

THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE TRUTH OF TRANSFORMATION

by Ed Marks

Regeneration takes place in an instant, when we receive Christ as our Savior and life, and glorification occurs in the twinkling of an eye at the Lord's return; transformation, however, is a long process through which we must pass in our earthly journey.

Two major verses in the New Testament speak of the divine truth and spiritual experience of the believers' being transformed into the image of the resurrected Christ for God's intention:

But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)

And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect. (Rom. 12:2)

The Definition of Transformation

Being transformed in 2 Corinthians 3:18 indicates that we are in the process of transformation. Transformation is not an outward correction or an adjustment of behavior but the metabolic function of the life of God within the believers. It is "the inward, metabolic process in which God works to spread His divine life and nature throughout every part of our being, particularly our soul, bringing Christ and His riches into our being as our new element and causing our old, natural element to be gradually discharged" (Recovery Version, Rom. 12:2, note 3). Regeneration, transformation, and glorification are the three major stages of God's salvation in life (Rom. 5:10). Regeneration takes place in our spirit (John 3:6), transformation in our soul (Rom. 12:2), and glorification in our body (Phil. 3:21). Regeneration takes place in an instant, when we receive Christ as our Savior and life (cf. Luke 23:42-43), and glorification occurs in the twinkling of an eye at the Lord's return (1 Cor. 15:52); transformation, however, is a long process through which we must pass in our earthly journey and on our Christian racecourse (9:24-27).

We can illustrate the truth of transformation in the physical realm by considering a person who is undernourished and appears pale, weak, and sickly. If you want him to have a radiant and healthy expression, you can apply some makeup to his face, but this is something outward, pretentious, and unreal. Instead, he needs to eat, digest, and assimilate good, healthy, and nutritious food. This digestion and assimilation of food is part of a metabolic process through which the person receives a new element and discharges the old element. When this food is digested and assimilated into his being, the inward, metabolic function of life will make him healthy, strong, energetic, and radiant. The beauty of a person through the application of makeup is not genuine. Only that which is expressed outwardly through the inward metabolism is genuine health and real beauty. This is an illustration of transformation in the physical realm, which is similar in the spiritual realm. How can we be spiritually healthy and have the Lord as our beauty? Attempting to change ourselves through self-improvement by outward correction and adjustment is similar to the application of makeup. What we need is to take Christ in as our spiritual food, our spiritual life

supply. Then the element of the divine life will increase in us and issue in an inward, spiritual, metabolic change, which is genuine transformation. Thus, the new element of Christ as life is added to our being, and the old element of our natural being is discharged.

God's Intention in Transformation

This divine and mystical transformation is the move of God in man to deify man so that man may become the masterpiece of God (the Body of Christ and the New Jerusalem) for God's expression (Eph. 2:10). Transformation is deification. When we speak of deification, we do not mean that we become God in the Godhead to be an object of worship. This is a great heresy. The early church fathers, such as Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Thomas Aquinas, spoke of deification in the proper sense (*Catechism* 128-129). To be deified is to participate in God's divinity so that we can be constituted with God in His divine life and nature but not in His Godhead. It is by participating in God's divinity in many aspects that we are transformed into the very image of Christ to be His expression. The holy Scriptures reveal that we can participate in God's life (John 3:15; Col. 3:4), in God's nature (Eph. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:4), in God's mind (Eph. 4:23; Phil. 2:5), in God's image (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29), in God's glory (v. 30; Heb. 2:10), and in God's sonship (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:23). Eventually, through the process of transformation we will be fully manifested as the sons of God (v. 19) and bear God's likeness (1 John 3:2).

In order to see the great truth concerning the believers being transformed into the image of Christ, we must come to the very beginning of the holy Scriptures. Genesis 1 and 2 reveal God's purpose and reveal transformation as the procedure God takes to accomplish His purpose. Genesis 1 tells us that God created man in a very particular way, a way totally different from His creation of other life forms. All forms of life were created according to their kind, their particular species (vv. 21, 24). But man was created, not according to his kind but in God's image and according to God's likeness. In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." Man was created, not according to his kind but according to "God's kind" for him to be God's species. Man was created by God with the purpose of containing God and expressing God to display God's characteristics and attributes. Just as a glove is created in the image of a hand in order to contain and express the hand, man was created in the image of God in order to contain and express God. First John 3:2 says that ultimately when Christ is manifested, "we will be like Him." Today through the process of transformation, we are being prepared to be the bride, the wife of Christ, which is the New Jerusalem as the full expression of God in God's full image (Rev. 21:9-11; cf. 4:3).

Genesis 2 shows us that God created man as a vessel to contain God as life (Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:7). Genesis 2:7 says that God "formed man with the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." This verse together with 1 Thessalonians 5:23 shows that man is of three parts—spirit, soul, and body. Man's physical body is composed of the dust of the ground. The breath of life refers to the spirit of man. The Hebrew word for *breath* in Genesis 2:7 is the same word for *spirit* in Proverbs 20:27, which says that the spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah. The issue of God's breathing the breath of life into the formed dust of the ground was that man became a living soul. Man's body possesses world-consciousness so that he may contact the material and physical world. Man's soul (composed of the mind, emotion, and will) possesses self-consciousness for him to have his personality and participate in the psychological realm. Man's spirit possesses God-consciousness for him to contact God, who is Spirit (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9).

The figures on the next page will help us to see God's purpose for this man of three parts. Figure 1 represents the Triune God, who is the uncreated life. Figure 2 represents the sinless Adam with the created life. The Greek language has three words for life: *bios*, *psuche*, and *zoe*. *Bios* refers to the physical life, *psuche* refers to the soulish life, and *zoe* refers to the

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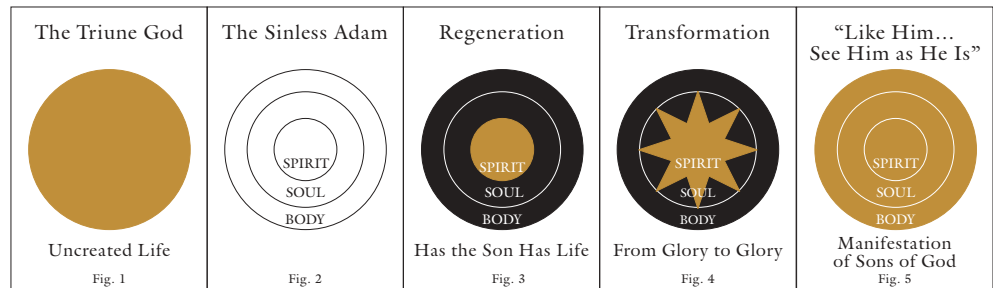


divine life. The sinless Adam possessed *bios* in his physical body and *psyche* in his soul. This is the created life. But what Adam lacked and what God desired to give him was *zoe*, the uncreated life. This is why God placed Adam before the tree of life (Gen. 2:9), which signifies God Himself as the uncreated life. This is why the Lord Jesus said, “I am...the life [*zoe*]” (John 14:6), and “I have come that they may have life [*zoe*] and may have it abundantly” (10:10). This is also why Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving (*zoe*-giving) Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45). The Triune God, the uncreated life, desires to dispense Himself into man in three stages. First, He wants to dispense Himself into man’s spirit for his regeneration, then into man’s soul for his transformation, and ultimately into man’s body for his glorification to make man the same as He is in His life.

Transformation is the bridge between regeneration and glorification. Our soul needs to be transformed. The three parts of the soul are the mind, the knowing part (Psa. 13:2; 139:14), the emotion, the loving part (1 Sam. 18:1; S. S. 1:7), and the will, the deciding part (Job 7:15; 6:7). The mind is for us to think, to know, and to consider; the emotion is for us to love, to hate, to be happy, and to be sorrowful; and the will is for us to decide and to choose. The soul is the person of man, for a human being is a soul (Gen. 2:7). The Triune God, who is the divine and uncreated life, wants to transform our soul with Himself. The following figures show us the three major stages of the Lord’s salvation of our entire tripartite being:

Figure 3 shows that when man is regenerated, born again, his spirit becomes life (*zoe*). Romans 8:10 says that because Christ is in us, our spirit is life. Figure 4 shows that when man is transformed, his soul is permeated with Christ as life. Romans 8:6 tells us when we set our mind (the leading part of the soul) on the spirit, our mind becomes life (*zoe*). Figure 5 shows that ultimately when man is glorified, his body is saturated with Christ as life. Romans 8:11 says that the resurrecting God gives life (*zoe*) to our mortal bodies. When our spirit, soul, and body are completely saturated with Christ as life, God’s eternal purpose is fulfilled. At that time we will be “swallowed up by life” (2 Cor. 5:4). This will be the manifestation, or revelation, of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19), when we will be exactly like Christ in our spirit, soul, and body. A hymn stanza expresses this great truth: “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).

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Adapted from *God’s Plan of Redemption* by Mary C. McDonough

It is of note that that the sinless Adam was still an empty and untransformed Adam, an Adam devoid of God as the uncreated life. Even Adam in his sinless state still needed to be regenerated by partaking of God as the tree of life. Of course, Adam did not choose the tree of life but instead chose the tree of knowledge; thus, death permeated his entire being. Man’s body was thus corrupted to become the flesh, which Paul spoke of as “the body of sin” and “the body of this death” (6:6; 7:24). Man’s soul became the self, the ugly and sinful ego, so that man is devoted solely to his own ambitious interests and advancement. Man’s spirit became deadened, losing the capacity to contact God. This is why Ephesians 2:1 says that before we received Christ, we were dead in offenses and sins. Thank the Lord that through Christ’s redemption, our sins have been forgiven (Luke 24:47), and we have been justified by God (Rom. 3:24-25), reconciled to God

(5:10), and sanctified, set apart, unto God (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 13:12). Christ's marvelous redemption brings us back to God's original intention to fill us with Himself as life.

His judicial redemption was through the shedding of His precious blood, and His organic salvation is through the dispensing of Himself as life into us so that all the death in our tripartite being may be swallowed up by life for the glorious expression of the Triune God. The Father is the source of life (John 5:26), the Son is the embodiment of life (1:4), the Spirit is the Giver of life (6:63), and we are the receivers of life (1:12-13). Our continual receiving of life transforms us and builds up the Body as the fullness of life to consummate in the New Jerusalem as the city of life with the tree of life, the river of life, and the glory of life (Rev. 22:1-2; 21:11). It is through our transformation in life that the wonderful purpose of God is realized.

God's purpose is to have a man in His image for His expression. Thus, He placed this man before the tree of life with the intention of man receiving Him as life. After God put the man whom He had formed before the tree of life, Genesis 2 says that a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and the issue of this river was a land with gold, bdellium, and onyx stone (vv. 10-12). Gold, bdellium (a pearl-like substance), and onyx stone are transformed materials. This shows that we need to partake of Christ as the tree of life and the river of life so that we can be transformed into precious material for God's building, His church. Genesis 2 goes on to depict this building. God took a rib from Adam's side, and with that rib God built a woman for Adam (v. 22). Adam is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14), and Eve is a picture of the church. Today Christ is also building a woman. This woman is His church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25), which ultimately becomes the New Jerusalem, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:9). We are built up to be His wife by being transformed into precious material to be the constituents of the New Jerusalem (vv. 18-21).

The Way to Be Transformed

Genesis 2 presents a wonderful picture of how we can be transformed into precious material for God's building. We need to partake of Christ as the tree of life, drink of Him as the river of life, and give Him the way to increase Himself as the flow of life within us. Then this life will grow and flow in us to transform us into living and precious stones for the building up of God's spiritual house, the church of the living God (1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15), consummating in the New Jerusalem as the living tabernacle and holy temple of God (Rev. 21:3, 22).

Being Transformed by Eating Christ as the Tree of Life

At the beginning of this article, we pointed out how taking Christ in as our spiritual food issues in transformation, which is the metabolic function of the life of God within the believers, issuing in the visible manifestation and expression of Christ. This expression is referred to in Galatians 5:22-23 as the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. Any virtues achieved by self-improvement and willpower are artificial fruit and do not last. We are speaking of God's divine attributes being expressed in and even becoming our human virtues. These divine-human virtues are the spontaneous issue of our enjoying Christ as our spiritual food, our spiritual life supply. God's desire was that man would eat Him as the tree of life so that He could become man's inward constitution to make man His glorious expression.

Dietitians tell us that we are what we eat. This is why the Lord said in John 6:57, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me." When the Lord spoke this, many of His disciples could not take it (vv. 60-61). "From that time many of His disciples went back to what they left behind and no longer walked with Him" (v. 66). The speaking

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concerning eating the Lord was a hard saying to them. The Lord's speaking in John 6, however, shows that eating Him is not something in the physical realm. He was not speaking to His disciples about eating His physical flesh. In verse 63 He said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." In resurrection the Lord as the incarnated God, the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). As the life-giving Spirit He is embodied in His words. Thus, to eat the Lord is to receive Him as the life-giving Spirit into our inner being by receiving His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we get the Spirit, who is life. To receive the Lord's words in this way is to eat His words (Jer. 15:16) and to eat Him as our spiritual food.

The way to exercise our spirit to receive the Lord's words is to pray. By praying with and over the Lord's words in the Scriptures, we can eat, digest, and assimilate the Lord Jesus in the spiritual way of life. This kind of daily exercise will transform our soul. Our mind will be infused with the thoughts and concepts of God to become the mind of Christ. Our emotion will be transformed so that we will love what the Lord loves and hate what He hates. We will be transformed in our will so that our choice will be His choice and our decisions will be His decisions. Day by day we need to receive the word of God by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18). By this daily practice we are "transformed by the renewing of the mind" (Rom. 12:2). The following passage from *The Organic Aspect of God's Salvation* speaks of how our mind can be renewed for our transformation:

How can our mind be renewed that our whole being may be renewed? The way of renewing lies in prayer and in reading the Scriptures, because for us to be renewed in our mind is for us to get rid of all our old concepts concerning the things of the human life and be made new again by the teaching of the holy Scriptures and the enlightening of the Holy Spirit. When you read the Bible and become familiar with it, the Holy Spirit will enlighten you and guide you. When the Holy Spirit comes to enlighten you while you thus pray and read the Word day by day, the mind in you is being changed from the old to the new. Your view is different and your being is renewed. (45)

The more we read the Bible accompanied with prayer, the more the thoughts of God, the concepts of God, the realizations of God, and the insights of God are infused into our mind. Thus, our mind is renewed and we are transformed. Paul said that we should not be like the unregenerated and untransformed Gentiles who walk in the vanity of their mind (Eph. 4:17). Whatever we do under the direction and control of our fallen mind is vanity. Romans 8:6 says, "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace." The best way to set our mind on the spirit is to set our mind on God's words, which are spirit and life. As we read and pray over the Word of God day by day, our mind will be saturated with the divine life and the divine peace, and we will live, move, and have our being according to the spirit (v. 4).

*Being Transformed by Drinking Christ as the River of Life
and Enjoying Him as the Inner Flow of Life*

The picture presented in Genesis 2 also shows that we need to drink of Christ and allow Him the full way to flow within us as the river of water of life so that we can become the precious and transformed material for God's building. First Corinthians 10:3-4 says that Christ is not only our spiritual food but also our spiritual drink and our spiritual rock. The rock that was smitten and cleft to flow out water for the thirsty Israelites (Exo. 17:6) typifies Christ who was smitten and cleft by God to flow out the water of life (John 19:34) for His thirsty believers. After the rock had been smitten, God charged Moses to speak to the rock so that it would yield its water (Num. 20:8). This shows that we can drink of Christ as our spiritual rock by speaking to Him in an intimate and even conversational way. As we talk to the Lord and open our entire being to Him, He dispenses Himself into us as the living water for our transformation in life.

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In Philippians 4:6-7 Paul charges us to speak to the Lord about everything: “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Anxiety kills the process of transformation within us. Instead of being anxious, we need to let our requests be made known to God. The phrase *to God* means that we are moving toward God and are in a living communion with God. We need to speak to the Lord constantly “in everything.” As we move toward God by speaking to Him, He moves into us as the peace of God. As we converse with the Lord, His presence fills our soul to become the answer to all of our troubles. His presence in our mind, emotion, and will is a river of peace as the antidote to our anxiety and the counterpoise to our troubles (John 16:33).

In addition to drinking the Lord as the river of life, we also need to allow the Lord as the inner flow of life to increase within us. Colossians 2:19 says that we are to grow with the growth of God. This means that we grow and are transformed with the increase of God as life within us. Ezekiel 47:1-12 provides a wonderful picture of how the Lord can increase as the flow of life within us for our transformation in life. This portion of the Word presents a vision of the ever-increasing flow of living water out of the house of God. Verse 1 says, “He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the right side of the house, on the south of the altar” (lit.). Verse 3 speaks of “the man...with the line in His hand.” This man is Christ, who is referred to in Ezekiel 40:3 as a man of bronze. His being a bronze man indicates that He is the judging One. Bronze in typology signifies the divine judgment (Exo. 27:1-6). The flowing of the living water toward the east, toward the rising of the sun, means that it is toward the glory (Num. 2:3; Ezek. 43:2). The flowing of the living water within us is for the glory, the expression, of the Triune God. Also, the waters come from the right side of the house. The right side is the pre-eminent position (Christ is seated at the right hand of God). This signifies that the indwelling Christ as the flow of life must have the preeminence within us. Is Christ as the divine life flowing within us at this very moment? This is what really matters in our Christian life. We need to sense this inner flow in whatever we do and wherever we go. This inner flow is the practical presence of God in us. When we have the flow, we have an inner sense of rest, joy, peace, brightness, watering, and encouragement.

Ezekiel 47:3 says, “When the man went out to the east with the line in His hand, He measured a thousand cubits; and He led me through the water, water that was to the ankles.” Measuring means to judge or to test, to determine whether something is according to a certain standard. To measure also means to possess. In Revelation 21:15 the holy city being measured by God means that He is going to possess it. To measure also means to examine. When someone is about to possess an article, he measures it, and his measuring includes examining. Thus, to measure is to judge, to test, to possess, and to examine. Ezekiel 47 records that each time after the measuring of the man of bronze, the flow of life increases. Verse 2 says that the water is running out on the right side. *Running out* can also be translated as “trickled forth” (ASV—note). After the first measuring the trickle becomes a flow to the ankles. After the second measuring the water is to the knees; after another measuring the water is to the loins; eventually after the final measuring the water becomes a river to swim in (vv. 3-5).

This picture shows that all of us need to be measured by Christ as the man of bronze. The depth of the flow of life within us depends on our being measured by Him. The life of God may be flowing within us, but how deep is this flow? How much have we allowed God as the flow of life to increase within us for our transformation? It is a tragedy in our Christian life if, after our regeneration, we remain the same without any transformation, without any metabolic change of our mind, emotion, and will. We must go to the Lord in prayer, open up our entire being to Him, and allow Him to measure us—to

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judge us, to test us, and to examine us in order to possess us. He wants to measure everything concerning us, even the small things. He wants to measure our attitude, our conduct, our dress, and the way we spend our time and our money. His measuring takes place in the light of His presence. We should pray as the psalmist did: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; / Try me, and know my anxious thoughts; / And see if there is some harmful way in me, / And lead me on the eternal way” (Psa. 139:23-24).

When we open to the Lord with this kind of prayer, He will shine in us. This is what happened to the prophet Isaiah when he saw a vision of Christ in glory. Isaiah exclaimed, “Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts” (6:5). In the light of the Lord’s glorious presence, Isaiah’s lips were measured by the Lord. He saw how unclean his speaking was. But the Lord’s measuring and examining resulted in His possessing of Isaiah to transform him and make him the Lord’s sent one. From that time on, Isaiah’s lips were consecrated to God and placed at God’s disposal. We need to allow the Lord to measure us repeatedly in a detailed way until He becomes a deep river in our inward being, even a river to swim in, for our complete transformation into His image for His intention.

Being Transformed by Turning Our Hearts to the Lord to Behold His Face

Second Corinthians 3:18 says that with an unveiled face, we are beholding the glory of the Lord to be transformed into His image. Let us consider this verse in its context to see how this transforming work takes place in us. Second Corinthians 3:15 says, “A veil lies on their heart,” and verse 16 says, “Whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” Then verse 18 says, “We all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.” We must be impressed that it is not a small thing for us to keep turning our heart to the Lord throughout the day, because whenever our heart turns to Him, the veil is taken away from our heart, and we can behold the Lord’s glory with an unveiled face.

These verses show that in the divine realm and according to the divine perspective, our real face is our heart. A veil lies on our heart until it turns to the Lord; then the veil is taken away from our heart, and we have an unveiled face, an unveiled heart, to behold the Lord. God does not look on man’s outward appearance or beauty; God looks on the heart, which is man’s real appearance (1 Sam. 16:7). Our heart, our face, needs to be turned to the Lord in prayer. There is another face implied in 2 Corinthians 3:18, and this is the face of Christ. According to 2 Corinthians 4:6, the glory of God is in the face of Christ. This is the glory we behold when we turn our heart, our face, to the Lord. When we turn our heart to the Lord, we are beholding Him face to face.

His face, His person, is the indwelling treasure in our spirit. Second Corinthians 4:6 says that God is “the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Then verse 7 says, “But we have *this* treasure in earthen vessels” (emphasis added). *This* treasure, according to verse 6, is not a doctrinal Christ but the face of Christ. It is the presence of Christ, the actual person of Christ, the face of Christ, which is our priceless treasure (Lee, *Stream* 1325). We are earthen vessels who are worthless and fragile, but within our spirit we contain a priceless treasure, the face, the person, of Christ Himself (2 Tim. 4:22). In Greek the word for *face* is the same word for *person* used in 2 Corinthians 2:10. This word signifies “the part around the eyes; the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person” (Recovery Version, 2 Cor. 2:10, note 3).

To turn our hearts to the Lord is to turn to Him as the indwelling One, that is, to turn to His face in our spirit. Then we are beholding His face, our treasure, with our face,

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of Christ, the
actual person of
Christ, the face
of Christ, which
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the person, of
Christ Himself.



our heart. Our heart is like a mirror beholding and reflecting the glory of God in the face of Christ. As we gaze on Christ, we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another until we become exactly like Him in life, nature, and appearance to express Him in glory. When Jacob wrestled with God and saw God's face, that was the beginning of his journey through the process of transformation unto his maturity (Gen. 32:24-30). At that time his name was changed from Jacob, a supplanter, to Israel, a prince of God. Jacob named the place where his name was changed Peniel, which means "the face of God." Today's Peniel is our human spirit, the dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:22; 2 Tim. 4:22). When we turn our hearts to the Lord to behold His face in our spirit, His presence becomes our serving supply. In the Holy Place of the tabernacle, the priests ate "the bread of the Presence" for their supply (Exo. 25:30). "The bread of the Presence" is literally translated "face bread." This shows that the treasure of the Lord's presence, His face, is our serving supply and our spiritual food for our transformation.

As we are beholding Him face to face, we are in the process of being transformed into His glorious image until one day "we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is" (1 John 3:2). Revelation 22:4 says that one of our rewards for eternity is that we will see His face. That will be the time when we will see Him as He is to reflect Him as He is for His full expression in the universe. This will be the consummation of the wonderful metabolic process of our deification, or "Christification." Such a wonderful process to accomplish God's eternal economy altogether hinges on our turning our heart to the Lord. This must become our daily experience. Witness Lee speaks of our experience of beholding the Lord's face as our treasure in this way:

This can never be just a kind of saying. We all can say that we are the earthen vessel, and Jesus is the treasure within. But we can say this without any sense of the reality within us. It is only when we are living in His presence, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is such a treasure to us. In the whole universe, there is nothing so precious as to behold the face of Jesus. This is something of personal experience and enjoyment. The more we live in His presence, the more sense we will have of the preciousness of Jesus. This is just the enjoyment of His indwelling. This very Jesus indwells us. This is a living reality, not merely a saying.

If we would all learn to forsake our old person, taking Him as our person by looking at the index of His face while enjoying His presence, we would have a sweet sense of the preciousness of the indwelling Jesus. This would make us so shining, a shining which is the reflecting of His glory. I can assure you that if you ever have this kind of experience, others will see how shining you are. It is not that you are merely happy, but you are shining. Something from within shines out, and that is the reflection of Jesus. This was Paul's experience of the indwelling Christ. (*Stream* 1325-1326)

We need to be impressed with the following sentence from the above portion: "In the whole universe, there is nothing so precious as to behold the face of Jesus." We need to respond to the Lord's desire for us to seek His face as the psalmist did in Psalm 27:8: "When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek." We need to continually look away to Jesus, the indwelling Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2), by turning our hearts to Him to behold Him. Then as the divine life, He dispenses Himself into every part of our being to gradually become our new element and to discharge our old, natural element. This results in an outward manifestation of the inward, metabolic function of life within us. This outward manifestation is the image of Christ into which we are being transformed. Only that which is the manifestation of the life within us is real beauty. When we are in the process of being transformed day by day, Christ is becoming our real glory and our real beauty, our real clothing for His radiant and glorious expression, just as the clothing of the Old Testament priest was for his glory and beauty (Exo. 28:2). How wonderful it is that we can turn our hearts to the Lord moment by moment for our moment by moment transformation!

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Being Transformed through the Breaking and Constituting Work of the Holy Spirit

In addition to speaking of our being transformed from glory to glory by the Lord Spirit, 2 Corinthians also shows that we are transformed through sufferings and consuming pressure in our environment. In 11:23-28 Paul listed his many afflictions as a proof of his apostleship. He said in 4:8, “We are pressed on every side.” Precious stones are transformed items produced through heat and pressure. Diamond, for example (cf. Exo. 28:18), is formed out of carbon by intense heat and extreme pressure. Petrified wood is also a good illustration of how transformation takes place. It is actually wood that has been transformed into stone. Geologists say that millions of years ago, volcanic lava swept trees down from certain hillsides. In the process, these trees were stripped of their leaves, branches, and bark, and the trunks of these trees were buried in volcanic ash and mud. Water then seeped through the ash and mud, bringing with it the minerals and elements of the volcanic material, to delicately permeate the wood spaces until these wood trunks were completely replaced by stone. Specimens of this “wood” can be seen in Arizona. Petrified wood looks like the wood it once was, but it has been completely replaced by stone.

The process of the wood being petrified into stone is similar to the process of our being transformed into precious stones. The Lord at times sovereignly places us in an environment of heat and pressure. The Spirit uses this environment to strip us of our self-glory, self-beauty, self-exaltation, natural strength, and natural ability. The Spirit uses all the details of our environment to break us and tear down every aspect of our natural, untransformed being. In that environment of heat and pressure, we need to enjoy the Lord as the water of life. This water brings with it the divine and mystical minerals and elements of the all-inclusive Christ to permeate our mind, will, and emotion until they are completely replaced by Christ. This “Christifies” us, transforming us into precious stones for God’s building.

Watchman Nee refers to this transforming process as the discipline of the Holy Spirit. The discipline of the Holy Spirit is the breaking and constituting work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit arranges our outward environment to destroy our natural disposition and habits. At the same time, the Lord as the Spirit is constituting us with Himself as the treasure to transform our inner being.

From the day we were saved, the Lord has been doing two things in us. On the one hand, He is tearing down our old habits, character, and disposition. This is the only way for Christ to express His life freely through us. If the Lord does not perform this work, His life will be frustrated by our natural life. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit is creating a new nature and a new character in us little by little, with its new living and new habits. The Lord is not only tearing down the old but also constituting us with the new. There is not only a negative tearing-down work, but also a positive constituting work in us. These are two aspects of the Lord’s work in us after we are saved. (*Messages* 711)

This tearing down and constituting is the Lord’s work to transform us into His image. Jeremiah 48:11 is another good picture of this work: “Moab has been at ease from his youth; / And he is settled on his lees / And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; / Nor has he gone into exile. / Therefore his taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed.” The Moabites were Lot’s descendants from his incestuous union with his daughter (Gen. 19:36-37), indicating something of the flesh, the corrupted body of sin (Rom. 6:6). Moab was at ease from his youth. The flesh likes to be in an environment where it can be at ease. If a believer is always at ease, he will not be transformed. To be at ease is to be as Moab was: “settled on his lees.” In ancient times when wine was made, the dregs, or the sediment, of the wine (the lees) remained at the bottom of the vessel. This means that the liquid was a mixture. In order for the wine to be pure, it had to be poured from vessel to vessel very carefully and repeatedly until all of the lees were gone. The lees signify the dregs, or sediment, of our flesh and our natural life. To be poured from vessel

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to vessel is to be purified by God by passing through various kinds of trying environments. Because Moab never suffered, was never poured from vessel to vessel, his taste remained in him and his scent was not changed. This means that he was not transformed. The Lord wants to take away our natural taste and our natural scent. He wants us to have the taste of Christ and become a fragrance of Christ for the expression of Christ (2 Cor. 2:15). Thus, He orders our environment to make us desperate to know Him, to gain Him, and to pursue Him. As we contact Him and allow Him to flow within us in the midst of our God-arranged environment, we are metabolically purified of our natural taste and scent and metabolically changed to have His taste and scent.

Romans 8:28 says, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” This verse is greatly misunderstood by many believers. They interpret this to mean that no matter what befalls us, if we love God, everything will turn out good in the end, thinking that everything will turn out to be good for us materially, physically, and environmentally. This interpretation is wrong because it misses God’s purpose for us. *All things* in this verse refers to all persons, matters, environments, and occurrences. All these things are ordered by the Father in our environment “for good.” What is the “good” here? Verse 29 tells us that the “good” is for us to be transformed and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God. Those of us who love God are called according to His purpose, and His purpose is that we would be filled with Christ and fully transformed to express Christ. If we love the Lord supremely, everything in our environment will work together to make us desperate to contact Him, enjoy Him, and experience Him so that we may become the transformed members of His Body. Paul’s experience as described in 2 Corinthians matches this. In 1:8-9 he said,

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living. Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

Paul and his co-workers were pressed to such an extent that they despaired even of living, so they learned not to trust in themselves. They were pressed beyond their power to bear. They were pressed to give up their trust in themselves and to trust in the God of resurrection. Being put in an environment that is impossible for us to deal with forces us to depend on the Lord and to gain Him for our transformation.

Paul also said that he was perplexed, unable to find a way out, but not utterly without a way out (4:8). According to the seen circumstances and his natural life, there was no way out for Paul. But according to the unseen Christ within him, the treasure in his earthen vessel, there was a way out. This way out was for him to enjoy Christ as the transforming Spirit (3:17-18). When Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they did not bemoan their situation. Instead, they prayed and sang hymns of praise to God, keeping themselves in the enjoyment of Christ for their transformation (Acts 16:25). In 2 Corinthians 4:16 Paul said, “Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” The word *decaying* means being consumed, being wasted away, being worn out. All the things in our environment are causing our outer man to waste away. At the same time, we need to be enjoying the fresh supply of the resurrection life by eating the Lord as our spiritual food, drinking Him as our spiritual drink, and turning our hearts to Him to behold and reflect His beauty. The bountiful supply of the riches of Christ added to our being will cause our inner man to be renewed for our transformation.

The Lord also uses our failures to transform us. The apostle Peter is a good example of this. He had a natural disposition full of boldness, full of natural strength, and was full of self-confidence in his love for the Lord. When the Lord first met him, He changed his name from Simon to Peter, meaning *a stone* (John 1:42). This meant that the Lord would

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transform him from being a natural Simon into a transformed and living stone for God's spiritual house. Later, Peter would write about this in his first Epistle (2:4-5). The Gospels tell us that Peter was transformed into such a stone through the process of his failures.

Before the Lord's crucifixion, Peter declared that even if all the other disciples would be stumbled, he would never be stumbled (Matt. 26:33). He also said that he would lay down his life for the Lord (John 13:37) and that he was ready to go with the Lord both to prison and to death (Luke 22:33). Jesus then said to him, "Truly I say to you that in this night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matt. 26:34). But Peter responded, "Even if I must die with You, I will by no means deny You" (v. 35). The Lord then allowed Peter to fail utterly by denying the Lord three times (John 18:17, 25, 27) so that his natural strength, his self-confidence, and his sense of superiority could be dealt with and broken. This failure surely shattered and broke Peter. How could he boast of his love and absoluteness for the Lord now? How could he be confident in anything of himself? Surely he must have been disappointed and discouraged.

After the Lord resurrected, He appeared to Peter and the disciples on the seashore. At that time He restored Peter's love for Him, charged Peter with the shepherding of His church, and prepared Peter for his martyrdom so that he would not follow the Lord with any confidence in his natural strength (21:15-19). We can see the result of the Lord's breaking and constituting work in Peter on the day of Pentecost, when he boldly took the lead among the other eleven apostles to preach the first gospel message for the establishing of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14-41). Through his failure, Peter was broken in his natural life and constituted with the divine life to be transformed for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Through the Lord's breaking and constituting work, Peter became a person who could shepherd God's flock with God's compassion for cherishing people and with God's desire for nourishing people with Christ as the life supply (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Through the Lord's breaking and constituting work, Peter became a person who could shepherd God's flock with God's compassion for cherishing people and with God's desire for nourishing people with Christ as the life supply.

We also are transformed by the Lord through our failures. We surely should not try to fail, but in the Lord's sovereign arrangements, many times we will fail. At that time when we come to the Lord to confess our sins in the light of His presence, we will see how natural, fleshly, and evil we are. We will realize how short we are of Christ filling our inner being. The Lord uses this to break our self-confidence and our pride in the strong traits of our natural disposition. This will make us desperate to really know Him, gain Him, and be filled with Him for our transformation into His image. In *The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit*, Watchman Nee describes this transforming work. He speaks of the breaking work of the Spirit through the arrangement of our environment, the inadequacy and failure of our natural man, and the light of the Lord's presence shining within us for our transformation:

Once we have seen our true condition under God's light and once we have seen what our pride is, the impression will never leave us. Something will remain in us that will give us pain, that will give us the feeling that we are useless, and we will no longer be able to be proud... Now we know what kind of persons we are! Now we know the kind of boasts we made! We thought we were better than others... We cannot find more filthy terms before the Lord to describe ourselves; we can only say that we are filthy and evil. We admit that our eyes have been blind for years, that they have seen nothing. The more we see our filth, the more ashamed we become. It seems as if the shame of the whole world is upon us. We prostrate ourselves before the Lord and repent, saying, "I repent of myself. I hate myself. I admit that I am an incurable man." This shining, repentance, shame, loathing, and prostration will shake off what we have been unable to shake off all these years... The shining is the saving, and the seeing is the deliverance... Only this kind of shining will remove our pride, and only this light will stop our fleshly activities and break our outer shell. (97-99)

He orders everything around us, the only purpose of which is to break our conspicuous, obtuse, and hard spots. May the Lord be gracious to us and show us the meaning of His

work in us. May He grant us much light to expose us and to humble us. If the Lord breaks our outer man, we will no longer present others with our strong self when we touch them. Instead, our spirit will flow out whenever we touch men. (100-101)

*Being Transformed by Exercising Our Spirit
to Deny the Self and Live by Another Life, Another Person*

We have pointed out that we are regenerated in our spirit, transformed in our soul, and glorified in our body. Once the life of God comes into our spirit for our regeneration, we must learn to exercise our spirit continually to contact God and deny our fallen soul, which is the self. In order to contact the things of the physical world, we must use our body. In order to contact the things of the psychological world, we must use our soul—our mind, emotion, and will. In order to contact the things of the spiritual world, we must use our spirit. John 4:24 says that God is Spirit, and we must worship Him in our spirit. The word *in* may also be translated “with.” We must worship God not only in our spirit but with our spirit. This means that we must exercise our spirit.

This is spoken of by Paul in 1 Timothy 4:7-8: “But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness. For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.” Paul here speaks of two kinds of exercise—bodily exercise and the exercise that is unto godliness. The English word *gymnastics* is derived from this Greek word for exercise. Godliness is Christ lived out of us for “God-likeness,” the expression of God through us. Christ as the Spirit lives in our spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:22). Therefore, to exercise ourselves unto godliness is to exercise our spirit to live Christ in our daily life.

The best way to exercise our spirit is to pray. We need to have set times of prayer as Daniel did: “Three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God” (6:10). We also need to pray unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). This can be compared to our breathing unceasingly to maintain our physical existence. To maintain our spiritual life, we also need unceasing spiritual breathing. Jeremiah refers to this in the book of Lamentations: “I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit. / You have heard my voice; do not hide / Your ear at my breathing, at my cry” (3:55-56). This simplest way for us to pray unceasingly, to breathe unceasingly, is to call upon the Lord’s name. When we speak the Lord’s name throughout the day, as we converse with Him and fellowship with Him, we are in the Holy Spirit—“No one can say, Lord Jesus! except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3—lit.). One stanza of a hymn says, “O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord! / Forgive me if I say, / For very love, Thy sacred name / A thousand times a day” (*Hymns*, #208). As we call upon the Lord’s name throughout the day, we can have uninterrupted fellowship with Him in our spirit.

As we exercise our spirit to contact the indwelling Christ, we also deny the self so that we may be transformed. Before we were saved by receiving the Lord as our life, our fallen soul (the self) was our person, and our body was an organ to carry out the fallen soul’s desires. In referring to people, the Bible calls them souls. Exodus 1:5 says that all the souls who came forth from the loins of Jacob were seventy souls (lit.). Acts 2:41 says that three thousand souls were added to the church in Jerusalem. When we were regenerated, our inner being was revolutionized because another person came into us to dwell in our spirit. Now the Lord wants us to deny our self, our natural and fallen person, and take Him as our person. Paul prayed that we would be strengthened into the inner man, our new person (Eph. 3:16). The inner man is our regenerated spirit with God’s life as its life to be our person and with the soul as the organ. The outer man (2 Cor. 4:16) is composed of the soul as the life and person with the body as its organ. The Lord’s desire is for us to live by another person, the inner man. We should daily pray to the Father, “Strengthen me with power through Your Spirit into the inner man.”

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In our daily life with all of its details we need to take the Lord as our person and deny ourselves: “If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24). We need to deny the natural thoughts of our mind, the natural likes, dislikes, and feelings of our emotion, and the natural purposes and tendencies of our will. We need to allow the Lord’s mind to become our mind, the Lord’s emotion to become our emotion, and the Lord’s will to become our will. Philippians 2:5 charges us to let Christ’s mind be in us, Revelation 2:6 indicates that we need to hate what the Lord hates, and Matthew 26:39 indicates that we should deny our will and take the Father’s perfect will. As we deny our natural person, our self, and take the Lord in our spirit as our person, the faculties of our soul are uplifted and transformed with the Lord as our life. “When we are about to think, desire, or decide, we must stop and contact the Lord who is within. Then we will learn to apply Him. We must deny ourselves and contact Him in the spirit. Then we will be transformed by Him, who is the Spirit within us, to His image, from one stage of glory to another” (Lee, *Parts* 30). For our transformation, we must live, walk, move, and have our being by the Spirit in our spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25). This is the Lord’s way of transforming us.

Being Transformed by Practicing the Body Life

Romans 12 reveals that we experience the process of transformation as we are practicing the Body life for the building up of the Body of Christ. In order to practice the Body life, the church life, we need a presented body (v. 1), a renewed mind for a transformed soul (v. 2), and a burning spirit (v. 11). When we present our bodies to God for the practice of the church life, our mind will be renewed and our spirit will be set on fire for His purpose. Verse 1 says, “I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.” We need to consecrate ourselves to God in a practical way by presenting our bodies to Him for the church life, the life of the Body of Christ. Presenting our bodies involves attending the meetings of the church to fellowship with our fellow believers and exercising the gifts the Lord has given us to minister Christ to our fellow believers.

Paul told us that in the last days men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure. We should not be conformed to this degraded situation. Instead, we should be lovers of God who are being conformed to the image of Christ.

When we present our bodies to God for the practice of the church life in this way, our minds will be renewed for our transformation. Verse 2 says, “Do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.” To be fashioned according to this age is to be “modernized.” We should not bear the same image, the same expression, of the people of today’s world. Paul told us that in the last days men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure. We should not be conformed to this degraded situation. Instead, we should be lovers of God who are being conformed to the image of Christ (2 Tim. 3:2-4). As lovers of God, we must care for the church as the flock of God by shepherding and feeding the Lord’s sheep (John 21:15-17). As we practice the church life by meeting with the Lord’s people, by shepherding them, and by feeding them, our minds will be renewed.

A sign that we have a renewed mind is that we do not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3). In order to serve the Lord’s children, the Lord’s mind must become our mind. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). This is the mind of the One who “emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave” (v. 7). As we practice the Body life, we should not think of our need to be served. Instead, we need to open to the Lord and ask Him to infuse His mind into our mind so that we will be one with Him as the Slave-Savior, the One who did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). By the renewing of our mind we are metabolically transformed into serving members for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Song of Songs also reveals in typology how the believers are transformed in the church life. This book unveils the progressive experience of the believers’ loving fellowship with

Christ, which transforms them corporately into His bride, His wife. As we love the Lord and as our love for the Lord grows deeper, the Lord is transforming us. Transformation is a great miracle. Who has the power to change a man inwardly? Only Christ as our inner life can do this. As we pursue Him in love, there is a metabolic function of the divine life operating within us that has an outward manifestation. This manifestation is the beauty of Christ shining out from His lovers for His magnification (Phil. 1:20). As the Lord's loving seeker portrayed in Song of Songs pursues Him, she receives the revelation concerning how to enter the church life and is led to follow the footsteps of the flock (1:8). In our initial pursuit of the Lord, our concern is our satisfaction, but Christ's concern is God's satisfaction. Because we want the Lord to satisfy us, He brings us into His chambers where we enjoy Him (v. 4). Then He leads us to take care of His satisfaction, which is the church life on the pathway of the footsteps of the flock. The flock is the church in the proper sense according to the apostles' teaching, following the footsteps of all the faithful Christ-seekers through the centuries.

It is in the church life that the seeker is transformed by the transforming Spirit. At first the seeker is likened to a "mare among Pharaoh's chariots" (v. 9). She pursues the Lord with her natural strength, signified by the mare, and is still enslaved by Satan in the world, signified by Pharaoh's chariots. When she enters into fellowship with the Lord's children in the practice of the Body life, she is transformed. Those in the church who have experienced being perfected by the Lord to be transformed cooperate with the Lord to minister God into the seeking one. They make her plaits of gold with studs of silver. She is also adorned with plaits of ornaments and strings of jewels (vv. 10-11). To minister gold, silver, and precious stones into people is to minister the building God into them for the building up of the church (1 Cor. 3:12). Gold signifies the Father in His divine nature, silver signifies the Son in His redeeming work, and precious stones signify the Spirit in His transforming work. The plaits of gold are in the hair to make the hair bound, and the studs of silver fasten the hair. A woman's plaited hair is a sign of her submission to God (cf. 1 Cor. 11:15). This shows that we need to dispense the divine nature, signified by gold, into people to bring them under God's throne so that they will submit to God according to His nature. Furthermore, we need to minister the redeeming Christ, signified by the silver studs, into the Lord's seekers to "fasten them" so that He becomes their holding factor.

The seeker's pursuit of the Lord in her love for Him brings about a further inward transformation in her so that she has the eyes of a dove (S. S. 1:15). The dove signifies the Spirit (Matt. 3:16), and its eyes signify the insight, realization, understanding, and apprehension of the Spirit for the renewing of the mind. A dove can look at only one thing at a time, signifying that the seeker is looking unto God with a single eye, a single heart. She is further transformed to become a lily (S. S. 2:1-2), living a life of trusting in God and not in her natural strength (Matt. 6:28-30).

The lover of Christ experiences being satisfied with Christ in the church life. She is brought to a feast of divine love as the expression of Christ's enjoyment of her and her enjoyment of Christ (S. S. 1:12). God's salvation is a feast (Luke 14:15-24), and the Christian life is a feasting life (1 Cor. 5:7-8). The Christian life is not a code of do's and don'ts. We should not resolve to do anything to improve our conduct outwardly by self-improvement methods. We should simply and daily feast on the Lord as our spiritual food (John 6:57) and enjoy the Lord by loving Him (Eph. 6:24). Then we spontaneously will be infused with His divine attributes, which will become our human virtues for His magnification (Phil. 1:20). Song of Songs reveals that the lover gains Christ and Christ gains His lover. Furthermore, the lover enjoys Christ, and Christ enjoys His lover (S. S. 1:13-17; 2:3-5; 1:12; 2:6, 2). The consummate result of this mutual gain and enjoyment is the banqueting in the banqueting house, the church life (v. 4). This banner of all-conquering love is a sign of our victory in Christ (Rom. 8:35-37). As we practice the Body life portrayed by the banqueting house in Song of Songs, we will maintain our enjoyment of the victorious Christ to be continually transformed into His image.

The Christian life is not a code of do's and don'ts. We should not resolve to do anything to improve our conduct outwardly by self-improvement methods. We should simply and daily feast on the Lord as our spiritual food and enjoy the Lord by loving Him.

Being Transformed to Become the New Jerusalem

The goal of our daily transformation in the church life is that corporately we would become the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is a corporate person; she is the bride, the wife of Christ, the Lamb of God (Rev. 21:2, 9). The Body of Christ is built up by our being transformed into the Lord's image from one degree of glory to another degree in a daily way. The building up of the Body is our being prepared to be Christ's bride. We are becoming His bride, the New Jerusalem, through the process of transformation. Our transformation is the Spirit's divine beautification of our inner being so that we may match and express our glorious, divine, and mystical Husband. The holy city is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, Christ, and the foundations of the walls of the city are adorned with every precious stone (vv. 2, 19-20). We need to take note of the word *adorned*. Our being transformed into precious stones for God's building is the Spirit's adorning us, beautifying us, to be our divine Husband's counterpart. Revelation 21:11 says that as the bridal city, we will have the glory of God and our light will be "like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal." Revelation 4:3 tells us that the enthroned God has the appearance of a jasper stone. This means that as the regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite wife of Christ, we will have the appearance of God for the glory, the expression, of God.

We must consecrate ourselves to the Lord, allowing Him to do His transforming work within us and submitting to His arrangement in our environment. It is only by our being transformed that we can be prepared to be the bride of Christ. When the Lord's bride is prepared, He will return to establish His kingdom on earth. Revelation 19:7 speaks of the time when "the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." To make ourselves ready to be Christ's bride is to cooperate with Him as the indwelling, transforming Spirit.

We must consecrate ourselves to the Lord, allowing Him to do His transforming work within us and submitting to His arrangement in our environment. It is only by our being transformed that we can be prepared to be the bride of Christ.

We can cooperate with Him to be transformed by eating Christ as the tree of life, by drinking Christ as the river of life and enjoying Him as the inner flow of life, by cooperating with the Spirit's breaking and constituting work, by exercising our spirit to deny the self and live by Christ as our life and person, and by practicing the Body life for the building up of the Body of Christ. By these means we can be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) to be "divinized" to be His bride. Without our being transformed, there is no possibility of our becoming Christ's bride. How crucial it is for us to exercise ourselves unto godliness day by day to be transformed into the Lord's image for the accomplishment of His eternal intention. May the Lord as the Spirit of reality guide us into all the reality of His transforming work (John 16:13) so that we may become His bride, the New Jerusalem, for His return to consummate this age. **✠**

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