Triune God in our ongoing experience of Him is described in Ephesians 4:4-6. This passage of Scripture shows how the Body of Christ exists with the Father, the Lord, and the Spirit as a foretaste of the

existence of the New Jerusalem in eternity: "One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." God the Father is the source of the Body, the Lord Christ is the element of the Body, and the Spirit is the essence of the Body. We need to allow the Father to be over us, through us, and in us. For Him to be over us, every detail of our life should be under His authority. We should seek His counsel in all that we do. We need to enthrone Him in the center of our being that we may be under the ruling of His life. When the centurion beseeched the Lord to heal his servant, he said, "Lord, I am not fit for You to enter under my roof; but only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it" (Matt. 8:8-9). Seemingly, the centurion should have said that he was a man *of* authority who could command others to go and to do. Instead, he said that he was a man *under* authority. The centurion had a precious revelation of who the Lord Jesus is—"a man under authority." It is only a man under authority who can be a man of authority. Because the centurion was a man who took his place under the authority of his commanders, he was able to exercise authority. Likewise, because the Lord Jesus was under the authority of God the Father in all that He did, He was a man of authority. He spoke the Father's word (John 8:28), did the Father's work (4:34), carried out the Father's will (5:30), and sought the Father's glory (7:18). For this reason, He

could declare, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). We need to be one with Him in allowing the Father to be over us in all things by speaking His word, doing His work, carrying out His will, and seeking His glory. Then we will have Him with us as our divine authority to disciple the nations to bring in the Father's kingdom. The Father is also "through all." We must allow Him to have the thoroughfare in our being. Finally, the Father is "in all." If we are under His authority and give Him the thoroughfare within us, He will have a way to abide in us for us to exist with Him.

We also need to enjoy the Lord so that He becomes our very element, the element of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4-5). When Christ lives in us, we live by Him, which means that we exist by Him (Gal. 2:20; John 6:57). We live Christ by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for His magnification in our existence (Phil. 1:19-21). As we are filled with the untraceably rich Spirit, we are saved from the failure of not living Christ and from the defeat of not magnifying Christ. Furthermore, we exist with the Spirit as the essence of the Body (Eph. 4:4). Because the Spirit is the essence of the Body, everything we do must be by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:3). We have been regenerated by the Spirit and baptized in the Spirit in order to drink the Spirit by calling on the Lord continually and drawing water with joy from Him as the fountain of living water (1 Cor. 12:13, 3; Isa. 12:3-6). In this way we are being transformed by the Spirit and strengthened and enriched by the Spirit for the Body life, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Triune God as the Enjoyment of the Holy City

The Triune God—the Father as the light of life, the Son as the tree of life, and the Spirit as the river of life—is the triune enjoyment of the New Jerusalem. The light of the New Jerusalem is the redeeming God. God as the light shines from within the Lamb as the lamp through the New Jerusalem as the diffuser (Rev. 21:23-25, 11; 22:5). God as light was once unapproachable (1 Tim. 6:16), but now He has been made approachable by becoming the redeeming Lamb. In the New Jerusalem there will be no night; God Himself will shine continuously. In both the Old and New Testaments, darkness is a punishment from God (Exo. 10:22; Rev. 16:10). We need to heed the Lord's call in Isaiah to His people: "House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah" (2:5). Light is the presence of God. We need to live, move, and have our being in the Lord's presence within us. Thank Him that the light of

His glorious presence can shine in any darkness that is within us, and the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5). The Scriptures tell us that God is light (1 John 1:5), Christ is light (John 8:12), the life of Christ is light (1:4), His word is light (Psa. 119:105), and the believers in Christ are light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8; Matt. 5:14). Furthermore, the church is a light-bearing, light-diffusing lampstand as a precursor of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 1:20). In order to keep ourselves in the light of the Lord's countenance (Psa. 90:8), His presence, we have to abide in His word and keep ourselves in fellowship with the members of His Body. Also, we need to keep our heart pure and single for God so that our whole inner being will be illuminated, full of light, without any dark part (Matt. 5:8; 6:22-23).

The Triune God—
the Father as the light of life,
the Son as the tree of life,
and the Spirit as the river of life—
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As diffusers of the divine light, we should shine as luminaries in the world, letting our light shine before men in all goodness, righteousness, and truth for God's glory (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14-16; Eph. 5:8-9, 14). Goodness is God the Father (Matt. 19:17), righ-

teousness is God the Son (Rom. 5:17-18, 21; 1 Cor. 1:30), and truth is God the Spirit (John 14:17; 1 John 5:6) as the fruit of the light, the shining of the light, from within us. In order to let our light shine, we need to be one with Christ as God's Servant, whom God made a light to the Gentiles so that His salvation might reach to the end of the earth for Him to come as the Desire of all the nations (Isa. 49:6; Hag. 2:7; Acts 13:46-47). Our commission, like that of Paul's, is to turn people from darkness to light. Since God Himself is the light of the holy city, there will be no need for any God-created or man-created light (Rev. 22:5). This indicates that we need to be careful not to bring any artificial, man-created light into what we minister to the Lord's children. This so-called light is something apart from the Lord that is merely from our natural ability in understanding and realizing things through our school-taught knowledge. Instead, we need a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of our heart would be enlightened with the divine light (Eph. 1:17-18). Then we should purely minister God as light into others (1 John 1:5) in order to enlighten them that they might see God's economy, His mysterious eternal plan to dispense Himself into man to make man His full expression (Eph. 3:9).

The enjoyment of Christ as the tree of life will be the eternal portion of all God's redeemed (Rev. 22:14). The tree of life signifies Christ as life to man and declares that He offers Himself to man in an edible form (Gen. 2:9; John 6:35, 57; Rev. 2:7). Because Christ is embodied and realized in His word, His words being spirit and life to us

(John 6:63), we can eat Him by eating His words: “Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart” (Jer. 15:16). The way to eat His words is by praying with and over His words, making the Bible our prayer book. As we have seen, this is to receive the word of God by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18). It is in this way that we eat the tree of life, which is to enjoy Christ as our life supply. Because Christ is our food, signified by the tree of life, we must depend on Him continually. The tree of life implies dependence on God, whereas the tree of knowledge implies independence from God. If a person acquires all the knowledge that an instructor has to teach, he can graduate from his class. He no longer needs his instructor and can be independent from him. But we cannot graduate from life. We need to eat Christ as our spiritual food every day so that our spiritual life can be maintained. Whenever we come to God’s Word, we must come to the Lord that we may enjoy Him as life, the tree of life (John 5:39-40).

The way to stay, remain, in our organic union with Christ, is by our abiding in His word. We need to read His Word daily and spend some personal time with Him daily, preferably in the morning, when we can pray over and with His Word.

Revelation 22:2 presents the picture of the tree of life growing on the two sides of the river of life. John 15:1 says that Christ is the vine tree, and 14:6 says that He is the life. Therefore, the tree of life is a vine tree that spreads and proceeds along the flow of the water of life for God’s people to enjoy. We are not only the eaters of this tree, but according to John 15 we are also the branches of Christ as the tree of life. The Lord says, “I am the vine; you are the branches” (v. 5). Unconsciously, we may misread this verse in the following way: “I am the root; you are the branches.” But the Lord does not say that He is merely the root. He is the whole vine, which includes the root, the branches, and the fruit. This shows that we have been grafted into Christ to become a part of Him. Hudson Taylor’s seeing of this great truth was a life changing experience for him:

As I thought of the vine and the branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured direct into my soul! How great seemed my mistake in having wished to get the sap, the fullness *out* of Him. I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The vine now I see, is not the root merely, but all—root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit: and Jesus is not only that: He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed. Oh, the joy of seeing this truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ. (214)

The New Testament charges us not merely to believe *in* Christ, but according to the Greek, to believe *into* Him. Our believing is our being grafted into Christ to become His branches, His members, in an organic union with Him, a union in which His life is our life (Col. 3:4). Now that we are organically united to Him, the Lord’s charge to us is to abide in Him. The Greek word for *abide* means “to stay (in a given place, state, relation, or expectancy); hence, to abide, remain, and dwell” (Recovery Version, 1 John 2:27, note 8). The way to stay in this organic union with Christ is to stay, to remain, in His words. In John 15:7 the Lord speaks of our abiding in Him and His words abiding in us. The Lord’s words here are His instant and present speaking (Gk. *rhema*). In John 8:31 the Lord said, “If you

abide in My word, you are truly My disciples.” The word here is the constant word (Gk. *logos*). When we put these two verses together, we see that if we abide in the Lord’s *logos*, His constant word, His *rhema*, His present and instant word, will abide in us. The way to stay, re-

main, in our organic union with Christ, is by our abiding in His word. This is why it is very crucial for us to be in the Word of God daily; we need to read His Word daily and spend some personal time with Him daily, preferably in the morning, when we can pray over and with His Word. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” We also need to build up the habit of singing the word of God through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. It is in this way that we can stay in Christ as the tree of life, abiding in Him, to enjoy the life-juice of the vine, the flow of the Spirit of life within us.

We not only enjoy God the Father as the light of life and God the Son as the tree of life but also God the Spirit as the river of water of life. The river of water of life in the New Jerusalem is the flowing out of the Triune God—the Spirit of life as the reaching of the Triune God to His redeemed people for their enjoyment. According to Revelation 22:1 this river is “bright as crystal.” When we drink of the one Spirit as the crystal-bright river of water of life for our satisfaction (1 Cor. 12:13), we are purified and made transparent as crystal, having no dimness or opaqueness. When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman in John 4, He revealed how we can drink of the Spirit as the river of water of life. In response to the woman’s desire for this water, the Lord said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit” (v. 24). This shows that to contact God the Spirit

in and with our spirit is to drink of the living water, which is to render real worship to God. In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul said that Christ is our spiritual rock and our spiritual drink. He was referring to the type in the Old Testament of the rock that Moses struck so that water could gush out to satisfy the thirst of all the Israelites (Exo. 17:6). This cleft rock is a picture of the crucified Christ, who was cleft on the cross to stream forth the living water for His people to drink. After the rock had been cleft, God instructed Moses to speak to the rock so that it would gush out its water (Num. 20:8). This shows that we need to speak to Christ as our spiritual rock to enjoy Him as the flowing Spirit, the living water.

When we speak to Christ in prayer with the confession of our sins, the Spirit as the living water has a way to gush up from within us. Just as the leaders of the people in Numbers 21 dug the dirt away so that water could spring up from the well for the people to drink (vv. 16-18), we need to cooperate with the Lord to dig away the dirt in our inward being that is blocking the stream of living water. Any unconfessed sin is a blockage to the inner flow of the divine stream. We should thus pray to the indwelling Christ, who is the Spirit in our spirit:

Spring up, well, with water;
Dig Thou, Lord, completely;
Dig away all barriers
That Thy stream flow through me. (*Hymns*, #250)

John 4 shows us that the way to take the living water is to confess our sins. When the Samaritan woman asked the Lord to give her the water of which He spoke, He asked her to call her husband. She responded with a lawyerly “half-truth” (actually a lie), by saying that she did not have a husband. Then the Lord said, “You have well said, I do not have a husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly” (vv. 17-18). In His conversation with this woman, the Lord, the light of the world, referred to her husband to touch her conscience. Then, in a sense, He confessed her sins for her by telling her of all the husbands she had had and of her living with one who was not her husband. Anything that we desire for satisfaction other than Christ as the living water is another kind of water. One of the basic reasons for the immorality of the Samaritan woman was that she was looking for a husband to satisfy her. Each husband was another kind of water, of which the Lord said, “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again” (v. 13).

In Jeremiah 2:13 the Lord declared, “My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.” The first evil is to turn away from the Lord as our unique source of satisfaction and supply. The second evil is to look to our own, man-made sources of satisfaction, the satisfaction of the things of the world. Any source of satisfaction other than Christ, the very God, is a broken cistern that will always leave us perpetually dissatisfied. First, we need to repent by returning to the Lord as our unique source of satisfaction. Then we need to confess our sins, our “broken cisterns” which we have tried, our “husbands” to which we have been joined. This confession will dig away the dirt

from our inner being, and the Spirit as the living water will gush up within us.

Any source of satisfaction other than Christ, the very God, will always leave us perpetually dissatisfied. We need to repent by returning to the Lord as our unique source of satisfaction and confess our sins. Then the Spirit, as the living water, will gush up within us.

Isiah 12 reveals that we can draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation by speaking forth the Lord in the following ways: giving thanks to Him, calling on His name,

making His deeds known among the peoples, singing psalms to Him, and exalting His name with praise (vv. 3-6). Ephesians 5 says that we can be filled with the Spirit, the living water, by singing and psalming with our heart to the Lord, and by giving thanks to the Lord at all times for all things (vv. 18-20). In the book of Judges, Samson called on the Lord when he was desperately thirsty, and the Lord gave him to drink. Samson then called that place “En-hakkore,” which means “the well of the caller” (15:18-19). The Lord Jesus is today’s reality of En-hakkore, and to drink of Him, we need to call upon His name. “No one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). What a promise this is to us! When we say “Lord Jesus” or “Jesus is Lord” with a turned heart and an exercised spirit, we are in the Holy Spirit and we are drinking of the Spirit. To declare that He is the Lord is one way of exalting Him with praise. We also need to speak of Him to others, which is to “make His deeds known among the peoples.” By speaking forth Christ, we not only drink of Him but also the Spirit as rivers of living water is flowing out of our innermost being so that others may drink of Him (John 7:37-39).

In John 4:14 the Lord said, “The water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into eternal life.” God the Father is the fountain of life, the source and origin of life. God the Son is the spring of life, the emergence and the manifestation of life, and God the Spirit is the river of life, the flowing out and reaching of life. The flowing Triune God gushes up “into eternal life.” Eternal life here refers to the New Jerusalem as the totality

of the eternal life. The word *into* in Greek means “resulting in” or to “become.” First, this means that the destination of the flowing Triune God is the New Jerusalem. Second, this means that our drinking the living water results in the New Jerusalem. Third, this means that by drinking the living water, we become the New Jerusalem, the totality of the eternal life. Even after we have become the New Jerusalem, the eternal companion of the God-man, we will eternally drink of Him as the eternal liquid of life (Rev. 7:17; 21:6).

In order to become the New Jerusalem, we need to daily enjoy the Triune God as the light of life, the tree of life, and the river of life. A place which is full of light, trees, and water is a place of beautiful scenery. A place devoid of these life sources is a place of desolation. The more we enjoy the Triune God as the God of life, the more we will become beautiful scenery to others. Eventually, we will be the most beautiful scenery to the whole universe when we are consummated to become the city of life, the New Jerusalem.

The Triune God as the Living of the Holy City

The Triune God—the Father as the source of life, the Son as the tree of life, and the Spirit as the flow of life—is the triune living of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1-2). In our daily life, we need to live out the Triune God. To live out the Triune God is to live out the New Jerusalem, since the holy city is constructed with the Triune God. We should take the Father as the unique source of all our life and work. The Lord Jesus set up a wonderful pattern to His disciples in His miraculous feeding of the five thousand, showing that He took the Father as the source of blessing for His life and work. He took the five loaves and two fish and “looking up to heaven, He blessed [them]” (Matt. 14:19). As the sent One in His humanity, He acknowledged that He was not the source of blessing. Rather, by looking up to heaven, the Lord as the sent One indicated that the Father, the Sender, was the source of blessing.

In taking the Father as His source, the Lord Jesus was one with the Father (John 10:30). Also, He did not do anything from Himself. “Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (5:19). The Lord denied Himself in His humanity so that He might live by the Father’s life for the Father’s glory. We also need to daily exercise our

spirit to deny ourselves and live by another life, the Father’s life (Matt. 16:24). Furthermore, the Lord did not seek His own will, but the will of the One who sent Him (John 5:30). Whenever we go out to serve the Lord, to represent Him, we should not go to accomplish our purpose, our aim, our goal, our idea, or our intention. Rather, we should go purely to fulfill the Lord’s purpose, aim, goal, idea, and intention. This is what it means to take the Father as our unique source. Also, the Lord testified that He did not seek His own glory but the glory of the Father who sent Him (7:18). To be ambitious in the Lord’s work is to seek our own glory. God’s glory is the expression of God. Our glory is the expression of our self, which is vainglory (Gal. 5:26). We can see from the

The Triune God—the Father as the source of life, the Son as the tree of life, and the Spirit as the flow of life—is the triune living of the New Jerusalem. To live out the Triune God is to live out the New Jerusalem, since the holy city is constructed with the Triune God.

above that to take the Father as the source of our life and work is to follow the Lord’s pattern and allow Him to live Himself through us so that we may deny our self, reject our purpose, and give up our ambition. Then our Father God will be expressed, His purpose will be accom-

plished, and He will be glorified.

As we live out the Father as the source of life, we also need to live out the Son as the tree of life, as our life and life supply. For the Lord to be our life and our life supply, we need to take Him as everything for His magnification, as revealed in the book of Philippians. Philippians shows that we should take Christ as our living so that He may be our expression (1:19-21). We should also take His mind as our mind (2:5). We need to gain Him and be found in Him so that He may become our lived-out righteousness (3:8-9). He should be the unique goal of our pursuit (v. 14) and our expectation as we await His return (vv. 20-21). Furthermore, we need to enjoy and be filled with His divine attributes so that they can become our human virtues (4:8). Finally, Philippians shows that we need to enjoy Him as our secret of sufficiency in all of our circumstances and as our power to do all things for His glory (vv. 11-13). In order to live out Christ as the tree of life in the many aspects shown in Philippians, Paul enjoins us to rejoice in the Lord always (4:4).

To live out the Son as the tree of life, we must eat Him as our spiritual food day by day. “He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me” (John 6:57). In resurrection the Lord became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) so that we can enjoy Him as our life-giving food. The means to enjoy Him in this way is by His words, which are spirit and life (John 6:63). After the Lord spoke this word about eating Him, many of His disciples no longer walked with Him, and the Lord said to the twelve, “Do you also want

to go away?” (v. 67). “Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life” (v. 68). His words convey the element of His life into our being for our supply so that we may live Him out. To live Him out as the tree of life is to hold forth the word of life (Phil. 2:16). To hold forth the word of life is to apply Christ, present Christ, and offer Christ to others so that they might partake of Him as the tree of life to be their life and life supply.

As we live out the Father as the source of life and the Son as the tree of life, we also live out the Spirit as the flow of life with the bountiful supply of the unsearchably rich Triune God (Rev. 22:1; Phil. 1:19). The flow of the water of life in the New Jerusalem illustrates the fellowship of life, which is the flow of the eternal life within the believers. This fellowship has two aspects. The vertical aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with the Triune God. This is why John said, “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). The horizontal aspect of fellowship refers to our fellowship with one another. This why John wrote to the believers—“that you also may have fellowship with us” (v. 3). Our fellowship with the Triune God produces, strengthens, enriches, and uplifts our fellowship with one another, and our fellowship with one another produces, strengthens, enriches, and uplifts our fellowship with the Triune God. This vertical and horizontal fellowship “interweaves” us, blends us, together with the Triune God and with one another. It is by this fellowship that the believers are blent together into one Body (1 Cor. 12:24). To be blent is to be tempered and mutually adjusted. As we fellowship with the Triune God in our fellowship with one another, we are tempered and mutually adjusted so that we lose our natural distinctions and Christ becomes all and in all (Col. 3:11). The function of this fellowship is to supply us with all the riches of the divine life, which Paul calls “the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19). The river of water of life, the flow of the Spirit of life within us and among us, includes all the rich ingredients of the communicable aspects of the Triune God in His person and in His work for our enjoyment.

This flow is also the fellowship of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16), which is the circulation of the Spirit of life in the Body. Just as our physical body is dependent on the circulation of blood within it, the mystical Body of Christ is dependent on the circulation of the Spirit of life within it. The Spirit of life is the essence of the Body, the “blood” of the Body, and the circulation, the flow, of this Spirit is the fellowship of the Body. In all of our work for the Lord,

we should have the inner sense of the flow of life. In Ezekiel 47:1 this flow is pictured as proceeding out of the right side of God’s house. The right side signifies the pre-eminent position (cf. Acts 2:33). This means that we must give the flow of life the first place in our inner being. In all that we do, we should sense whether or not we have the flow of life and are in the flow of life. When we have the inner flow of life as we are serving the Lord, we will sense that we are inwardly watered, refreshed, strengthened, and uplifted. Witness Lee gave the following pertinent testimony regarding this in his relationship with Watchman Nee:

When I was young, Brother Nee came one day to have a talk with me. I was a young learner under his hand, and many times he gave me some basic lessons. He said, “Brother, do you know that we can never go to any place to start a work unless the current of the Holy Spirit is there already?” Oh, how I have remembered this

The work of the Lord in the flow of life issues in the expression of the Triune God, which is the expression of the New Jerusalem. The holy city has the glory of the Triune God, which is His radiant expression.

word! Unless the current of the Holy Spirit is already in a place, you and I can never go there to work. Brother Nee continued to say, “Oh, brother, if you realize where the current of the Holy Spirit is, simply go along with it! To work there for the Lord will be a rest to you; it will be a bed upon which you can lie. The work in the flowing of the Holy Spirit is not a burden, but a rest.” I cannot tell you how much these words have helped me. From that time I have learned the lesson that I must go along with the flowing of the stream of the Holy Spirit. I cannot go to any place to work for the Lord or to start a work for the Lord without the flowing of the current of the Holy Spirit. I am unable to do that, I am not qualified to do that, and I am not ordered by the Lord to do that. What I must do is just go along with the flowing. (*Divine Stream* 15)

Whenever we work with and for the Lord in this divine and living stream, we are laboring in His one move through His one ministry to build up His one Body for His one testimony.

The Triune God as the Expression of the Holy City

The work of the Lord in the flow of life issues in the expression of the Triune God, which is the expression of the New Jerusalem. The holy city has the glory of the Triune God, which is His radiant expression (Rev. 21:11). This expression is signified by the city’s jasper element. The first layer of the wall’s foundation and the entire wall of the city is built of jasper (v. 18-19). Also, the light of the city is

like a jasper stone (v. 11). Revelation 4:3 speaks of God, the One on the throne, being like a jasper stone. This means that the whole city bears the appearance of God for God's glory. The glory of the Triune God, which is the glory of the New Jerusalem, is the answer to the Lord's prayer in John 17: "And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one" (v. 22). When we are fully saturated, mingled, and built into the Triune God—the Father of glory (Eph. 1:17), the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8), and the Spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14)—to be the New Jerusalem, that will be our oneness in the divine glory for His corporate expression.

Whereas the first foundation of the city's wall is jasper, the eleven foundations below it are of various precious stones (21:19-20). These foundations are the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14), each of whom is signified by a precious stone. Each of them is unique in the sense that they are different kinds of precious stones, but these stones are also layer upon layer and lead to the first foundation stone of jasper, signifying the appearance of God. This means that in the apostles' work for the Lord, each bore a particular ministry, or function, in the Lord's one ministry to build up His Body. Peter had a fishing ministry to gain people for the increase of the church (cf. Matt. 4:18-19). John had a mending ministry to mend the rents in the church (vv. 21-22). Paul had a building ministry to build up the church (Eph. 4:11-12). Although each of them had a particular work and commission from the Lord, their work was "layer upon layer," which means that each was built upon the other, as seen with the twelve foundation stones. Also, their "layer-upon-layer" work led to one unique appearance, which is the appearance of the Triune God, as seen with the first foundation of jasper. Although we have different functions and portions in the Body of Christ, what we do should bear the same appearance, the same expression, which is the glory of the Triune God.

We have seen that the New Jerusalem is a glorious corporate person. This holy city is the wife of the Lamb, the counterpart of Christ, the eternal companion of the God-man. Lenski says that the holy city is the eternal union of God and the Lamb with all the saints (643). Furthermore, the New Jerusalem is the aggregate of the divine sonship, the aggregate of all of God's regenerated, transformed, and glorified sons. Also, the holy city is the incorporation of the Triune God with His chosen and redeemed people. He is the temple in which they dwell, and they are the tabernacle in which He dwells. God and His people mutually indwell each other to be a mutual abode, the eternal coinherence of the Triune God with the tripartite man. The holy city is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. The New Jerusalem, as the greatest sign of the Scriptures, reveals that the Triune God is the existence, entrance, constitution, enjoyment, living, and

expression of His redeemed people. "The New Jerusalem is the Triune God, the Divine Trinity, as three basic factors, wrought into and structured together with His redeemed as the conclusion of the whole Bible" (Lee, *Application* 41). This wonderful conclusion is the great goal of the Triune God according to His eternal economy. "An overcomer's goal should be uniquely and ultimately the goal of God's eternal economy, that is, the New Jerusalem" (Lee, *How to Be a Co-worker* 40). May we be governed with a heavenly vision of this divine goal, making God's goal the goal of our entire life and work. **AFC**

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