

Fulfilling God's Purpose by Expressing Him with His Image and Representing Him with His Dominion

by Witness Lee

Introduction

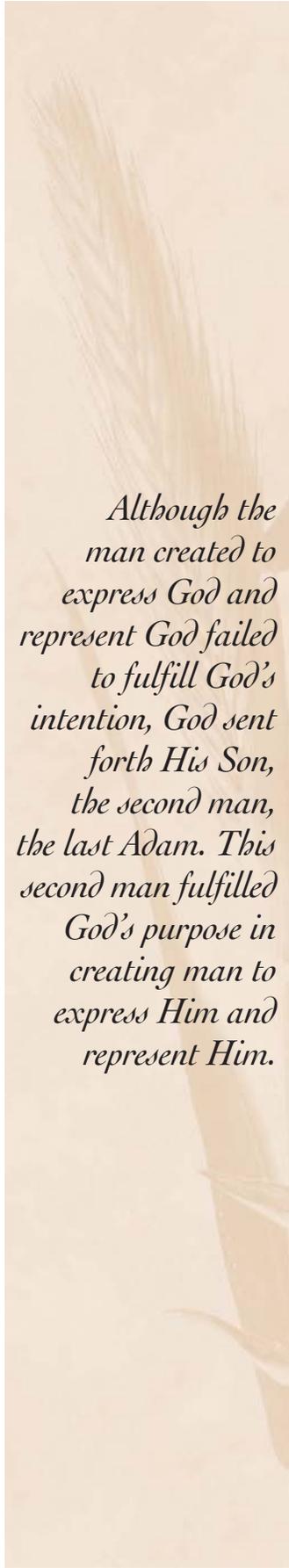
"God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26). Here we have two exceedingly important words—image and dominion—which are the general subject of this issue of Affirmation & Critique.

Along with other students of the Word, we believe that Let Us in verse 26 indicates that a council was held among the three of the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—concerning the creation of man. The decision to create man in the image of God was made in eternity past, thereby revealing that the creation of human beings was intrinsically connected to God's eternal purpose. As Ephesians 3:9-11 makes clear, God created all things according to His eternal purpose which He made in Christ. God's purpose is to have on earth a corporate man to express Him with His image and to represent Him with His authority so that he might exercise dominion to deal with God's enemy and to bring in the kingdom of God.

Our image, the image of God, refers to the inner being of God and is the expression of the essence of God's attributes, such as love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Our likeness refers to the expression of the essence and nature of God's person. The God-created human virtues correspond to and are a duplication of God's attributes and are the means for human beings to express the divine attributes. Therefore, God created man to be a duplicate of Himself with the capacity to contain God and express Him.

All the other living things were created "according to their kind" (Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24-25), but man was created according to God's kind (cf. Acts 17:28-29a). Since God and man are of the same kind, it is possible for man to be joined to God and to live together with Him in an organic union (John 15:5; Rom. 6:5; 11:17-24; 1 Cor. 6:17). (Lee, Recovery Version, Gen. 1:26, note 3)

It is of vital importance that we realize that the image of God in which humanity was created is actually Christ, the Son of God, who is the embodiment and expression of God. The Son of God's love, in whom we have redemption, is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Christ the Son, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (2:9), is the image of God, the expression of God's attributes. "God is invisible. But the Son of His love, who is the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance (Heb. 1:3), is His image, expressing what He is. The image here is not a physical form but an expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues" (Lee, Recovery Version, Col. 1:15, note 1). Since humanity was created in God's image and this image is Christ, humanity was created in the image of Christ to express Christ. As the New Testament reveals, it is God's good pleasure that the Christ in whose image we were created would



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be revealed in us (Gal. 1:15-16), live in us (2:20), be formed in us (4:19), make His home in our hearts (Eph. 3:16-17), and become our life and our constituent for His glorious expression.

The words them in Genesis 1:26 and 28 and their in 5:2 indicate that the man created in God's image was a corporate man, a collective person, including all humankind. From this we see that God's intention was to have a corporate man in His image and according to His likeness in order to have a corporate expression of Himself. This corporate man was created not only to express God with His image but also to exercise dominion over the earth and all things by representing God. In particular, this corporate person was to subdue God's enemy and to recover the earth for God's kingdom.

Although the corporate man created to express God and represent God failed to fulfill God's intention, in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, the second man (1 Cor. 15:47), who was the last Adam (v. 45). This second man—the God-man Jesus, who is the complete God and a perfect man—fulfilled God's purpose in creating man to express Him and represent Him. The Lord Jesus expressed the Father in everything that He did. As the Gospel of John reveals, the Lord lived because of the Father, spoke the Father's word, did the Father's will, and carried out the Father's work, never seeking glory for Himself but always desiring that His Father would be glorified. Thus, He was the living expression of God, the true image of God in humanity. Furthermore, the Lord was a man under authority who represented God to deal with the enemy, resisting temptation, casting out demons, and destroying the devil through His death on the cross. On the one hand, the Lord Jesus brought in the kingdom of God; on the other hand, He Himself was the kingdom of God. In His ministry He sowed the seed of the kingdom so that the kingdom of God as a realm of life would expand from one person—Jesus—to many persons—the believers as members of the Body of Christ, the one new man created by Him on the cross (Eph. 2:15). This new corporate man, created in God's image (Col. 3:10), will bear the image of God and represent God for the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God.

Fulfilling God's Purpose

Genesis 1:26 through 28 is the governing portion of Genesis chapter 1. Moreover, these verses are among the most significant words in the divine revelation of the Bible. They tell us that God planned to create man, and they also reveal the way in which God created man, the purpose of God's creation of man, and the position that man received from God in His creation. The mysteries contained in these three verses need the whole Bible to unfold them. In particular, we need to consider a number of verses in the New Testament, beginning in Matthew and progressing through Revelation, in order to help us find the right meaning of the three verses in Genesis.

Four Crucial Words

In these three verses we can find four main points, which are based upon four words. The first word is *image*. In verse 26 God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." In this verse the pronouns *Us* and *Our* are used in reference to God, but in verse 27 the pronouns are changed to *He* and *His*. This is a seed of the Divine Trinity, which grows and develops throughout the Bible.

The second word in these three verses is *dominion*. In verse 26 God also said, "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Verse 28 says, "And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." In these two verses God gave man dominion, that is, authority, over the entire earth and

charged man to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. The creeping things typify Satan, the serpent (3:1, 14; Rev. 12:9), and his fallen angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:4, 7), as well as the demons who follow Satan (cf. Luke 10:19). The fact that man is to subdue the earth implies that a war is raging on earth between God and His enemy, Satan. Whoever gains the earth will have the victory. Man was created by God to subdue, to conquer, the earth and recover it for God.

The third important word in Genesis 1:26 through 28 is *man*, and the fourth is *God*. The British Brethren published two versions of the Bible. The first was Darby's New Translation, and the second was the Newberry Reference Edition, which was not a new translation but an annotated King James Version. In the Newberry Reference Edition, Thomas Newberry inserted symbols into the English translation to indicate meaningful details related to certain words in the original text. In Genesis 1:1 Newberry placed three short horizontal bars next to the word *God*, indicating that in the Hebrew text the word is plural in number. In the same verse Newberry placed one bar next to the verb *created*, indicating that the verb is singular. Thus, the subject of Genesis 1:1, *God*, is plural, but the predicate, *created*, is singular. This again is a seed of the Divine Trinity. The entire Bible shows that God is one (Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5), but He is also three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). He is the Triune God. According to Genesis 1, it was the Triune God who created.

In Genesis 1:26 and 27 the word *man* in Hebrew is singular. This indicates that the one God in His three persons created a singular man in His own image, and He committed to this man His dominion over all the earth. This one sentence encompasses the divine revelation in the entire Bible, for the revelation of the Bible is that the Triune God created a man in His image and with His dominion to express Him and represent Him.

The Image of God

The image of God is the expression of the inward essence of God's attributes, the most prominent of which are love (1 John 4:8), light (1:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), and righteousness (Jer. 23:6). God is invisible, yet the invisible God has a visible image (1 Tim. 1:17; Col. 1:15). How can the invisible God have a visible image? God is Spirit (John 4:24). As Spirit, God is real, yet He is invisible. Likewise, electricity is real, yet no one has ever seen electricity, for it is invisible.

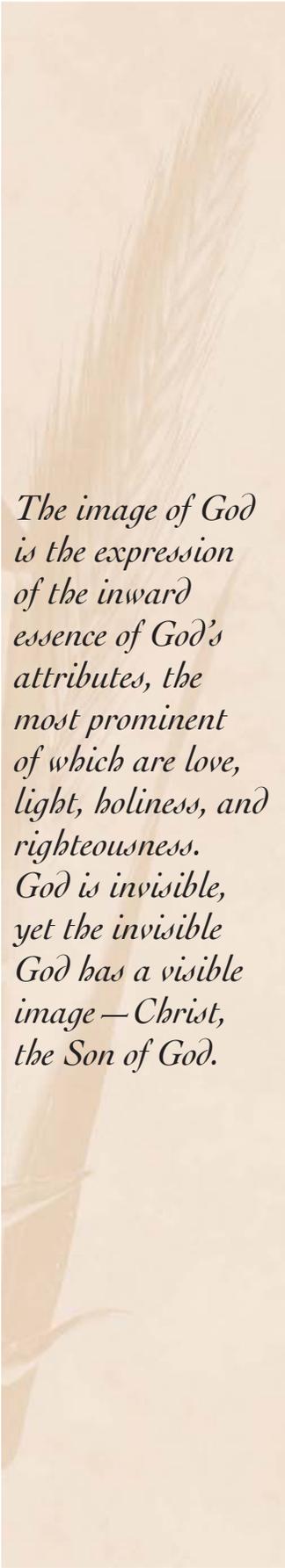
Christ—the Image of the Invisible God

Colossians 1:15 says that Christ, the Son of the Father's love (v. 13), is the image of the invisible God. God is invisible, but His image is visible, and this image is Christ, the Son of God. Second Corinthians 4:4 confirms that Christ is the image of God. We can say that no one has ever seen God (John 1:18), but we cannot say that no one has ever seen Christ. Although God is invisible, Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

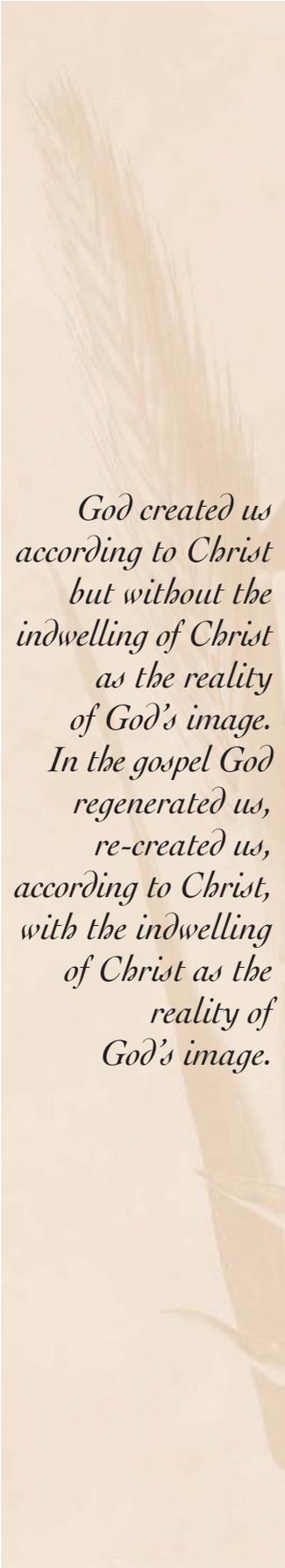
In John 14:8 Philip asked the Lord Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it is sufficient for us." The Lord was surprised by Philip's request, and He replied, "Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father?" (v. 9). The disciples might have thought that they had seen the Lord Jesus, who is the Son of God, but had not seen the Father, but the Lord said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," because the Lord Jesus is the visible image, the visible expression, of the invisible Father.

Man Created according to Christ

The fact that God created man in His image and that this image is Christ means that



The image of God is the expression of the inward essence of God's attributes, the most prominent of which are love, light, holiness, and righteousness. God is invisible, yet the invisible God has a visible image — Christ, the Son of God.



God created us according to Christ but without the indwelling of Christ as the reality of God's image. In the gospel God regenerated us, re-created us, according to Christ, with the indwelling of Christ as the reality of God's image.

God created man according to Christ. After we are saved and have been enlightened by God to see how sinful we are, we may feel that we are nothing and that we are worthless. However, although it is foolish to be proud, we do have something to boast of. First, since we are human beings who were created in the image of God, which is Christ, we can boast that we were created according to Christ. We may not be good for many things, but we are good for expressing Christ. We are only human beings, but we are human beings with the divine image. This is not a small thing.

In the United States many people are fond of cats and dogs. Although these pets may be lovable to a certain extent, we certainly cannot say that they have the image of God. A human being has the image of God, but neither a cat nor a dog has God's image. Therefore, we should not look down on ourselves so much. We are small persons, but we are much higher than a cat or a dog. We have a super position because we were made in the image of God; we were made according to Christ. Whether or not a person has the life of Christ, as long as he is a human being, he was made according to Christ. Therefore, it is not a small thing to be a human being.

Some Christians may consider the angels to be higher than they are, but the angels do not have the image of God. The angels were not created according to Christ, but we were. Some people may feel that it would be better to be an angel than a human being, but we need to realize what a great thing it is to be a human being, because human beings have the image of God and were created according to Christ. This gives created man the capacity to receive Christ, contain Christ, live Christ, and express Christ.

Regenerated according to Christ

As we have pointed out, Colossians 1:15 says that Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation." This means that in creation, as a creature, Christ is the image of God. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Christ is the image of God in the gospel of His glory. In creation Christ is the image of God, and in the gospel also Christ is the image of God. These two verses both tell us that Christ is the image of God, but there is a difference between these verses. Colossians 1:15 tells us that Christ is the image of God in creation, whereas 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that Christ is the image of God in the gospel. This means that in His creation God created us according to Christ but without the indwelling of Christ Himself as the reality of God's image; however, in the gospel God regenerated us, re-created us, according to Christ with the indwelling of Christ as the reality of God's image (Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5). In order to fulfill His purpose, God needed to create us according to Christ, and He also needed to regenerate us, to re-create us, according to Christ.

Transformed into the Image of Christ to Be the Same as He Is

We were created according to Christ, and we were also regenerated, or re-created, according to Christ. In addition, 2 Corinthians 3:18 says that we are being transformed into the image of Christ from glory to glory. Since we have been regenerated, re-created, according to Christ, why do we still need to be transformed into the image of Christ? The reason is that although we were created according to Christ, we eventually became the old man; hence, after we are regenerated according to Christ, we need transformation. Through the first creation we became the old man, but in the second creation through our regeneration, we are the new man. The old man becomes the new man through transformation. We need to be continually transformed from being old to being new. According to Romans 12:2, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind, and according to Ephesians 4:22-24, we put off the old man and put on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind. The divine concept is that we need to be absolutely in the image of Christ both outwardly and inwardly. We have all been

created according to Christ, and we have also been regenerated according to Christ. We are now in the process of being transformed from the old man into the new man. Creation, regeneration, and transformation are three steps that make us absolutely the same as Christ. I have the full assurance to say that one day, sooner or later, we will be fully transformed into the image of Christ, who is the image of God, and will be absolutely the same as He is (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

Becoming the Expression of God

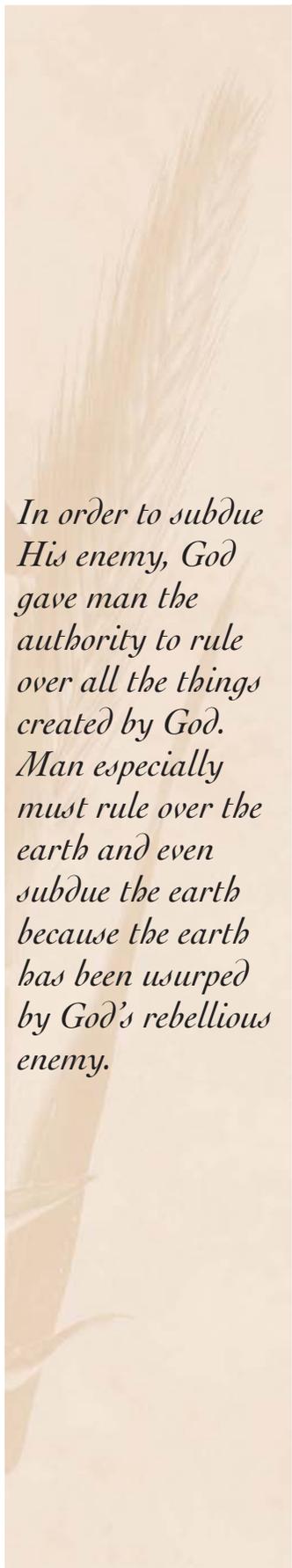
The image of God is for the expression of God. Thus, to be in the image of God is to express God. God created us in His own image with the purpose that we may be His expression. God created us according to Christ, regenerated us according to Christ, and is transforming us into the image of Christ because His intention is that we will express Him. God's intention is not for man to do good and refrain from doing evil. God's purpose is that man will express Him. It is not a matter of doing good but a matter of expressing God. God's purpose in creating man was to have an expression of Himself. Therefore, according to God's purpose, we need to become the expression of God through creation, regeneration, and transformation.

God's Dominion

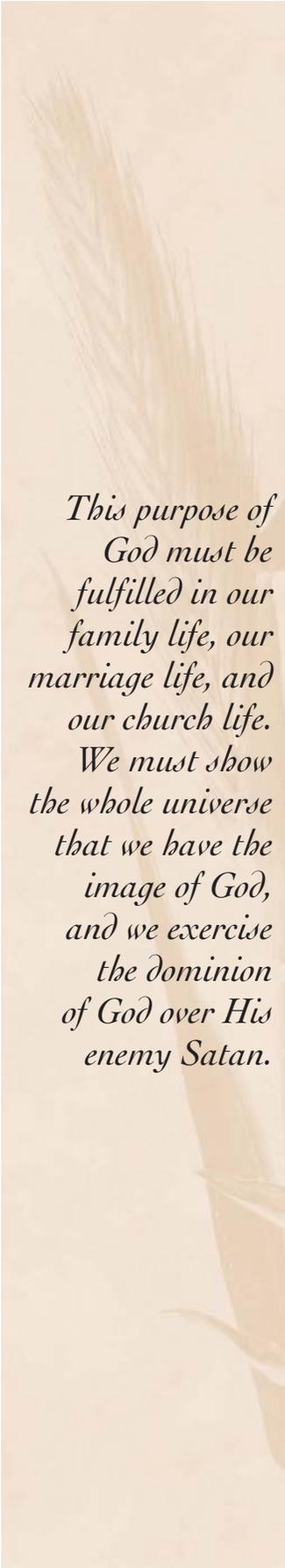
God gave created man dominion so that man could represent God by exercising His authority over all the things on the earth that were created by God. God is the Creator, but He does not want to rule over the earth by Himself directly. He gave dominion to man so that man could rule over all things on the earth. God's intention in giving man dominion is (1) to subdue God's enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God; (2) to recover the earth, which was usurped by Satan through man's fall; and (3) to exercise God's authority over the earth in order that the kingdom of God may come to the earth, the will of God may be done on the earth, and the glory of God may be manifested on the earth (Matt. 6:10, 13). If we read the Bible carefully, we will see that God has a problem, and this problem is Satan, the archangel who rebelled against God and became His enemy in the universe and especially on the earth (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18). According to Genesis 3:1, Satan as God's enemy hid himself in the serpent, one of the creeping things on the earth. In order to subdue His enemy and thus solve His problem, God gave man the authority to rule over all the things created by God. Man especially must rule over the earth and even subdue the earth because the earth has been usurped by God's rebellious enemy. Thus, God needs man to exercise His authority over all the creeping things, and God needs man to subdue and conquer the rebellious earth so that God may recover the earth for His kingdom.

In the New Testament Christ came to impart the divine life into man (John 10:10), and then He gave His disciples the authority over all the power of the enemy. Luke 10:19 says, "Behold, I have given you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." The serpent, as the leading one of all the creeping things, represents Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9; 20:2), and the scorpions may signify the demons (Luke 10:17, 20). Both serpents and scorpions are creeping things. The Lord's giving His disciples authority over serpents and scorpions in Luke 10 corresponds with God's giving man dominion over the creeping things in Genesis 1.

According to Luke 10:19, what the Lord gave to the disciples was authority; what the enemy has is power. Authority is higher than power and subdues power. The cars on the street have a great deal of power, but the policeman who directs the traffic has authority over the cars. All the cars must stop at the policeman's command because his authority is higher than their power. The red light at an intersection has authority.



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enemy Satan.*

When we see a red light, we must stop our powerful car. Many Christian teachers give messages telling people that they need to have power, but it is rare to hear a message saying that we believers have been given authority. We need to be clear that what God gave man is not power but dominion, and what Christ has given us is not power but authority. We need to tell Satan, "Satan, I know that you are powerful, but you must realize that I have the authority to command you to stop." The authority of a stop sign prevails over the power of a truck. The enemy Satan is powerful, but we have the authority to stop him. The authority is not under the power; the power is under the authority.

A husband should not argue with his wife. Instead, he should exercise his authority, not to tell his wife to stop but to tell the enemy to stop. Sometimes people came to me and tried to argue with me. I simply stopped talking outwardly, but inwardly I said something to the enemy: "Satan, shut your mouth." Many times when I did this, I noticed that the mouth of the arguing one was shut. We have the dominion, the authority, to subdue and to conquer the enemy.

Fulfilling God's Twofold Purpose

In our marriage life and our family life, we need to have the image of God and the dominion of God. That is, we need to express God and also conquer God's enemy. If the members of a family argue and quarrel, and if the husband and the wife exchange words, there will be no image of God, no expression of God, and no dominion over the enemy. God will not recover "the earth" in their family life and marriage life. Such a situation in the family life and marriage life is a failure in relation to God's twofold purpose of expressing Himself in man and subduing His enemy through man. However, if God is expressed in our family life and our marriage life, people will see the image of God, and at the same time they will have the deep sensation that Satan, the rebellious one, is conquered and that God has recovered a part of the earth for His kingdom.

If in the church life the brothers are not in harmony and the sisters are not one, there will be no image of God, that is, no expression of God, and also no dominion of God. We will sense that the enemy of God has not been conquered in the church. In contrast, when there is harmony and oneness in the church, we see the image of God among the saints, and we have the deep sensation that Satan is subdued and the earth is conquered for God's dominion. In such a situation God is glorified in His dominion over His enemy through the church, and the church fulfills God's purpose of expressing Him with His image and representing Him with His dominion.

It is not a matter of our doing good and refraining from evil; what matters is whether or not we express God and subdue His enemy to conquer the earth. These are the two aspects of God's purpose in the creation of man. God created man for a purpose, and that purpose is that man may express Him and subdue His enemy to conquer the earth. These two things are also the main aspects of God's purpose in regenerating us. God regenerated us in order that we may express Him and exercise His dominion over all things. This purpose of God must be fulfilled in our family life, our marriage life, and our church life. It must be realized in all the relationships between the brothers and the sisters in the church. We must show the whole universe that in the church we have the image of God, and we exercise the dominion of God over all things, especially over His enemy Satan.

God's Intention to Gain a Corporate Man

In the first part of Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image." As we have pointed out, the word *man* here is singular. Then God said, "And let them have dominion." Here the plural pronoun *them* is used in reference to man (cf. 5:2). This

raises the question of whether God created one man or many men. The answer to this question is that God created one man, and this man is corporate. When God created Adam, He actually created the whole human race in one person (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22). Although each of us was born at a certain point in time, we were all created at the same time by God in Genesis 1:26 and 27. This means that we were created before we were born. The singular man created by God was a corporate man, and this man included all human beings. In his footnotes on Genesis 1:26 and 27 in his New Translation, Darby says that the Hebrew word *adam* can also be translated “men” or “mankind,” referring to the whole human race. This means that God created mankind corporately in a single man. Adam was a single man, yet he was a corporate man who included all mankind. We were all created in Adam (Acts 17:26). Therefore, on the one hand, God could say, “Let Us make man,” and on the other hand, He could say, “Let them have dominion.” In the eyes of God all the descendants of Adam are a part of Adam. We are all parts of Adam, and Adam includes all of us. Collectively, the entire human race is one corporate man in God’s creation.

Living a Corporate Community Life for God’s Purpose

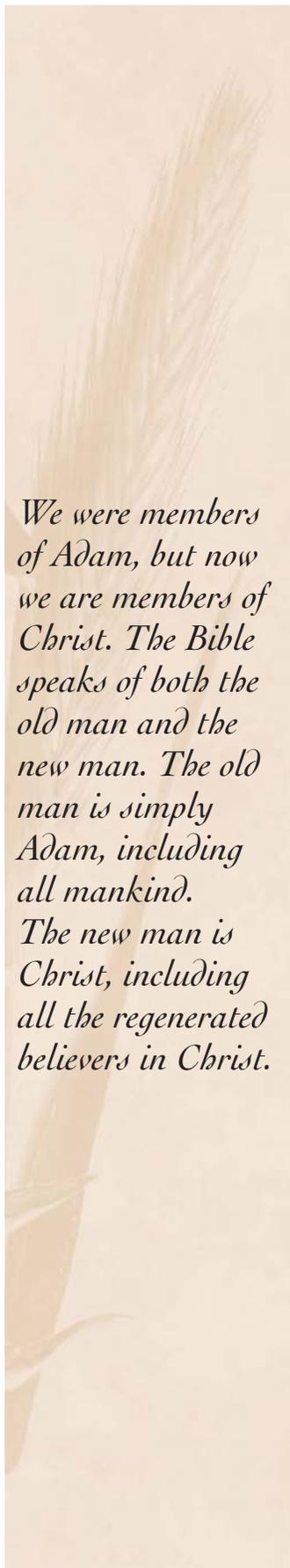
God has no intention to have many separate men living separately as individuals. His intention is to have one corporate man composed of many individual men to live a corporate community life. This is the reason that every human being was created with an inclination to have a social life. The inclination to be social was created by God in man’s nature. No man can live alone; all men need a community, a society. The same is true with the believers in Christ. The believers need to live a community life in the church.

Man’s need to have a community was created by God, and this need is related to God’s purpose that man would express Him and subdue His enemy. However, before man could fulfill God’s purpose, man became fallen (Gen. 3:1-6). In his fallen condition man misuses his God-created social inclination in order to do evil, and he cooperates with God’s enemy to oppose God’s purpose (11:1-4). However, in the church we have another kind of society, another kind of community, and this community is one that expresses God, subdues God’s enemy, and conquers the earth for the fulfillment of God’s purpose. We need such a community in order to express God and subdue God’s enemy to conquer the rebellious earth.

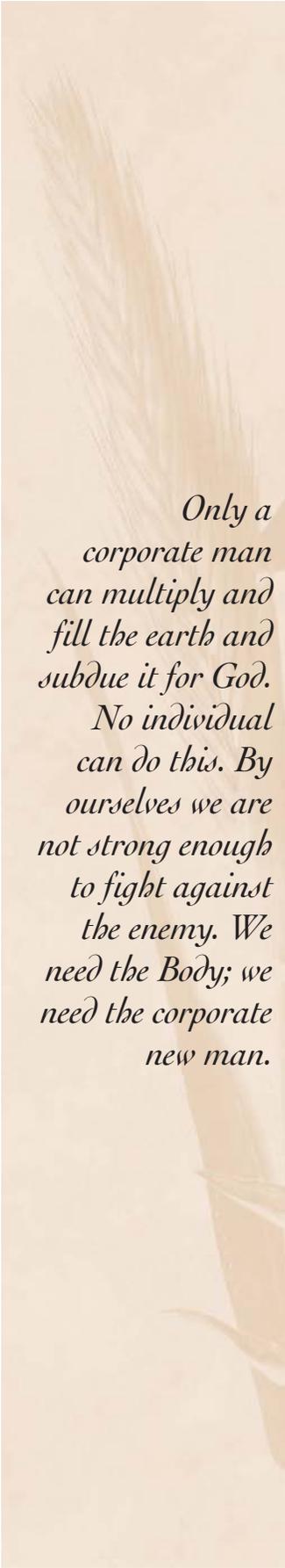
Putting Off the Old Man and Putting On the New Man

Previously, we were members of Adam, but now we are members of Christ. The Bible speaks of both the old man and the new man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). The old man is simply Adam, including all mankind. The new man is Christ, including all the regenerated believers in Christ. As individuals, we are not the new man. We are only members of the one new man, and this new man is the Body of Christ (Eph. 2:15-16). The one Body is the new man. We need to see that God’s intention is not to regenerate many separate human beings. Rather, God’s purpose is to regenerate one new man composed of many members (vv. 5-6; 1 Pet. 1:3).

In Genesis 1 God created one corporate man, and in the New Testament God produced a new corporate man (Eph. 2:15). According to both Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-10, we need to put off the old man and put on the new man. Ephesians 4:22 indicates that the putting off of the old man relates especially to our former manner of life, which includes our former social life, or community life. This means that in putting off the old man and putting on the new man, we need to put off the old community, the old society, with the old community life, and put on the new community, the new society, with the new community life. The new community is the church, and the new community life is the church life. The church is the new community, and the church life is the new community life.



We were members of Adam, but now we are members of Christ. The Bible speaks of both the old man and the new man. The old man is simply Adam, including all mankind. The new man is Christ, including all the regenerated believers in Christ.



Only a corporate man can multiply and fill the earth and subdue it for God. No individual can do this. By ourselves we are not strong enough to fight against the enemy. We need the Body; we need the corporate new man.

In the 1960s, on the West Coast of the United States, many young people, who were called hippies, tried to practice a certain kind of community life. They desired to have such a community life because in the human nature created by God there is an inclination to live a community life. However, the community life that the hippies practiced is not the real community life. The real community life is the church life. We all need to put off the old man, that is, the old community, and put on the new man, the new community. Day by day we are gradually putting on the new man, which is the Body, the church as the new community with the new community life. The more we grow in life and spread on the earth, the more we will put on the church, and the more we will be in the church life. We will be delivered fully and absolutely out of the old society, the old community, with the old social life, the old community life, and will be brought fully and thoroughly into the church life.

Today I can testify that my community, my society, is the church, and my community life, my social life, is the church life. The normal and proper community life for which man was created is the church life. In order to enjoy the church life, we need to put off not only the sinful things but also all the old things belonging to the old community, the old society. Furthermore, we need to put on the new things of the new community, the new society, that is, the church with the church life. This is God's intention.

Let Them Have Dominion

In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let them have dominion," not "Let him have dominion." It is difficult for one individual person to exercise God's dominion. In order to exercise God's dominion, we need the proper community with the proper community life. We must never try to be victorious over the enemy by ourselves. If we try to conquer the enemy by ourselves, we will surely be defeated. If we put on the new man and put ourselves into the church community, all the evil spirits will run away. When we are tempted, we need to learn the secret. We need to tell the enemy, "Satan, I am going to fellowship with the church." We should not try to overcome the enemy by ourselves. If the young brothers and sisters are tempted to go to the movies, they should not try to overcome that temptation. They should simply tell the enemy, "Let me go to the church first and fellowship with the church." If they try to overcome by themselves, they will be defeated by the tempter. They must learn the lesson to put on the church with the church life.

The same is true when we are tempted to lose our temper. Many Christians find it very difficult to overcome their temper. However, whenever we are tempted to lose our temper, we should learn to say, "Little temper, I am going to tell the church that I am tempted to lose my temper." If we have problems with our spouse, we should not keep them secret. Instead, we should bring them to the proper persons in the church. However, many of us would not do this but would keep these things secret. Whenever we keep things secret, we are defeated. We need to tell the enemy, "Don't bother me. Don't tempt me anymore; otherwise, I will tell the church. I will bring the whole matter to the church." If we would bring our problems with our spouse to the proper persons in the church, there would be no separation or divorce among us. We need to take heed to God's Word, which says, "Let *them* have dominion" (emphasis added). Only a corporate man can multiply and fill the earth and subdue it for God. No individual can do this. By ourselves we are not strong enough to fight against the enemy. We need the Body; we need the corporate new man.

When I was young, I was helped by some messages in which I was advised to tell the tempter, "Satan, let me tell Jesus." If I would do this, I was told, the enemy would flee. Today I can say that if we tell the enemy, "Satan, let me tell the church," he will run away even more quickly. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus said, "Upon this rock

I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” It is the church that is prevailing against the enemy. We must learn to put ourselves into the church and deal with the enemy through the church. To be in the church as the corporate new man is to practice the principle of the Body. God has no intention to create or to regenerate any individual persons. God’s intention is to regenerate many members of one new man, who are the many members of the one Body of Christ.

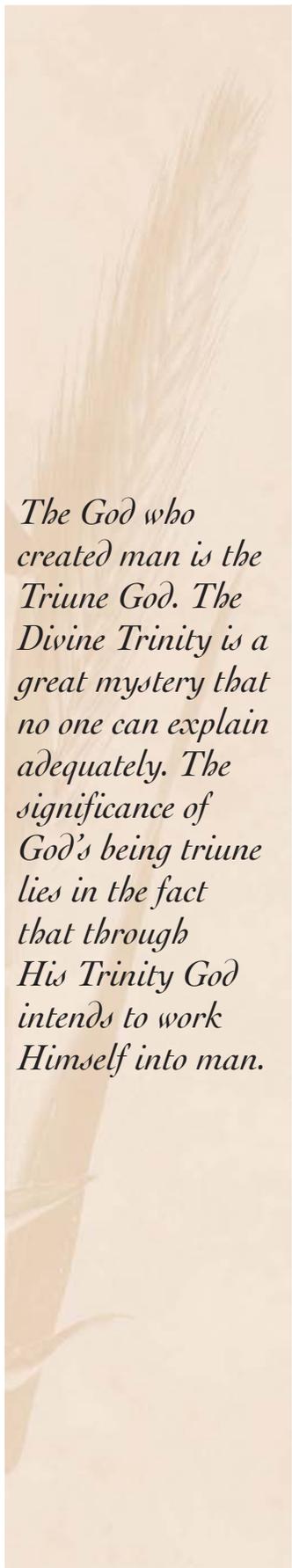
We need to keep ourselves continually in the Body life. We may feel that we are weak. The reason that we are weak may be that we are separated from the Body. If a certain member of our body is separated from the body, it will surely be weak. As long as it is joined to the body, it is powerful. The strength of that member comes from the body. We need to learn to deal with the enemy in the Body and through the Body, the corporate new man. We are the new man to conquer the enemy and to subdue the earth. If we bring our situation to the church, it will be easy for us to conquer the enemy in any kind of circumstance. As soon as we bring our situation to the church, we are immediately in a transcendent position above the enemy (Eph. 1:20-23). The enemy is under our feet, and he is conquered by us (cf. Rom. 16:20).

In Revelation 2:26 the Lord Jesus told the church in Thyatira, “He who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations.” Eventually, in the New Testament we see the fulfillment of God’s word in Genesis 1, which says that the man created by Him would exercise His dominion over all the created things. This word is being fulfilled in the church life. The church life is a ruling life, a life with God’s dominion over all things. In the church life we have God’s image with His dominion. As the church, the corporate man in God’s eternal purpose, we express God and represent Him to subdue the earth and to conquer His enemy.

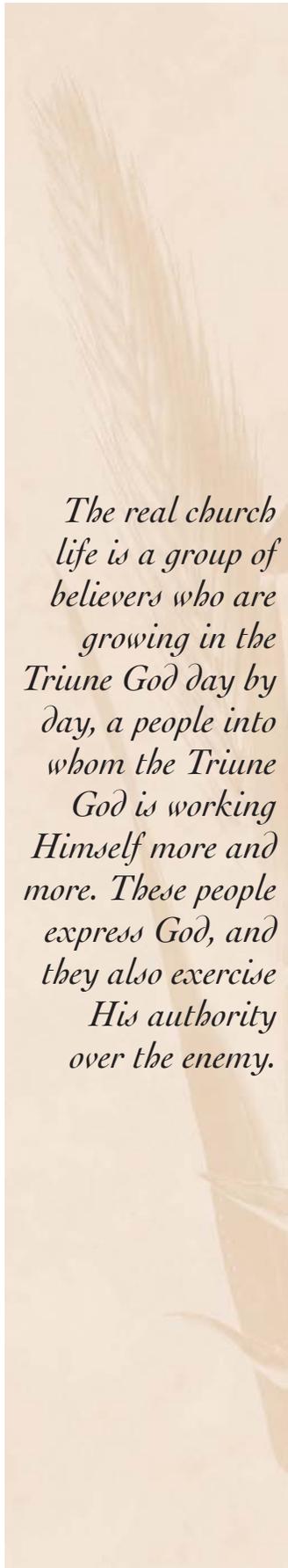
The Trinity of God for the Working of God into Man

According to Genesis 1:26 and 27, the God who created man is the Triune God, the unique God who is in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19). The Newberry Reference Edition of the Bible places three bars next to the word *God* throughout Genesis 1 in order to indicate that this word is plural in number. In verse 27, which begins, “And God created man,” Newberry marked the word *created* with one bar, indicating that the verb in this sentence is singular. This implies that God is uni-plural and corresponds to the revelation in the entire Scriptures that God is three-one—triune. The Divine Trinity is a great mystery that no one can explain adequately. The significance of God’s being triune lies in the fact that through His Trinity God intends to work Himself into man. We can illustrate this matter by considering electricity. In order for electricity to be applied for a particular purpose, there is the need of a source to generate and store the electricity, a wire through which the electricity can flow, and a current by which the electricity can be applied. If there is no intention to apply electricity, there is no need to have a wire and an electrical current. However, for the purpose of applying electricity to a particular use, there is the need of the source, the wire, and the current. Furthermore, the electricity that is in the source, the wire, and the current are not three separate things but one electricity. God’s intention is to work Himself into us. He does this through His Divine Trinity—through the Father as the source, the Son as the course, and the Spirit as the current. The Divine Trinity of the Godhead is related to His purpose to work Himself into us.

When God created other things, He did not say, “Let Us make...” He said this only when He made the decision to create man. Because of His intention to work Himself into man, God employed His Divine Trinity to create man in His image and with His dominion. Genesis 1:26 tells us that God created man by means of His Divine Trinity.



The God who created man is the Triune God. The Divine Trinity is a great mystery that no one can explain adequately. The significance of God’s being triune lies in the fact that through His Trinity God intends to work Himself into man.



The real church life is a group of believers who are growing in the Triune God day by day, a people into whom the Triune God is working Himself more and more. These people express God, and they also exercise His authority over the enemy.

Then Matthew 28:19 tells us to baptize the nations into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The name is the sum total of the Divine Being. The reality of the name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the Spirit. This means that we have all been baptized into the Spirit as the reality of the Triune God (1 Cor. 12:13). When we gather into the name of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 18:20), we meet in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, because the reality of the Lord's name is His person, the Lord Himself, and the reality of the Lord's person is the Spirit (John 14:16-20). The Spirit into whom we have been baptized is the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20; cf. Luke 12:12), the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4:6), and the Spirit of the Holy Spirit. As long as we have believed into the Lord's name and have been baptized, whether we feel like it or not, we have been baptized into the Spirit, that is, into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit the Father is the source, the fountain; the Son is the course, the spring; and the Spirit is the current, the river (John 4:14; 7:37-39). It is through and in the Spirit that the Triune God is applied to us. Electricity is applied to the lamps in a room by means of the current of electricity. Likewise, in the Spirit the Triune God is applied to us.

In the creation of man and in regeneration with baptism, there is the need of the three persons of the Godhead. Second Corinthians 13:14 says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The mentioning of the three persons of the Godhead in this verse is not for creation or regeneration but for transformation. The love of God the Father is in the grace of God the Son, and the grace of God the Son is communicated to us in the fellowship of God the Spirit. The love of God is the source, since God is the origin; the grace of the Lord is the course of the love of God, since the Lord is the expression of God; and the fellowship of the Spirit is the impartation of the grace of the Lord with the love of God, since the Spirit is the transmission of the Lord with God, for our experience and enjoyment of the Triune God. Therefore, the three persons of the Godhead are all involved in the creation of man, the regeneration of the believers, and the transformation of the regenerated ones.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the transmission of the grace of Christ with the love of God into us. The Holy Spirit is constantly transmitting Christ as grace with God as love into us. By the fellowship of the Holy Spirit we enjoy the grace of Christ with the love of God in its reality. Furthermore, it is by the Triune God that we are now being transformed. We were created by the Triune God, we were regenerated by the Triune God, and we are being transformed by the Triune God. The Triune God is continually being transmitted into us for our enjoyment. In our daily Christian life, and especially in the meetings of the church, the grace of Christ with the love of God in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is realized by us. This is the enjoyment of the Triune God, and this is the working, the constituting, of the Triune God into us. The more we enjoy the Triune God, the more the Triune God is wrought into us.

Through the enjoyment of the Triune God, day by day we are growing in the reality of the divine image and the reality of the divine dominion. The more we grow in Christ, the more we have God's image, and the more we have God's authority. When people come into the church meetings, they can touch the reality of Christ in the flow of the Spirit, and they can see the expression of God and sense the subduing and conquering by the exercise of the divine authority. This is God's purpose, and this is the genuine church life today. The genuine church life is not merely a group of human beings who love one another and do good in order to please God. The real church life is a group of believers who are growing in the Triune God day by day, a people into whom the Triune God is working Himself more and more. These people spontaneously express God, and they also exercise His authority over the enemy. Such a church life is the fulfillment of Genesis 1:26 through 28. Today on the earth God intends to have such a church life. **AFC**