

The Procedures God Must Take to Carry Out His Eternal Purpose

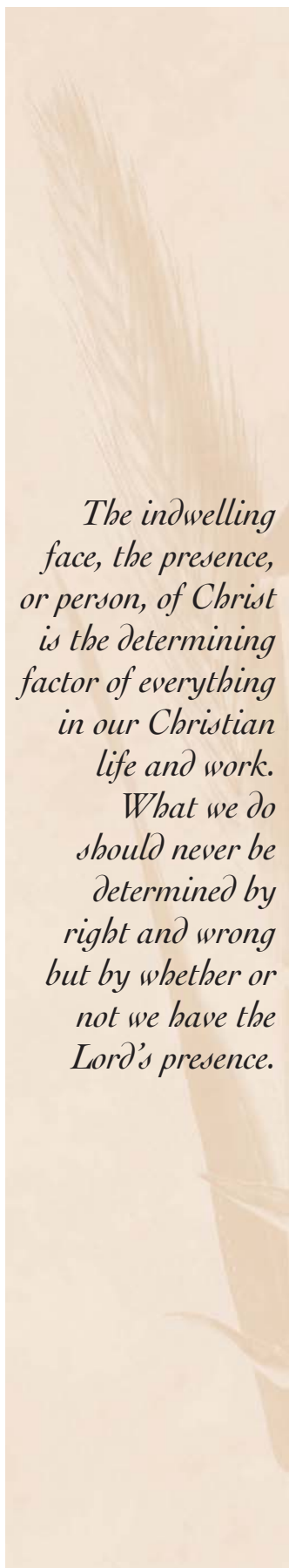
by Ed Marks

God's eternal purpose, the purpose of the ages (Eph. 3:11) is embodied in two words—*image* and *dominion* in Genesis 1:26. The heart's desire of God is to have a corporate person fully expressing Him to glorify Him with His image and fully representing Him to reign with Him for His dominion. Thus, God's goal is to have a building by building Himself into man and man into Himself for His corporate expression (John 14:20; 1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20-22; 3:16-17). This divine and mystical building—the mutual abode of God and man—will also represent God and fully reign with God over Satan, sin, and death (John 14:23; 15:5; Rom. 5:17; Rev. 21:3, 22; 22:5).

The Bible is a building manual, showing God's goal and the way to attain it. The introduction of the Bible fully matches its conclusion. In Genesis 1 and 2 is the organic blueprint, the architectural plan of the Triune God, and in Revelation 21 and 22 is the finished product, the organic masterpiece of the Triune God, to be the model of what we are and how we work (Heb. 11:10; Eph. 2:10). What is revealed in these two parts of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures is the central line of the divine revelation throughout the entire Holy Scriptures. This central line should be a controlling principle in our interpreting and understanding of the Holy Scriptures. In Revelation 21 and 22 the New Jerusalem, as the built-up bride of Christ (21:2, 9; 22:17), will be the full expression of God in God's image (21:11; cf. 4:3), and she will subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority over the entire universe (22:5; 21:15; cf. 21:8; 20:10, 14-15). The following six points show how the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22 is the reflection and fulfillment of the divine revelation concerning the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1 and 2. Both the introduction and the conclusion of the divine revelation show God's eternal purpose and the procedures that God must take to carry out His purpose.

Man Being a Vessel Created according to God's Kind So That Man Might Contain and Express Him

All living things were created according to their kind, their genus, their species, but man was created in God's image according to His likeness (1:26). This means that man was created according to God's kind so that man might contain God and express Him. Just as a glove is created in the image of a hand in order to contain and express a hand, so man was created in the image of God in order to contain and express God. In Romans 9:21 and 23 Paul says that we are vessels of mercy and vessels unto God's honor and glory. We were made to contain and express the God of mercy, the God of honor, and the God of glory. Concerning God's people, Isaiah 43:7 says, "Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory."



The indwelling face, the presence, or person, of Christ is the determining factor of everything in our Christian life and work. What we do should never be determined by right and wrong but by whether or not we have the Lord's presence.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:7, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.” *This treasure* points to the previous verse, which 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” (v. 6). Thus, we may say that *this treasure* specifically refers not merely to Christ but to the face of Jesus Christ. His face, His living and present presence and person, is the treasure in our weak and fragile earthen vessel. Paul says that he forgave a certain brother in the person, or face, of Jesus Christ (2:10). While we are beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are being transformed into His image. “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” (3:18).

In order to have an unveiled face, we must turn our heart to the One who dwells in our spirit (v. 16). Then we behold Him for ourselves and reflect Him into others. As we are thus beholding and reflecting the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are being transformed into the image of the resurrected and ascended Christ from one degree of glory to another degree until we are fully like Him. “We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is” (1 John 3:2). The indwelling face, the presence, or person, of Christ is the criterion and determining factor of everything in our Christian life and work. In the Christian life and work, what we do should never be determined by right and wrong but by whether or not we have the Lord’s presence. His presence is His uplifted countenance upon us (Num. 6:26); His presence to us is His smile within us, confirming that we have gained the honor of being well pleasing to Him (2 Cor. 5:9).

Jacob’s transformation began when he wrestled with God and saw the face of God: “Jacob called the name of that place Peniel, for, he said, I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been preserved” (Gen. 32:30). *Peniel* means “the face of God.” The priests in the Old Testament enjoyed the bread of God’s presence, His face, as their serving supply (Exo. 25:30). Jehovah spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his companion, and He promised Moses, “My presence [or face] shall go with you, and I will give you rest” (33:11, 14). The psalmist exhorts us to “seek Jehovah and His strength; / Seek His face continually” (Psa. 105:4). In Psalm 27 the psalmist also sought one thing from the Lord: “To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple” (v. 4). Then he goes on to say, “When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek” (v. 8). Revelation 22:4 says that in the New Jerusalem, we “will see His face” for eternity. His face will be the wonderful treasure within the New Jerusalem as the great corporate vessel that contains and expresses God in the universe (2 Cor. 4:6-7).

Man Being Created with a Human Spirit

God created man with a human spirit to contact God, receive God, contain God, and fulfill God’s purpose. Genesis 2:7 says, “Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” The Hebrew word for *breath* (*neshamah*) is the same word for *spirit* in Proverbs 20:27, which says, “The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, / Searching all the innermost parts of the inner being.” Revelation 4:5 says that there are “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.” The seven Spirits of God are the sevenfold intensified Spirit. Within us there are two lamps—our human spirit and the sevenfold intensified Spirit (Rom. 8:16). These lamps shine within us and supply us with the light of life so that we can become the New Jerusalem, the city of life (Rev. 22:1-2).

Man’s body was formed from the dust of the ground, man’s spirit was created by

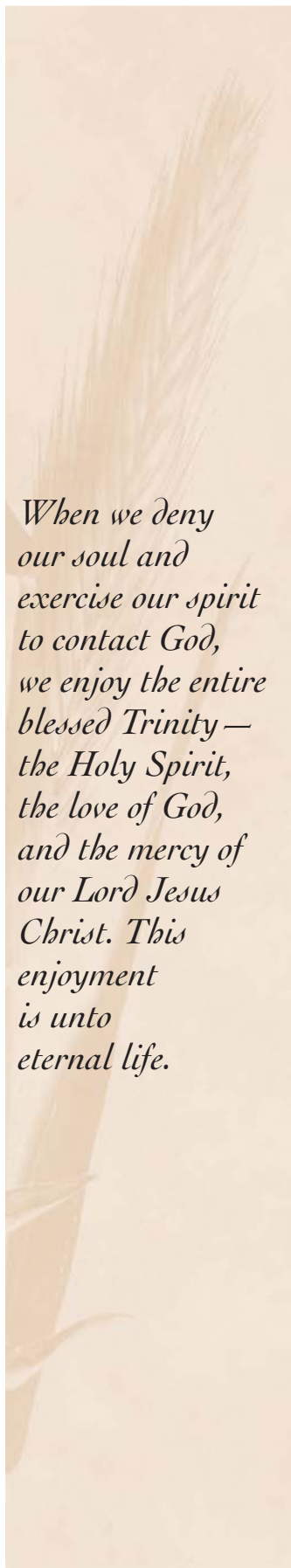
God's breath, and the result was that man became a living soul. Thus, man is composed of three parts: spirit and soul and body (1 Thes. 5:23). Man's spirit has the capacity to contain and contact God, his soul has the capacity to express and enjoy God, and his body has the capacity to glorify and magnify God (1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20; Phil. 1:20). Second Timothy 4:22 says, "The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you." This is the final recorded word of the apostle Paul, thus showing its importance. Without our enjoying the Lord as the presence of grace with our spirit, the degradation of the church is present.

The Lord is the Spirit, and the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God (2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:16). Furthermore, "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). The Lord Himself is the Spirit, who indwells our spirit. If we intend to live the Christian life, it is crucial that we set our mind upon our spirit, which means that we must pay attention to our spirit. Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace. Our conduct in our daily life and in our Christian service should be governed by the inner sense of life and peace in our spirit. When Paul was traveling to spread the gospel, a door was opened to him in the Lord for the preaching of the gospel in Troas, but because Paul had no rest in his spirit to go through this door, he went on to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13). This shows that what governed Paul was not his outward environment, even an environment in which a door for the gospel was opened to him in the Lord. Paul paid attention to the rest in his spirit. Paul's spirit was the "capital city," the preeminent part, of his being. We need to follow Paul's pattern to always pay attention to our spirit above all else.

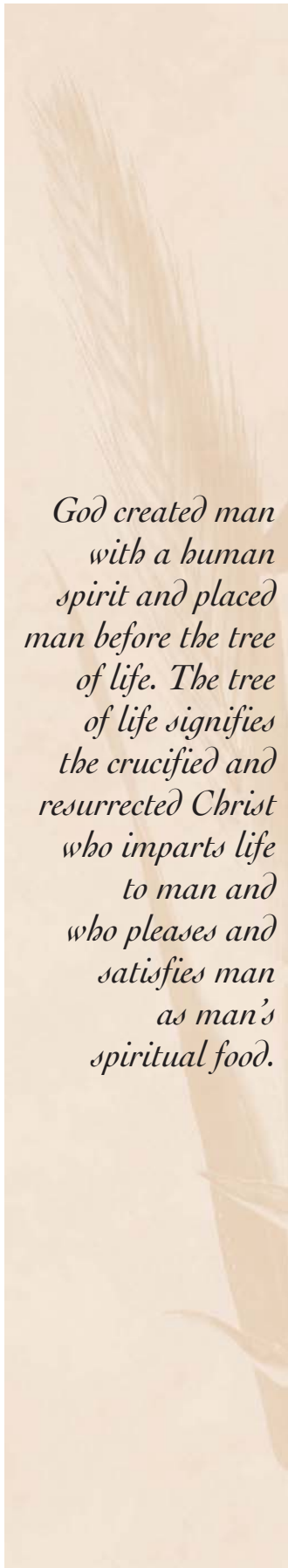
John 4:24 says that God is Spirit and that those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness. Our spirit is the place where we must worship God and contact God in order to drink of Him as the living water (vv. 10, 14). Truthfulness is the divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity for the true worship of God. The Father is seeking this kind of true worshipper (v. 23). We become the New Jerusalem by exercising our spirit to enjoy the Triune God. First Timothy 4:7 tells us to exercise ourselves unto godliness, which is Christ lived out of us and expressed through us in our daily life. The exercise unto godliness is the exercise of our spirit.

Jude 19 speaks of those who are soulish, who make divisions, and who do not care for, use, or employ their spirit; thus, it is as if they had no spirit. We are not to be like those who have no spirit, but we must build up ourselves upon our most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit (v. 20) to keep ourselves in the love of God, "awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (v. 21). When we deny our soul and exercise our spirit to contact God, we enjoy the entire blessed Trinity—the Holy Spirit, the love of God, and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This enjoyment is unto eternal life. The Greek word for *unto* speaks of destination and means "to become." Thus, by exercising our spirit to contact and enjoy the Divine Trinity, we become the totality of the eternal life—the New Jerusalem.

When we were regenerated by God to be born of God, He gave us a new spirit to contact Him and a new heart to love Him (Ezek. 36:26). Our spirit is the hidden man of the heart (1 Pet. 3:4). Our heart is composed of all the parts of our soul—mind, emotion, and will—plus the conscience. Among all these parts, our spirit is the center; it is surrounded by the parts of the heart. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that God put eternity in our heart, which is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy" (Amplified). This sense of purpose can be attained only through the exercise of our spirit to contact God and the exercise of our heart to love God. Man has a deep desire for permanent things, and the only things that are permanent are the eternal things, the life of eternity, the life of God. The Lord wants to recover us from things seen to things



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unseen, from things that are temporary to things that are eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18; Heb. 11:27). Concerning our experience of Christ, 1 Peter 1:8 says, "Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory." We can contact the One whom we love, the unseen One, who is Spirit, only by exercising our spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13).

The Tree of Life Being the Center of God's Economy

God created man with a human spirit and placed man before the tree of life, which God said was good for man's food. The tree of life is spoken of in both Genesis 2:9, Revelation 2:7, 22:2, and 14. It signifies the crucified and resurrected Christ who imparts life to man and who pleases and satisfies man in an edible form as man's spiritual food. Christ said that He is the life—the eternal, uncreated, unlimited life of God (John 14:6). He also proclaimed that He is the vine tree (15:1). Thus, Christ is signified by the vine tree, which is the tree of life. On the one hand, we are the eaters of Christ as the tree of life, enjoying His fruit, so that we may live because of Him (6:57). On the other hand, we are branches of the tree of life and are joined to Him, organically united with Him, to abide in Him and enjoy His life sap (the life-giving Spirit) so that we may bear much fruit for the Father's glorification (15:5, 8; cf. Psa. 92:14; Luke 23:31). The Lord is the life (John 14:6), and He came that we might have life and have it abundantly (10:10). Thus, in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), who can give life to our entire tripartite being—making our spirit life, our soul life, and our body life (Rom. 8:10, 6, 11).

The principle of the tree of life is the principle of dependence on God. Abraham followed this principle when God called him to move to the good land, and Abraham went out, "not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). This means that Abraham had to take the Lord's presence as his traveling map, depending on the Lord day by day for His instant leading. In contrast to Abraham, we see the children of Israel being deceived by the Gibeonites because of their independence from God. In dealing with the Gibeonites, the Israelites did not depend on the Lord. According to Joshua 9:14, they "did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah." As God's wife, God's people should always be one with Him by relying upon Him. In whatever we do in our daily life or in our Christian service, we should always seek the counsel of Jehovah. Then we will have the Lord's blessing.

In his first interaction with the ascended Lord, Saul of Tarsus said, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10). Blessed are those who ask this question. This dependent attitude saves us from presumptuous sins, keeps us in the God of measure (2 Cor. 10:13), and maintains our oneness with the Lord. Psalm 16:7 says, "I will bless Jehovah, who counsels me; / Indeed in the nights my inward parts instruct me." This verse describes our Lord's human living. God the Father continuously counseled Him, and He was one with the Father to such a degree that His inward parts instructed Him in the nights. In our oneness with Christ, our identification with Christ, we can experience the same thing. Matthew 14:22 and 23 describe what the Lord did after He fed the five thousand: "Immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone." This shows how dependent on the Father the Lord was in His humanity. He did not bask in the great miracle that was just performed, but He compelled the crowd to leave Him so that He might have more time to pray privately to the Father. This was so that He could be absolutely one with the Father in His move to establish and spread His kingdom on earth. This is a pattern to us, a pattern of praying in full dependence on God. This is the principle of the tree of life.

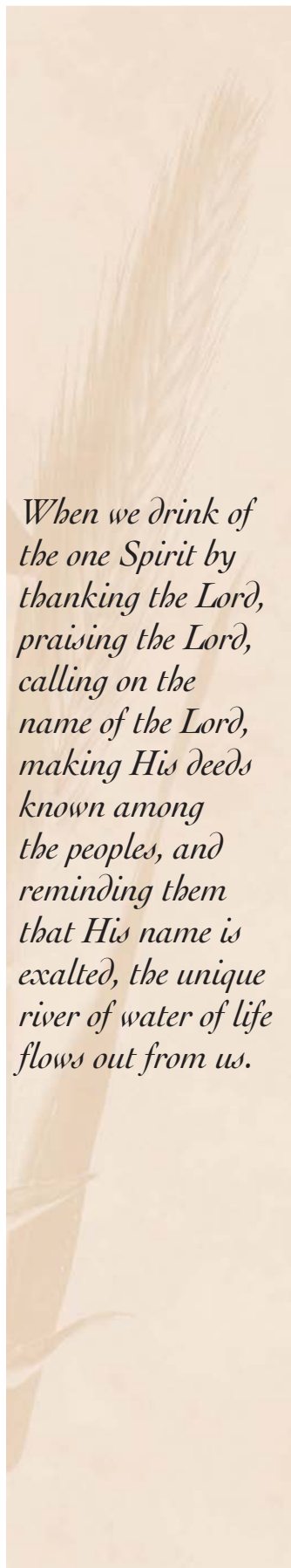
Anything we do independently of the Lord is in the principle of the tree of knowledge. It is possible for us to even read the Scriptures in a spirit of independence. In this case we will not receive any light or life from the Lord. John 5:39 and 40 say, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me. Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." Every time we come to the Scriptures, we must come to the Lord, because He is the life and the Giver of life. Furthermore, He is the one who can open our mind to understand the Scriptures through His enlightenment (Luke 24:44-45; Eph. 1:17-18). Through our prayer over and with the Word, we can convert the written word into the spoken word, that is, into words of spirit and life that supply and illuminate us (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18). Second Corinthians 3:6 says that as ministers of a new covenant, we are "ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." If we minister the letter of the Bible to people independently of the Lord, we are ministering in the principle of the tree of knowledge, which is the tree of death. However, if we minister the life-giving Spirit to people, the Spirit who is embodied in the word of God, we are in the principle of the tree of life.

The River of Water of Life

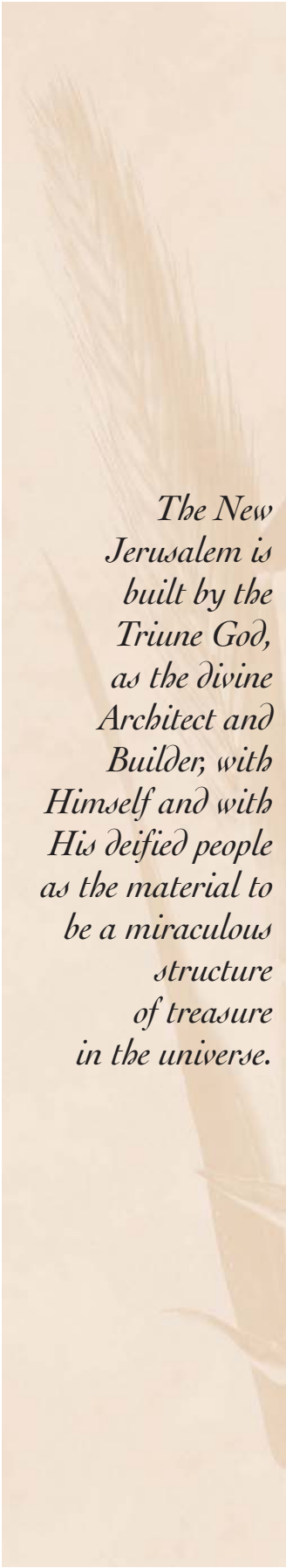
Genesis 2:10-14 describes a river going forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it flowed in four branches to reach the four directions of the earth. This river matches the river of water of life with the tree of life in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1-2). Thus, at the beginning and end of the Bible, there are the tree of life and the river of water of life. The streams of this river "gladden the city of God" (Psa. 46:4). Thank the Lord that He causes us to drink of the river of His pleasures (36:8). The Hebrew word for *pleasures* is the plural of the word for "Eden." John 7 describes the Lord's speaking at the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 2). The Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Ingathering (Exo. 23:16), denotes man's success and achievement in his human life. There is a last day to all the earthly enjoyment of any success in man's human life. Thus, on the "last day," the great day of the feast, Jesus realized that the people were still unsatisfied, so He "stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). The rivers of living water are the many flows of the unique river of water of life, which is the Spirit of life. Romans 15:30 speaks of the love of the Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 of the joy of the Spirit, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 of the sanctification of the Spirit, and Galatians 5:22 and 23 of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is God's divine attributes becoming our human virtues. They are attributes such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. These divine attributes becoming our human virtues are the issue of our drinking of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). When we drink of the one Spirit by thanking the Lord, praising the Lord, calling on the name of the Lord, making His deeds known among the peoples, and reminding them that His name is exalted (Isa. 12:3-4), the unique river of water of life becomes rivers of living water flowing out from within us. These rivers are the many flows, the divine tributaries, of the river of water of life flowing out of our innermost being for the expression of Christ as the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). In Revelation 22:1 this river of water of life is proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb to bring us under the inner rule of God's authority so that we may spread the gospel of the kingdom with the Lord's authority (Matt. 28:18-20).

Precious Materials for God's Building

In the flow of the river in Genesis 2:11 and 12, there are three kinds of precious materials for God's building with His image and dominion. This shows that the inner flowing of the divine life transforms us into precious materials for God's heart's desire. These materials in Genesis 2 are gold, bdellium (a pearl-like substance), and onyx



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stone. The building materials of the New Jerusalem at the conclusion of the divine Scriptures are gold, pearl, and precious stones (Rev. 21:18-21). Furthermore, the holy city has the glory of God, and “her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal” (v. 11). The One sitting upon the throne has the appearance of jasper (4:3), and the holy city of God also has the appearance of jasper (21:11). Jasper with its dark green color signifies the communicable God as the transmittable glory of the divine life. This shows that the New Jerusalem bears the complete image of God for His glory, His full expression.

Gold signifies God the Father in His divine nature, pearls signify God the Son in His redeeming, life-releasing death and His life-dispensing resurrection, and precious stones signify God the Spirit in His transforming work. When the Triune God fully makes His home in our heart and when He is fully formed in us, He will have built Himself into us to make us the same as He is in life and nature as precious materials for His building. The New Jerusalem is built by the Triune God, as the divine Architect and Builder, with Himself and with His deified people as the material to be a miraculous structure of treasure in the universe (Heb. 11:10; 1 Cor. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:4-5). When we say that we are the same as God in His life and nature and that we are His deified people, we are not saying that we become God in the Godhead or that we become an object of worship. This, of course, is heresy. But the Bible does tell us that Christ is our life (Col. 3:4) and that we are partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Since the holy city is a building of God in man and of man in God for the expression of God with His image and for the representation of God with His dominion, we need to be those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness to reign in life (Rom. 5:17). We need to allow Christ as grace (the enjoyment of God) to reign and rule within us (v. 21). We need to claim the promise in Romans 16:20, which says, “Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.” When we have a proper church life for the glory of God, the expression of God, in the unique Body of Christ, this promise is ours.

According to Revelation 3:18, we need to pay the price to “buy” the Triune God in our experience for the building up of the church and of the New Jerusalem (Zech. 4:12-14, 6; Matt. 25:8-9). In Revelation 3 the gold that we buy signifies God the Father in His divine nature, white garments signify Christ the Son as our lived-out righteousness, and eyesalve signifies God the Spirit anointing our inner eyes so that we might truly see the limitless treasure of Christ as the centrality and universality of God’s economy (Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:17-18). Furthermore, in order to become the expression of our precious Lord Jesus, we need to become pearls. Pearls are produced by oysters in the waters of death. When a grain of sand wounds the oyster, it secretes its life-juice around this grain of sand to turn it into a precious pearl. The Lord Jesus as the real oyster went into the death waters of the world, was wounded by us for our transgressions, and He is now secreting His life both within and around us to make us precious pearls for His building. In order to become pearls, we need to abide in the death of Christ and enjoy His life-secreting resurrection to make us pearls for the building of God’s eternal expression (Phil. 3:10; 1:19; cf. S. S. 2:8-9, 14). We also need to become precious stones. This takes place by our experiencing the riches of Christ through sufferings, consuming pressures, and the killing work of the cross to be transformed into precious stones for God’s building (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:10-11, 16).

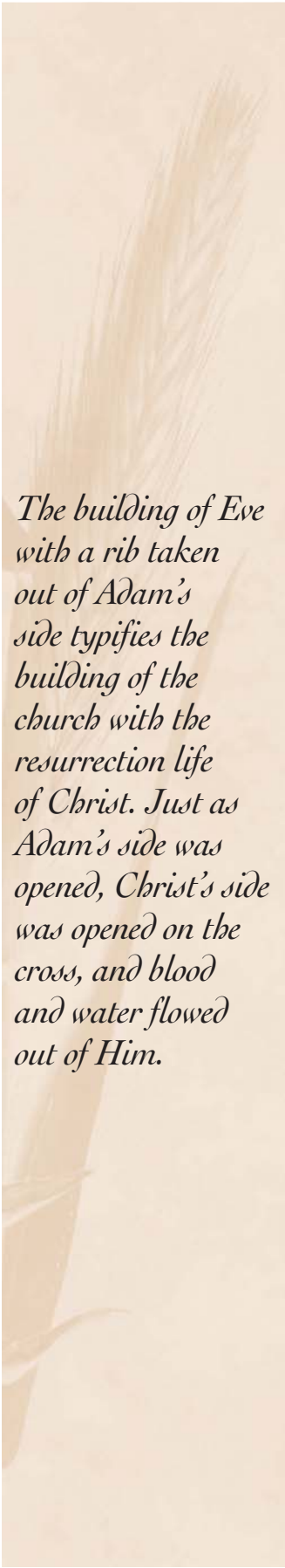
In order to become the New Jerusalem, which is fully in God’s image and possesses God’s ruling presence, we need to minister the Triune God into others for their transformation (Acts 6:4; 5:20). We need to experience the transforming work of the Spirit day by day so that we can go on to maturity (Heb. 6:1). Transformation is to be metabolically changed in our natural life, whereas maturity is to be filled with the divine life that changes us. Transformation should be consummated by conformation.

Romans 8:28 and 29 say, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” *Good* in verse 28 refers to our being conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God in verse 29. Transformation into Christ’s image should be consummated by conformation into His image. Our conformation is our maturity in the divine life through which we participate in God’s divinity in full and are solidified in the possession of His divine element. God conforms us so that we may be solidified in the experience of His organic salvation, the salvation in Christ’s life (5:10). To be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God is to be saved in Christ’s life from self-likeness, that is, from the expression and appearance of the self. The self includes vainglory (Gal. 5:26), outward show (6:12), hypocrisy (Luke 12:1), ambition for leadership (Matt. 20:20-28), self-confidence, self-righteousness, self-justification, self-vindication, self-exaltation, being opinionated, murmurings, reasonings (Phil. 2:14), gossip (Matt. 12:34-36), and rivalry (Phil. 2:3). By exercising our spirit to deny the self (2 Cor. 4:5), there is glory, the expression of God with the likeness and image of God. In the expression of the self, there is division, but in the denial of the self, there is glory and oneness (John 17:22).

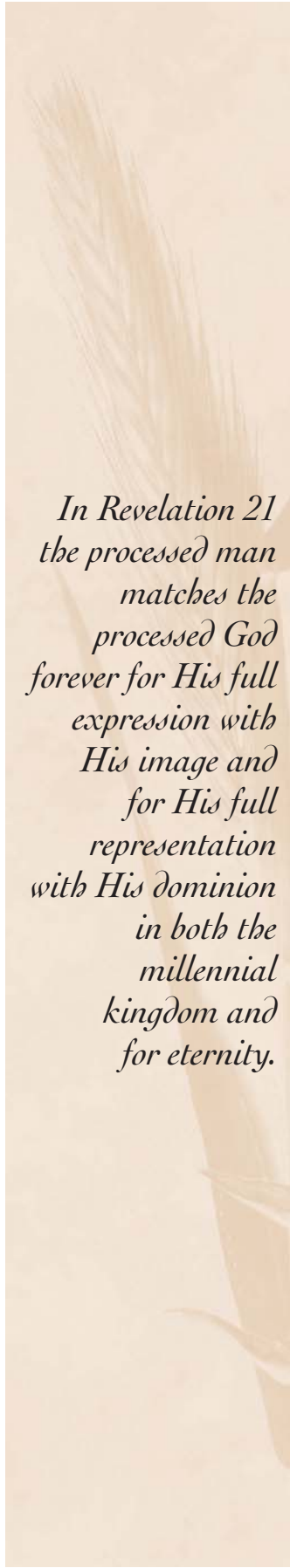
The Producing of a Couple—a Corporate, Great God-man

God’s eternal purpose is to gain a divine and mystical couple—a corporate, great God-man, who fully expresses God in His image and fully represents God with His dominion. It is significant that the book of Ephesians, a book on the Body of Christ, concludes with the church as the wife of Christ for His expression in chapter 5 and with the church as the warrior of Christ for His dominion in chapter 6. In Ephesians 5:25 through 27 husbands are charged to love their wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. This was so that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word in order to present a glorious church as His bride to Himself. The washing word in verse 26 is the instant and beautifying word of God for the glorious expression of the church in the full image of God. In Ephesians 6 the church is charged to put Christ on as the whole armor of God and to receive the word as the sword of the Spirit (vv. 10-20). Through receiving the word by means of all prayer (vv. 17-18), the word becomes a sword to us for slaying Satan, the adversary of God, resulting in the victory of the overcoming saints for the dominion of God.

Genesis 2:22 shows us in typology how the church is produced and built up. Adam typifies Christ (Rom. 5:14), and Eve typifies the church. Jehovah caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam (Gen. 2:21). Adam’s sleep is a type of Christ’s death. In the Bible sleep can refer to death (1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14). Genesis 2:22 and 23 say, “Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called Woman / Because out of Man this one was taken.” The building of Eve with a rib taken out of Adam’s side typifies the building of the church with the resurrection life of Christ. Just as Adam’s side was opened, Christ’s side was opened on the cross, and blood and water flowed out of Him (John 19:34). Blood and water are two great signs of the death and resurrection of Christ. The blood that flowed out of Christ was for our judicial redemption, for the purchase and redemption of the church, and for the forgiveness of all our sins. Out of Adam’s side, blood did not need to flow, because man had not yet sinned; thus, there was no need for redemption. The rib out of Adam’s side is equivalent to the water that flowed out of Christ’s side. The rib signifies the unbreakable, resurrection life of Christ (v. 36), and the water signifies the flowing life of Christ for our organic salvation, for the building up of the church, and for our being saved from the power of sin. Just as Eve was a pure product out of Adam, the church is a pure product out of



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*In Revelation 21
the processed man
matches the
processed God
forever for His full
expression with
His image and
for His full
representation
with His dominion
in both the
millennial
kingdom and
for eternity.*

Christ; anything that is other than Christ is not the church (cf. Gen. 5:2; Eph. 5:28-32). The New Jerusalem is the ultimate and eternal Eve, the corporate bride, the wife of the Lamb, built up with precious materials produced by the flowing, transforming, and building resurrection life of Christ.

The goal of God's organic salvation is the producing of a couple. In Revelation 22:17 we see the Spirit and the bride speaking together as one entity. The Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God marries the bride as the consummation of the processed tripartite man (21:2, 9). God passed through the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit—the consummation of the processed Triune God (1 Cor. 15:45b). Man passes through the processes of regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, and glorification to become the bride of Christ—the consummation of the processed tripartite man (Rom. 5:10; cf. Heb. 2:10-11). Thus, the processed man will match the processed God forever for His full expression with His image (Rev. 21:11, 23) and for His full representation with His dominion in both the millennial kingdom and for eternity (22:5; 5:10; 11:15).

The six points above show God's eternal purpose and the way to carry it out. We see the blueprint of God's building, the finished product of God's building, and the procedures that God must presently take in us and through us to carry out His eternal building. This wonderful building of God into man and of man into God is the culmination and full realization of the words *image* and *dominion* in Genesis 1:26. May we all be faithful to cooperate with God to carry out this heavenly vision (Acts 26:19; Prov. 29:18). **AFC**

Works Cited

The Amplified Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1987. Print.

The Purpose of God

“We know that all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

What is the purpose of God's calling? We find it in verse 29. “Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” Paul does not say that God foreknew and predestinated us to go to a happy place or to have a life that will endure forever. These are not our destiny. God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. This destiny was determined before we were even created...

We have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son that He may be the Firstborn among many brothers...When Christ was the only begotten Son, He was unique, but God desired to have many sons who will be the many brothers of His Son...The purpose is that we express God in a corporate way. God's kingdom is built up with His many sons, and the Body of Christ is built up with His many brothers...The kingdom of God is simply the Body life, and this Body life in the church is God's kingdom where He is expressed and where His dominion is exercised on the earth. This is God's purpose.

From *Life-study of Romans* by Witness Lee, pp. 239-241