

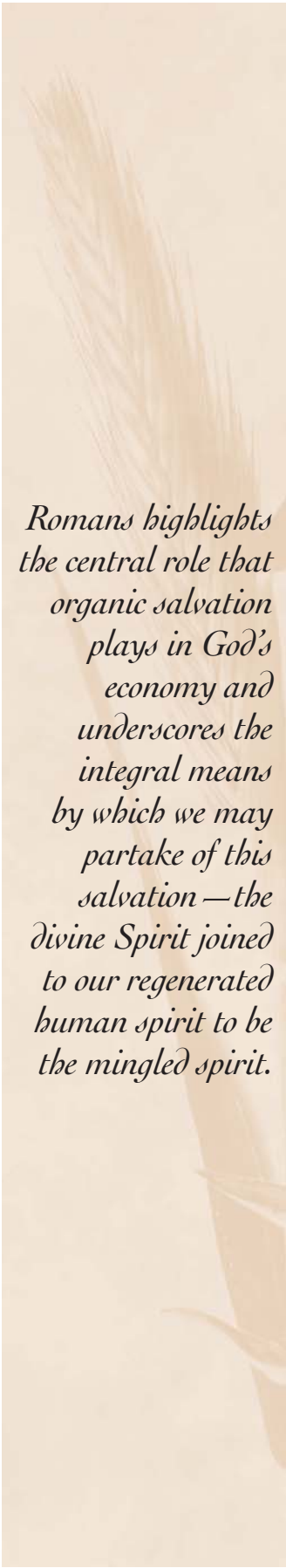
The Spirit with Our Spirit: The Secret of the Believers' Experience of God's Salvation in Life

by David Yoon

The majority of Protestant commentators have understood the Epistle to the Romans to be a systematic treatment of the doctrine of justification by faith and its implications. Under the Spirit's illumination, Martin Luther paid special attention to Paul's elaboration of the relationship between sins, justification, the law, and faith in the early chapters of this Epistle. Luther taught that a believing sinner is justified not out of the works of the law but out of faith in the merit of Christ's substitutionary death. Throughout the centuries this truth has benefited countless believers, causing them to rejoice in the assurance that they who once were vile sinners have been justified by God's saving grace and by their faith in Christ. Nevertheless, an undue emphasis on the judicial aspect of God's salvation has obscured the equally crucial organic aspect of His salvation that is also presented in Romans. Regrettably, many among those who subscribe to the traditional Protestant view of this book have failed to advance beyond the initial stage of justification, discussed mainly in the first five chapters. This failure leaves many distressed and puzzled by the paucity of their experience of God's saving power. Their daily walk is characterized more by the reign of sin and death than by the reign of grace (5:14, 21). They identify more with the wretched man's cry of despair under the tyranny of the law of sin and of death than with the conqueror's exclamation of triumph in the freedom of the law of the Spirit of life (7:24—8:2, 37). They conduct themselves more as debtors to the flesh than as sons of God led by the Spirit, and they find themselves conformed more to this age than to the image of God's firstborn Son (8:12, 14, 29; 12:2). Such a lamentable condition can be traced to a deficient view of the gospel of God unveiled in Romans, a view that limits their appreciation of the gospel of God to justification by faith.

This is not to diminish the importance of justification, which is a necessary element of the gospel. However, the full gospel of God presented in Romans involves much more than just the imputation of righteousness to repentant sinners. The gospel of God's complete salvation in Romans may be encapsulated by three key terms in this Epistle: *redemption, life, and Body* (3:24; 5:10; Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 12:5). These three terms correspond to three crucial components of God's New Testament economy: the accomplishment of judicial redemption, the impartation of the divine life, and the constitution of Christ's mystical Body. Judicial redemption not only delivers us from God's condemnation but also lays the foundation for us to enjoy His organic salvation in life, in which God in Christ saves us by dispensing Himself as the divine life into our tripartite being. In turn, salvation in life begets us as children of God and then matures us as sons of God in order to produce the one Body of Christ as His fullness, His corporate expression. In brief, redemption leads to life, and life issues in the Body.

The Epistle to the Romans not only highlights the central role that organic salvation plays in the fulfillment of God's economy but also underscores the integral means by



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which we may partake of this salvation—the divine Spirit joined to our regenerated human spirit to be the mingled spirit. Salvation in life, which has redemption as its base and the Body of Christ as its goal, is carried out by Christ, who has passed through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Because Christ as the Spirit of life is mingled with our human spirit to be the mingled spirit, our enjoyment of organic salvation is dependent upon our exercise of the mingled spirit. In order for us to obey, announce, and serve in the gospel revealed in Romans and to be established according to this gospel, we need to realize that our mingled spirit is the focal point of our participation in salvation in life for the building up of the Body of Christ (Rom. 1:9, 15; 10:16; 16:25). In Romans 5:10 Paul unveils that our participation in judicial redemption should issue in our enjoyment of a much deeper organic salvation in life: “If we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled.” Our judicial reconciliation to God, which was accomplished by Christ’s redemptive death, opens the way for us to experience organic salvation, which is executed by the operation of His resurrection life within us. Ultimately, the operation of the divine life within us saves us to the uttermost by regenerating, sanctifying, renewing, transforming, conforming, and glorifying us in order to manifest the Body of Christ.

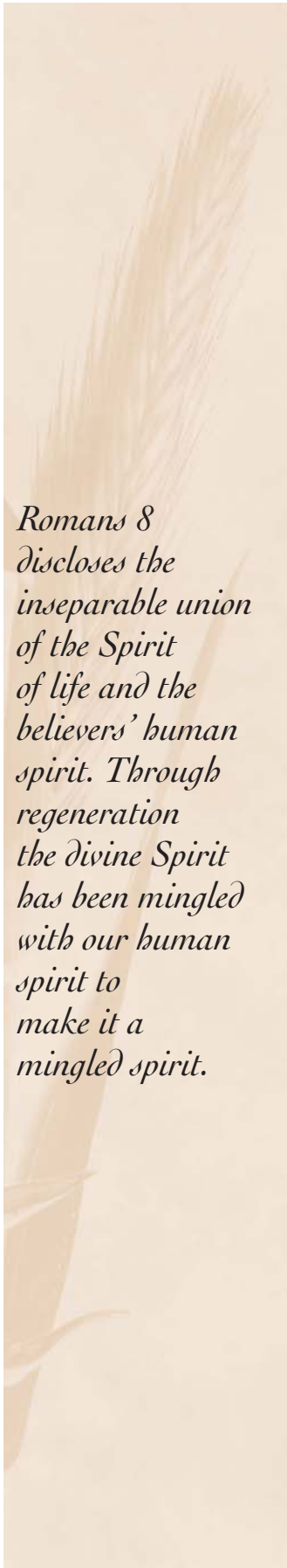
The Key to Experiencing Christ’s Saving Life— the Spirit of Life Mingled with the Believers’ Human Spirit

After speaking of our participation in Christ’s judicial redemption that enables us to experience His organic salvation, Paul reveals in Romans 8 that our enjoyment of Christ’s organic salvation in the divine life is intrinsically and inextricably related to the Spirit. The expression *the Spirit of life* in verse 2 places the Spirit and life in apposition. In *God’s Empowering Presence* Gordon Fee asserts that *the Spirit of life* is “the single most significant designation of the Spirit in the Pauline corpus” and that life is “the primary characteristic of the Spirit” (525, 541). Life is both an attribute and the content of the Spirit, and the Spirit is the reality of life and even life itself (cf. John 6:63). This thought is affirmed by two designations of the Spirit in Paul’s Epistles: *the life-giving Spirit* and *the Spirit who gives life* (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6). The Spirit of life, the Spirit who imparts life into the believers, is not merely the Spirit of God before Christ’s incarnation—the Spirit who possessed only divinity—but the Spirit of God after Christ’s resurrection—the divine Spirit who has been compounded with Christ’s humanity, incarnation, death, and resurrection (Rom. 8:3, 11, 13). This notion is confirmed by Paul’s interchangeable use of several expressions in verses 9 through 11 to refer to the Spirit who indwells the believers: *the Spirit of God*, *the Spirit of Christ*, *Christ*, and *the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead*. Shortly after speaking in verse 2 of the Spirit of life who has freed us from the law of sin and of death, Paul speaks in verse 9 of the Spirit of God who dwells in us. Immediately after pointing out that the Spirit of God dwells in the believers, Paul characterizes a believer as a person who has the Spirit of Christ, revealing that the indwelling Spirit of God is equivalent to the Spirit of Christ possessed by the believers. In the same verse Paul says that “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.” In *The New Testament for English Readers*, Henry Alford explains that for a person to be of Christ means that he “belongs” to Christ “in the higher and blessed sense of being united to Him as a member of Him” (906). Thus, a corollary of Paul’s declaration in verse 9 is that a person who has the Spirit of Christ is of Christ, belonging to Christ by being joined to Him. This thought is reinforced by the fact that shortly after speaking of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the believers, Paul speaks of Christ being in the believers. In verse 11 Paul speaks of the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead, the One who gives life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells us. This implies that the resurrected Christ as the indwelling Spirit is the Spirit of resurrection. Therefore, the Spirit of life is the compound Spirit who contains not only the element of God—the Creator and Ruler of the universe, the

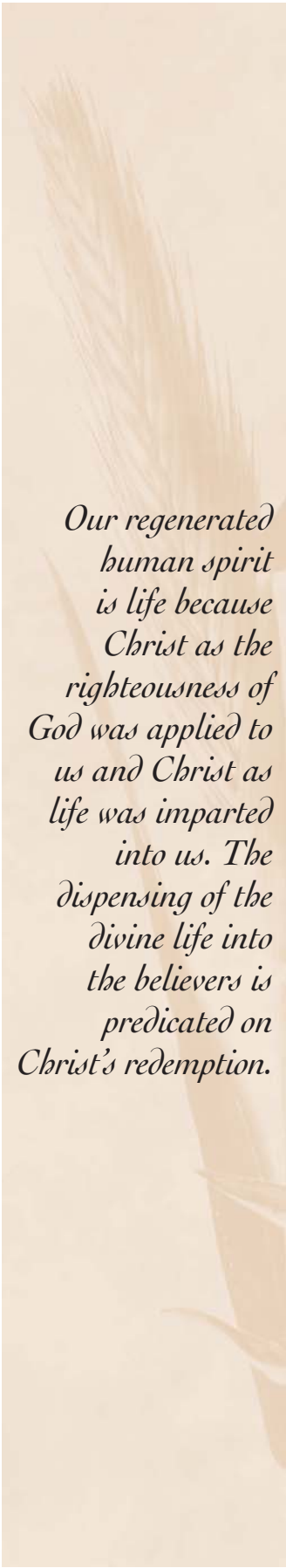
source of all things, and the Originator of His eternal purpose—but also the elements of the man Jesus, who, as the anointed One of God, accomplished God’s purpose through His incarnation, God-manifesting human living, redeeming and all-terminating crucifixion, and life-imparting resurrection. Such a bountiful Spirit who ministers life, God, Christ, and the power of resurrection to the believers is none other than the indwelling Christ who is in the believers and in whose life they are saved. The Spirit of life is the application of the processed Triune God in the organic salvation of the believers; all that God in Christ is, possesses, and has accomplished is made available to us in the Spirit. The life of God’s Son in which we are saved much more is none other than the Son Himself, the embodiment of the divine life, who is realized as the Spirit of life. Thus, the way to experience the saving life of Christ is by the Spirit of life, the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

Romans 8 discloses not only the identification of Christ as the saving life with the Spirit of life but also the inseparable union of this Spirit and the believers’ human spirit. In order for us to partake of the Spirit of life, we need to see that through regeneration the divine Spirit has been mingled with our human spirit to make it a mingled spirit. This truth is emphatically revealed in Romans 8:16, which says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.” In this verse *the Spirit* refers to the Spirit of God who dwells in us (vv. 9, 11), and *our spirit* refers to our human spirit indwelt by the Spirit of God. In verse 16 the expression *witnesses with* is critical. Paul does not say that the Spirit Himself witnesses to our spirit or that the Spirit and our spirit witness, both of which would imply a separation between the divine Spirit and our human spirit. Neither does Paul say that the Spirit witnesses in our spirit, which would imply that only the divine Spirit is witnessing. Instead, Paul says that the Spirit witnesses *with* our spirit, highlighting “the concurrent testimony of the human spirit with that of the divine Spirit” (Vincent 92). The word *with* indicates that the divine Spirit and the regenerated human spirit witness “conjointly,” implying the co-living and working of the divine Spirit with the human spirit in the believers (Godet 311). The two spirits live and cooperate as one because the Lord who is the Spirit is with our spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:22). This thought is directly unveiled in 1 Corinthians 6:17, which says, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” indicating that the Lord Jesus who became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection is joined to our human spirit through regeneration to become one spirit. The fact that the Spirit of God and the regenerated human spirit work together distinctly but inseparably as one spirit implies that the mingling of the divine Spirit with the human spirit does not produce a third substance or confuse the distinction between the two spirits; in this mingling, the distinction remains without the elimination of their particular characteristics. In *The Spirit of Christ* Andrew Murray, commenting on Romans 8:16, captures the thought of both the oneness of and the distinction between the Spirit of God and our regenerated human spirit: “Our spirit is the renewed, regenerate spirit. God’s Spirit dwells in our spirit, yet distinguished from it, witnesses in, with and through it” (14). The witness within us who testifies that we are children of God is the mingled spirit, the Holy Spirit indwelling our human spirit.

In Paul’s understanding, Christ’s saving life and the believers’ mingled spirit are so vitally and inseparably connected that he identifies the divine life with the mingled spirit, declaring that if Christ is in us, “the spirit is life because of righteousness” (v. 10). Marvin Vincent points out that *the spirit* in this verse refers to “the believer’s human spirit” (90). Henry Alford develops this notion, suggesting that *spirit* refers to “our spirits as possessed and penetrated by God’s Spirit,” that is, “our human spirits” that have been “revived or quickened” (906). The Greek word translated “life” in verse 10 is *zoe*. In the New Testament *zoe* refers to the eternal, divine, uncreated, indestructible life of God, which is Christ Himself as life to the believers (John 11:25; 14:6; Heb. 7:16; Col. 3:4). In Paul’s view our regenerated human spirit, the mingled spirit, has become *zoe* through our participation in Christ’s judicial redemption and regeneration, the first step



Romans 8 discloses the inseparable union of the Spirit of life and the believers’ human spirit. Through regeneration the divine Spirit has been mingled with our human spirit to make it a mingled spirit.



Our regenerated human spirit is life because Christ as the righteousness of God was applied to us and Christ as life was imparted into us. The dispensing of the divine life into the believers is predicated on Christ's redemption.

of His organic salvation. The mingled spirit is the divine life not only because Christ as God's righteousness has been applied to us but because Christ who is life has entered into us and has been joined to our human spirit based upon this righteousness. Through regeneration our human spirit has become life: "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10). In this verse *the spirit* should be interpreted not as the divine Spirit but as the mingled spirit, the human spirit indwelt by the divine Spirit, because the spirit here is life "only under the condition that Christ is in us" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 10, note 5). The divine Spirit is unconditionally the Spirit of life because life is the eternal and inherent content of the Spirit. Regardless of whether Christ is dispensed into us or whether righteousness is applied to us, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of life. Hence, *the spirit* mentioned in Romans 8:10 refers to the mingled spirit, the regenerated human spirit joined to the indwelling Christ as the Spirit of Christ (2 Cor. 3:17).

Our regenerated human spirit is life because at the time of our regeneration Christ as the righteousness of God was applied to us and Christ as life was imparted into us. The dispensing of the Triune God as the divine life into the believers is predicated on the satisfaction of His righteousness through Christ's redemption. God's justification is based upon our receiving Christ as "our righteousness" in two aspects—objective and subjective (1 Cor. 1:30; Jer. 23:6). As our objective righteousness, Christ is the righteous One in whom God justifies us, approving us according to His standard of righteousness (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:1). As our subjective righteousness, Christ is the One dwelling in us in order to make us the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). In Romans 5:18 Paul states that Christ's righteous act of dying on the cross resulted in a "justification of life." The expression *justification of life* indicates that justification is not an end in itself but is unto life and for life, issuing in the impartation of life. "Through justification we have come up to the standard of God's righteousness and correspond with it, so that now He can impart His life to us" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 18, note 2). Having Christ as our righteousness results in having Christ as "our life" (Col. 3:4). Because of the gift of righteousness through Christ's redemption, God in Christ can dispense Himself as "the grace of life" into our spirit without contradicting His righteousness (Rom. 5:17; 1 Pet. 3:7). This dispensing causes our spirit to be regenerated. Since the regenerated human spirit is indwelt by and joined to Christ, who is both life and the life-giving Spirit, the regenerated human spirit is not only living but is life itself. Christ, who was on the cross as the redeeming Lamb to be applied to us as our righteousness, is now within us as the life-giving Spirit and joined to us as one spirit, making our mingled spirit life.

Becoming Children of God by the Spirit of God Regenerating the Spirit of Man

The union of the Spirit of God and the human spirit regenerates the believers to be children of God. Thus, Paul in Romans 8:16 associates our being children of God with the co-working of the regenerating Spirit of God with our regenerated spirit: "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God." Our status as children of God is based upon our regeneration, our spiritual birth, in which we are born of the Holy Spirit in our human spirit (John 3:6). The human spirit created by God as the organ to receive the divine life was deadened through Adam's fall (Eph. 2:1). However, when we believed into Christ, He righteously entered into our spirit as the Spirit of life and joined Himself to it, imparting His eternal life into our deadened spirit with the authority to make us children of God (Gal. 3:1-3; Eph. 2:5; John 1:12-13).

Through the mingling of the Spirit of life with the human spirit, we were born of God the Father, the source of life, and made children of God with the life and nature of God. Regeneration is irreversible; once the Spirit of God comes into our spirit, He will never depart but will remain in us forever (14:16-17). Once we have been begotten of God, we have His eternal life and are His children forever. It is a wonder and an

astounding proof of God’s unfathomable love for us that through regeneration, we who were once children of the devil, alienated from the life of God, are now and will eternally be the children of God, possessing His life (Eph. 4:18; 1 John 3:1). By our first birth, we were generated, born of flesh, and begotten of man, thereby obtaining the human life and nature; by our second birth, we were regenerated, born of the Spirit in our spirit, and begotten of God, thereby obtaining His divine life and nature (John 3:6; 1:12-13). We have become children of God, not merely through a legal process but more intrinsically through an organic process of birth made possible by the mingling of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man. Because we are genuine children of God in life, we are, in our mingled spirit, the same as God in life and nature (but not in the Godhead or as an object of worship), and we can walk in a manner that is worthy of God by living according to His eternal life and partaking of His divine nature in order to express Him (Eph. 5:1-2, 8; Matt. 5:48; 1 Thes. 2:12).

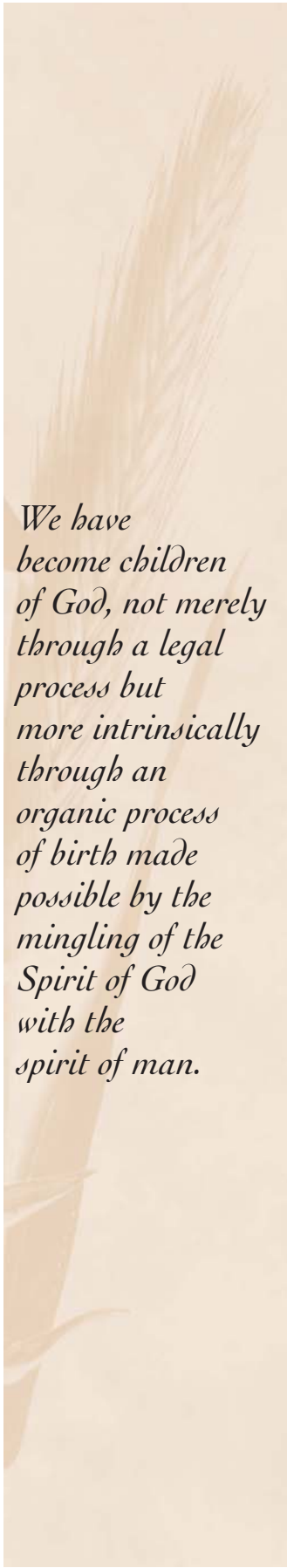
The Mingled Spirit Crying, “Abba, Father!”

Prior to mentioning the Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are God’s children, Paul presents proof that we are God’s children: we “have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!” (Rom. 8:15). When the Spirit of God’s Son was imparted into our spirit and mingled with it, we were ushered into a union with the Son and thus received a spirit of sonship (Gal. 4:6; cf. 1 Pet. 3:4). Therefore, the one who is crying is neither we alone nor the Spirit of God’s Son alone but the Spirit of God’s Son mingled with our regenerated human spirit. God sent forth the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of life, in order to dispense His life with His nature into us so that we might become His children in life. Our divine sonship was initiated when God gave us a spirit of sonship. The spirit of sonship is the mingled spirit, our regenerated spirit joined to the Spirit of God’s Son. It is by the mingled spirit that we may know the reality of having been begotten of God with His eternal life and divine nature and may have a genuine relationship in life with God as our Father.

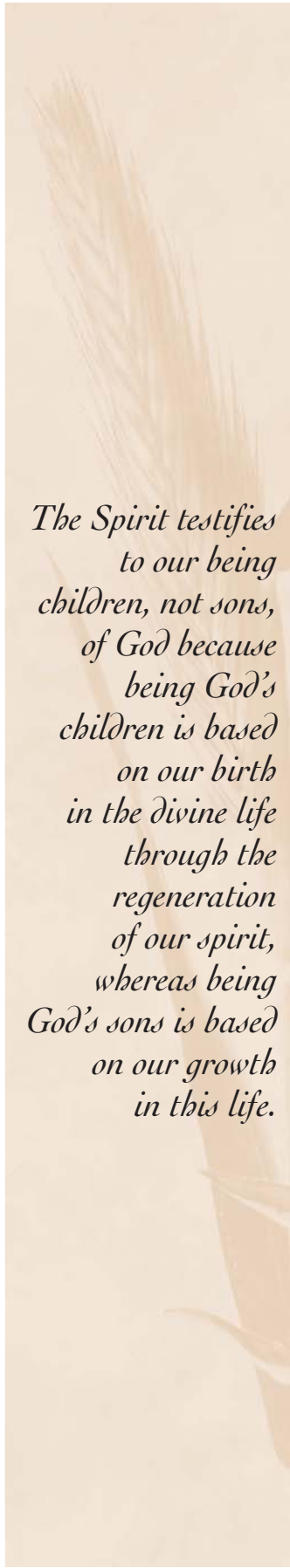
Prior to His death and resurrection, only Christ, by virtue of the divine life that He possessed, was qualified to call God His Father (Matt. 26:39, 42; John 5:17; 6:32, 40; 8:38). But after Christ’s resurrection, the believers, who now also possess the divine life, are qualified to call God their Father. In the days when He walked on earth, Christ was the unique human being who had the divine life (1:4). After passing through death and entering into resurrection, He was designated the Son of God in power, the firstborn Son of God, and was transfigured to be the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of God’s Son (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:17). In regeneration the Spirit of God’s Son enters into our human spirit, causing our spirit to become the spirit of sonship in which we cry, “Abba, Father!” As a result, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has become our God and Father as well (Eph. 1:3; John 20:17). We are no longer just God’s creatures; we are His children, born of Him and related to Him in life. Two thousand years ago in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ, the only begotten Son, prayed to the Father in agony, crying, “Abba Father” (Mark 14:36). Today countless children of God, by virtue of the divine life, share with the firstborn Son the privilege of addressing God in a most intimate and affectionate way, crying, “Abba, Father!”

The Witnessing of the Mingled Spirit

From the moment of our regeneration, the Spirit of God continually witnesses with our regenerated spirit that we are God’s children. This inner witnessing attests to the most elementary form of our organic relationship with God the Father—that we are His children based upon our life union with Him in Christ—and not only assures us of this relationship but also restricts us to a living that befits our status as children of God. The inner witnessing of the Spirit with our spirit convicts us when we do things that are not in keeping with being a child of God. The Spirit with our spirit constantly



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testifies that we are truly begotten of God, possessing His divine life, so that we may live according to this life by walking according to the mingled spirit (Rom. 8:4).

In order to experience the operation of the Spirit who witnesses and cries, "Abba, Father" with our spirit, we should bear the responsibility to exercise our spirit to witness and cry. "Our spirit must take the initiative to witness first; then the Spirit will witness with our spirit" (Lee, Recovery Version v. 16, note 1). When we exercise our mingled spirit by crying, "Abba, Father," the Spirit of God's Son witnesses with our spirit that we are indeed the children of God. "When our spirit testifies, the Spirit honors our testifying and testifies with our spirit" (Lee, *Exodus* 887). Similarly, even though both the Spirit of God's Son and we in the spirit of sonship cry, "Abba, Father" together, our spirit must take the initiative to cry. Then the Spirit will honor our crying by crying in and with us. Although the Spirit witnesses and cries within us, our experience of these activities of the Spirit requires that we take the initiative. Therefore, we should learn to exercise our spirit to cry in order to experience the Spirit's crying of "Abba, Father," thus witnessing that we are God's children.

Becoming Sons of God through the Spread of the Mingled Spirit into Our Soul

According to Romans 8:16, the Spirit testifies to our being children, not sons, of God because being God's children is based on our birth in the divine life through the regeneration of our spirit, whereas being God's sons is based on our growth in this life through the transformation of our soul. Since God's eternal purpose is to bring many sons into glory, the children of God need to grow in the divine life to become the sons of God (Heb. 2:10). In order to advance in the divine life, we need to live according to the mingled spirit, the spirit of sonship.

In Romans 8:14 Paul unveils that as the believers learn to walk according to the mingled spirit, they grow in the divine life from being children to being sons of God: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." As Henry Alford elucidates, "A *son* of God differs from a *child* of God, in implying the higher and more mature and conscious member of God's family" (907). Our growth in the divine life to be sons of God involves our experience of various stages of organic salvation, including sanctification, renewing, transformation, and conformation, through our enjoyment of the Spirit of life in our spirit. We need to progress in our participation in this salvation by allowing the mingled spirit to penetrate and permeate every faculty of our soul.

Sanctification

Romans reveals that sanctification entails not only separation from the world unto God through the application of Christ's redemption but also saturation with God's holy nature through the operation of the divine life within us (6:12-23). The former aspect of sanctification concerns our outward position, whereas the latter concerns our inward disposition. In Romans 15:16 Paul underscores the role of the Spirit in the believers' dispositional sanctification: "I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit." In his endeavor to fulfill his function as a priest of the gospel of God, Paul ministered Christ Jesus, the Holy One, to the Gentiles in order to make them a satisfying offering to God. Since Christ is the Spirit, Paul's ministry of Christ to the Gentile believers caused them to be "sanctified in the Holy Spirit," saturated in their inward parts with the Holy Spirit as the application of the essence of the Holy God. At the time of our regeneration, the Holy Spirit was mingled with our human spirit to become the base from which He may spread into our soul and body, thus sanctifying all three parts of our being (1 Thes. 5:23). Through dispositional sanctification the Holy Spirit sanctifies us with God's divine life and His holy nature, saving us from being common and worldly to becoming holy as God is in

our entire being (1 Pet. 1:16). Our experience of sanctification in life depends on our partaking of Christ as the Spirit through the exercise of our mingled spirit, which is now “a holy spirit” (2 Cor. 6:6).

Renewing

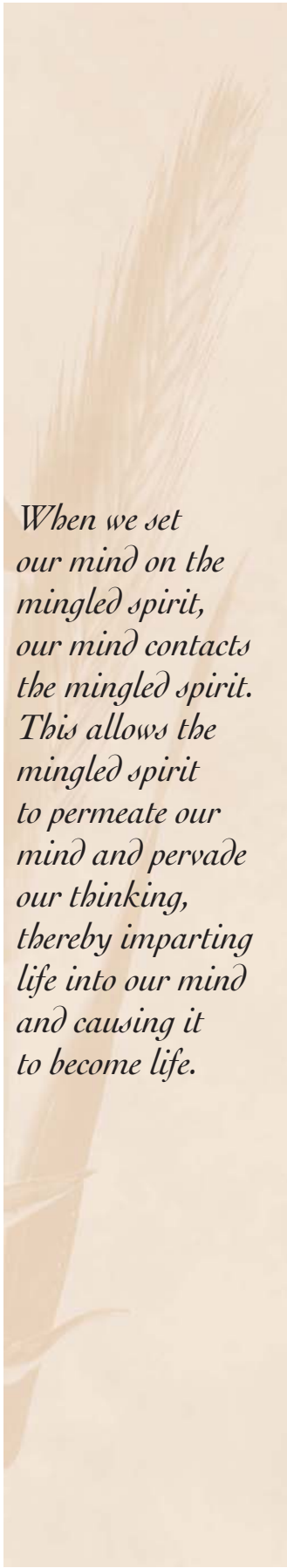
Paul’s exhortation that the believers “be transformed by the renewing of the mind” is intrinsically related to the mingled spirit (Rom. 12:2). Gordon D. Fee posits that although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in chapter 12, “the Spirit is presupposed everywhere and lies close to the surface in the imperative ‘be transformed by the renewing of the mind’” (598). Noting that “having the mind of Christ” in 1 Corinthians 2:16 and “having the Spirit of God” in 7:40 are “nearly interchangeable ideas,” Fee suggests that “to have a renewed mind is equal to having the Spirit” (602). In keeping with this suggestion, Fee points out that Paul’s imperative in Romans 12:2—“be transformed by the renewing of the mind”—has “significant conceptual correspondence with” Paul’s imperative in Ephesians 4:23—“be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (710). Fee states that he understands *the spirit* in Ephesians 4:23 as “yet another instance where we should recognize the human spirit as the first referent, but be prepared also to recognize the Holy Spirit as hovering nearby, since in Paul’s own theology, such renewal is indeed the work of the Spirit” (712). For this reason, Fee translates Ephesians 4:23 as “be renewed in the spirit/Spirit of your mind” (709). Witness Lee understands what Fee denotes as “spirit/Spirit” in verse 23 to be the mingled spirit—“the regenerated spirit of the believers, which is mingled with the indwelling Spirit of God”—and points out that “such a mingled spirit spreads into our mind, thus becoming the spirit of our mind. It is in such a spirit that we are renewed for our transformation” (Recovery Version, v. 23, note 2).

Elsewhere in Romans Paul connects the working of the divine life to the mingled spirit in the context of the renewing of the believers’ mind. In 6:4 Paul refers to “newness of life,” the divine life, and in 7:6 he refers to “newness of spirit,” the mingled spirit. According to Andrew Murray, *newness of life* refers to “an objective reality secured to us in Christ,” *newness of spirit* refers to “a subjective experience made ours by the indwelling of the Spirit” (115). In essence *newness of life* and *newness of spirit* refer to the same divine reality, for *life* refers to the resurrected Christ who is life, and *spirit* also refers to the resurrected Christ, who is joined to our human spirit as the Spirit of life. “Our regenerated spirit is a source of newness because the Lord, the life of God, and the Holy Spirit are there” (Lee, Recovery Version, Rom. 7:6, note 4). Our experience of the renewing capacity of the divine life is dependent upon our participation in the Spirit of God mingled with our spirit.

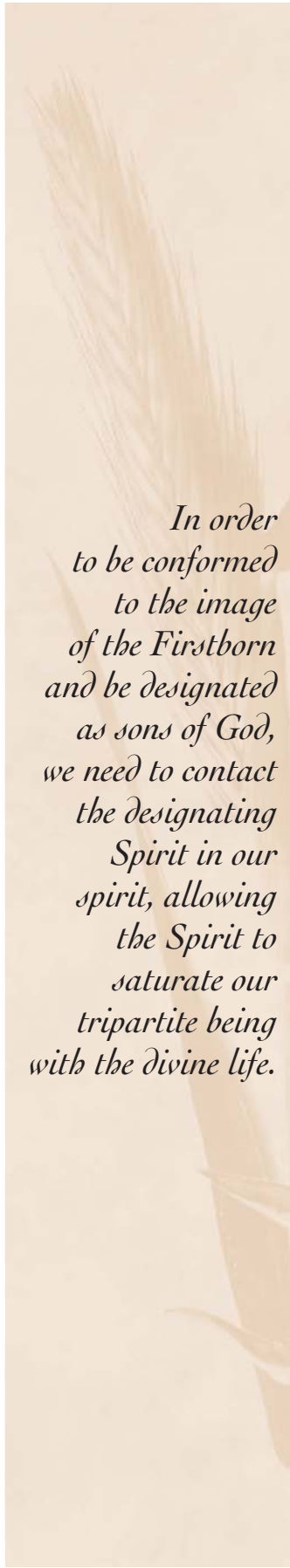
It is in the mingled spirit that we are renewed in our mind by the operation of the divine life. For this reason, Paul links the mingled spirit with the divine life in 8:5-6, declaring that “those who are according to the spirit” mind “the things of the Spirit,” for “the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” When we set our mind on the mingled spirit, our mind contacts the mingled spirit. This allows the mingled spirit, which is life itself, to permeate our mind and pervade our thinking, thereby imparting life into our mind and causing it to become life. We need to set our mind on the mingled spirit by minding the things of the Spirit, which are the things concerning the Son that the Spirit of reality receives and declares to us (John 16:14-15). Consequently, the Spirit in our spirit will renew our mind by supplying our mind with the divine life. The mind is the principal component of the soul. Hence, if the mingled spirit saturates our mind with the divine life, renewing our mind and making our mind life, the way will be opened for our entire soul to be renewed through the operation of the divine life.

Transformation

The renewing of the mind issues in the transformation of the soul (Rom. 12:2).



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our thinking,
thereby imparting
life into our mind
and causing it
to become life.*



*In order
to be conformed
to the image
of the Firstborn
and be designated
as sons of God,
we need to contact
the designating
Spirit in our
spirit, allowing
the Spirit to
saturate our
tripartite being
with the divine life.*

Transformation in Romans should be understood as a stage of the organic salvation carried out by the resurrection life of Christ; it is not merely an external adjustment in our conduct but an inward change of our being through the progressive impartation of Christ as life into the faculties of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will. Such an organic metamorphosis in and with the divine life leads to a change in our soul, issuing in a Christ-permeated and Christ-expressing soul. Although many commentators rightly understand transformation in Romans 12:2 to be the work of the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:18, few see the organic and Christological significance of transformation as an issue of our participation in the saving life of Christ as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit for the expression of Christ.

Conformation

Romans 8:29 says that God predestined us “to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” Being transformed in our soul results in our being conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God, for conformation is the consummation of transformation in the divine life. The believers are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ not as God’s only begotten Son but as His firstborn Son. Romans 1:3-4 reveals Christ as the pattern—the first God-man who was designated the Son of God in resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God—and 8:29 reveals the believers in Christ as the reproduction of that pattern—the many God-men who will be conformed to His image through organic salvation to be the many sons of God. In Romans 1:3-4 Paul says that Christ “came out of the seed of David according to the flesh” and “was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead.” According to His status as the second of the Divine Trinity, Christ is eternally the only begotten Son of God. As such, Christ in His divinity did not need to be designated the Son of God. However, through incarnation Christ became the seed of David according to the flesh, a God-man, putting on the human flesh, which did not possess divinity. Even though the incarnated Christ was the Son of God in His divinity, He was not the Son of God in His humanity until after His resurrection. Acts 13:33 says that after Christ had died as a man in the flesh, God, in raising Him up from the dead, declared, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.” This implies that God raised Christ from the dead by imparting the divine life into Christ’s human flesh, thus begetting Him in His humanity, deifying His humanity, and uplifting His humanity into the divine sonship. Hence, the resurrected Christ is the Son of God not only in His divinity but also in His deified humanity. This Christ, who was begotten as the Son of God in resurrection, is called the Firstborn in Hebrews 1:5-6, because His many brothers, the many children of God, were “regenerated...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3; Matt. 28:10; John 20:17).

In Romans 1:3-4 Paul discloses the operation of the Spirit in designating Christ as the Son of God in His resurrection, saying that as the seed of David He was designated the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead. “The Spirit of holiness” refers to the divine essence of Christ, the essence of the divine life within Him. In resurrection the Spirit of holiness permeated Christ’s humanity with the divine essence. As a result, His humanity was sanctified and brought into the divine sonship, making Him the firstborn Son of God and opening the way for many sons of man to become sons of God. Our conformation to the image of the firstborn Son is our progressive designation as sons of God, which will consummate in “the revelation of the sons of God” at the Lord’s return (8:19). Following the pathway pioneered by our elder Brother, we too are designated the sons of God according to the Spirit of holiness, that is, by the Spirit’s work to saturate our inward parts with the divine essence. In order to be conformed to the image of the Firstborn and be designated as sons of God, we need to contact the designating Spirit in our spirit, allowing the Spirit to saturate our tripartite being with the divine life. In order for us, who are

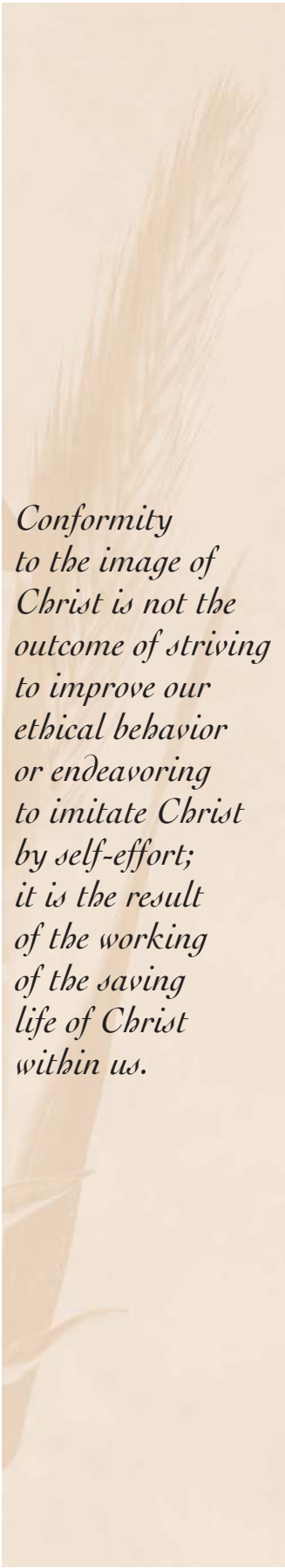
human seeds according to the flesh, to be transformed into divine sons, we need to walk according to our mingled spirit. If we walk according to the mingled spirit, we will partake of the Spirit of holiness that permeates us with the divine essence so that we may gradually be designated as sons of God until we are fully conformed to the image of the firstborn Son.

Conformity to the image of Christ is not the outcome of striving to improve our ethical behavior or endeavoring to imitate Christ by self-effort; it is the result of the working of the saving life of Christ within us, which equals the operation of the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8:2. The law of the Spirit of life is not a legal code but a natural principle, referring to the innate ability and spontaneous power of the divine life within the believers. Every kind of life has its inherent law to produce a life form with a particular life shape. As a fruit tree grows, the life of that tree automatically functions as a law to shape the fruit according to its characteristic form. Similarly, as the divine life grows within us, the indwelling Spirit of life spontaneously functions as an organic law to conform us to the image of Christ, God's Firstborn. The operation of the law of the Spirit of life as the divine capacity within us assures us that we will be like Christ and will be perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect (1 John 3:2; Matt. 5:48). In the sight of God, Christ is the firstborn Son of God among many brothers because He is the Firstborn from the dead and has the first place, the preeminence, among His brothers who have been regenerated through His resurrection from the dead (Col. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3). In order for Him to be manifested to the universe as God's Firstborn, we need to grow in the divine life to be conformed to His image so that we may match His glorious image. By the working of the Spirit of life in our spirit, we as the many brothers of Christ are conformed to His image so that we may be saved from self-likeness (the appearance and expression of the self) and become mature sons of God, who are the same as Christ in life and nature as well as in expression and appearance but not in the Godhead.

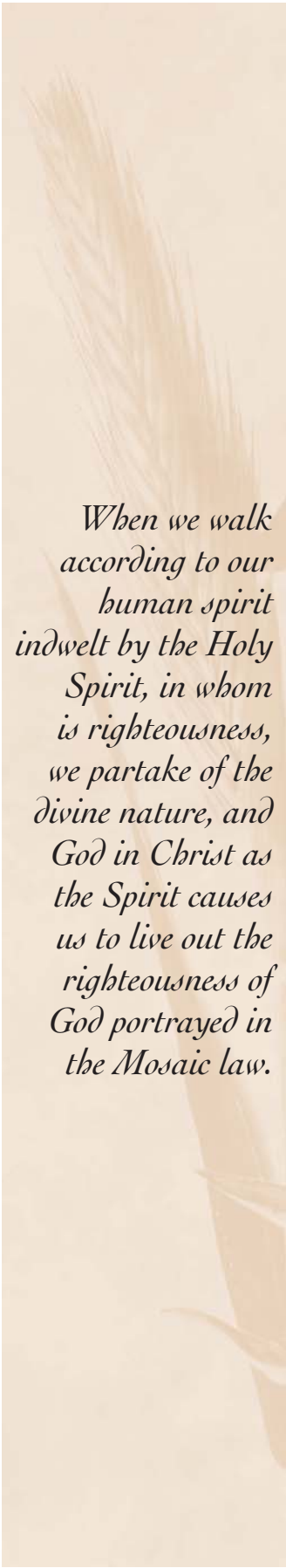
Liberation from the Law of Sin and of Death

The law of the Spirit of life in our spirit saves us not only from self-likeness but also from the bondage of sin and death. In Romans 7 Paul describes the condemnation he suffered as a result of his captivity to the law of sin in his members, yet shortly thereafter he testifies of his freedom through the law of the Spirit of life in Romans 8:1-2: "There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death." The flesh, the fallen and corrupted human body, is both the body of sin and the body of death (6:6; 7:24). The former is "strong in sinning against God," for sin "energizes the fallen body to sin"; and the latter is "weak in acting to please God," for death "utterly weakens and disables the corrupted body, so that it cannot keep God's commandments" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 24, note 2). Every fallen man is under bondage to the law of sin and of death.

Through crucifixion Christ dealt with sin by condemning sin in the flesh and putting it away (8:3; John 1:29; Heb. 9:26), and through resurrection He dealt with death by overcoming and swallowing it up as the resurrection life (1 Cor. 15:52-54; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 1:18). However, the effectiveness of Christ's sin-condemning crucifixion and His death-conquering resurrection are made available to us only by the Spirit in our spirit. Although we have been crucified, buried, and resurrected with Christ (Rom. 6:2-10), Christ's crucifixion and resurrection will remain objective facts to us if we do not live in the mingled spirit. In order to experience our co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Him, we must put to death the practices of the body by the Spirit in our spirit so that we may live (8:13). Paul declares in verse 2 that it is *in Christ Jesus*—in our organic union with Christ as the Spirit of life in our spirit—that the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin and of death and liberates us from its bondage.



Conformity to the image of Christ is not the outcome of striving to improve our ethical behavior or endeavoring to imitate Christ by self-effort; it is the result of the working of the saving life of Christ within us.



When we walk according to our human spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit, in whom is righteousness, we partake of the divine nature, and God in Christ as the Spirit causes us to live out the righteousness of God portrayed in the Mosaic law.

Hence, in Romans 8 “the phrase *in Christ* refers not only to our standing, our position, in Christ, as mentioned in ch. 6, but also to the reality of our daily walk in our regenerated spirit” (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 1, note 3). Thus, Paul speaks of the believers in verse 1 as “those who are in Christ Jesus” and in verse 9 as those who are “in the spirit.” Those who are *in Christ Jesus*—the believers who are liberated from the law of sin and death through their abiding in Christ are those who are *in the spirit*—the believers in whom the Spirit of God dwells to liberate them from this law through their living in the mingled spirit. By living in the mingled spirit, we may abide in Christ, who as the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the tyranny of sin and death.

Fulfilling the Righteous Requirement of the Law

The operation of the Spirit in our spirit also fulfills the righteous requirement of the Old Testament law. According to Romans 8:4, the righteous demand of the law is fulfilled “in us,” not by us. According to Henry Alford, the passive construction of the Greek verb translated “fulfilled” “is to [show] that the work is not ours, but that of God by His grace” (905). Witness Lee echoes this thought, saying that the righteous requirement of the law is “not consciously kept by us through our outward endeavoring but spontaneously and unconsciously fulfilled in us by the inward working of the Spirit of life” (Recovery Version, Rom. 8:4, note 1). Moreover, Gordon D. Fee argues that since the Greek word translated “in us” “almost certainly is not instrumental, but locative,” “we as his people are the sphere in which God by his Spirit has fulfilled his divine purposes set forth in the Law” (536). Fee also notes that “Paul does not say that Torah is now ‘obeyed’ or ‘kept’ or ‘done’—the ordinary language for Torah observance—but that what Torah requires is now ‘fulfilled’ *in us*” (536). He explains further, “It is the Spirit who effects the ‘righteousness’ that Torah aimed at but could not produce” (538, cf. 561). The Spirit in our spirit is the realization of Christ who came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17). Hence, when we live according to our spirit mingled with the Spirit, the Spirit spontaneously operates within us to fulfill the righteous demand of the law in us. God’s Spirit within us (that is, in our spirit) contains God’s nature, and His written law, which portrays and defines Him, corresponds to His divine nature (Ezek. 36:26-27; John 4:24). When we walk according to our human spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit, in whom is righteousness (Rom. 14:17), we partake of the divine nature, and God in Christ as the Spirit causes us to live out the righteousness of God portrayed in the Mosaic law. Instead of trying to keep the righteous requirement of the written law by fleshly effort, we should walk according to our mingled spirit, thereby enjoying the operation of the Spirit of life in our spirit—an operation that organically fulfills the righteous demand of the law.

Being Led by the Spirit

The Spirit of life in our spirit is the processed Triune God who dwells in us to carry out His salvation in life. Christ as the Spirit of life administers God’s complete organic salvation in its various stages within us, operating in us with the power of His indestructible life for the fulfillment of His heart’s desire to produce us as mature sons of God (Heb. 7:16, 25; 2:10-11; cf. Phil. 2:13). Nevertheless, in order for this desire of God to be realized, we must bear the responsibility to cooperate with the inner-operating God by exercising our mingled spirit in order to be led by the Spirit. Gordon D. Fee agrees with this thought, asserting that “the Spirit has not come to “take over,” as it were, so that our own human responsibility is diminished...The coming of the Spirit does not overtake or overwhelm...The Christian life is *by the Spirit*; but *we* cry, or walk” (569).

The thought that the Spirit’s work in the believers does not negate their responsibility is in accordance with Romans 8:14, where Paul characterizes the sons of God as those who are “led by the Spirit.” “This verse speaks of our being led by the Spirit rather than of

the Spirit's leading us, indicating that although the Spirit is ready to lead us, we must take the initiative to be led by Him" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 14, note 1). In the verse prior, Paul says, "If you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live," implying that if we would be sons of God with the distinguishing characteristic of being led by the Spirit, we should put to death the practices of the body by the Spirit and should not live according to the flesh but according to the spirit. Henry Alford suggests the same, stating that "slaying the deeds of the body by the Spirit, implies...being under the Spirit's guidance" (907). He also explains that *the practices of the body* refers to "the whole course of habits and action which has the flesh for its prompter" (907). Hence, to put to death the practices of the body by the Spirit is to crucify the flesh by walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 24-25). In order to be led by the Spirit, we must also live according to the mingled spirit (Rom. 8:13), which includes walking according to the mingled spirit (v. 4), minding the things of the Spirit (v. 5), setting our mind on the spirit (v. 6), and living in the spirit (v. 9). The more we walk according to the mingled spirit, the more we will grow in the divine life and be led by the Spirit. Reciprocally, the more we develop in the divine life and have the leading of the Spirit, the more we will live according to the spirit. In this cycle we continually enjoy the dispensing of the divine life from our mingled spirit into our soul. Eventually, we reach the stage of maturity in the divine life, in which we advance from being sons of God to heirs of God (Heb. 6:1).

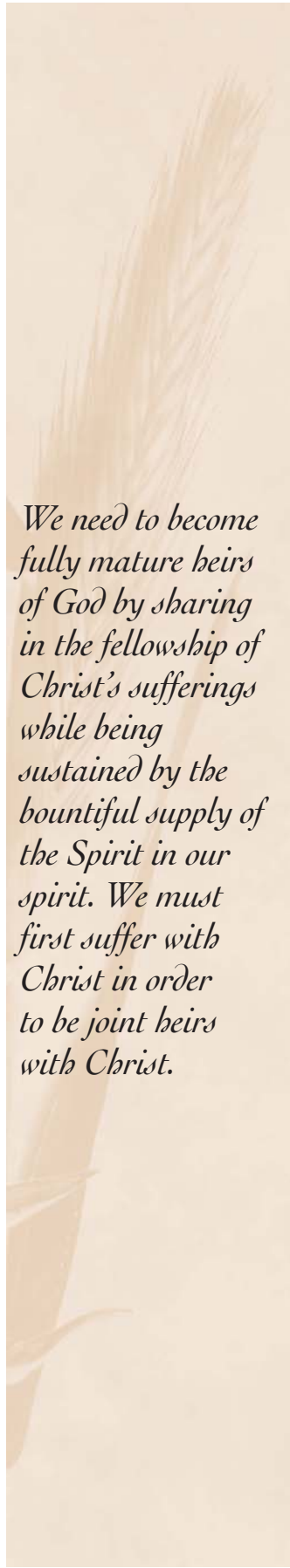
Becoming Heirs of God through the Spreading of the Mingled Spirit into Our Body

The crowning manifestation of the believers' growth in life unto full maturity of sonship is their progression from sons of God to heirs of God—from those who are led by the Spirit to those who are qualified to inherit God's estate. Romans 8:17 says, "If children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him." By experiencing all the stages of God's full salvation, we will ultimately become heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, to inherit all that God is and has. God the Father is the One who gives Himself as the divine inheritance to the believers, and Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the One whom God appointed Heir of all things and who shares His inheritance with the believers, His brothers (Col. 1:12; Heb. 1:2; John 16:15; cf. Psa. 2:8; Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 1:32; Matt. 11:27).

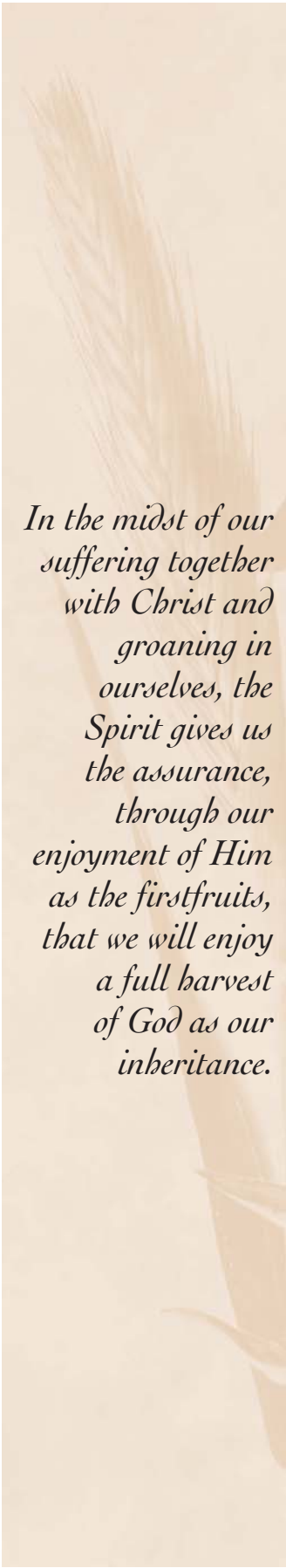
The God-appointed destiny of every foreknown, predestined, called, and justified believer is to be glorified with Christ so that he may be a joint heir with Christ of God (Rom. 8:29). First, we are children of God by virtue of our regeneration, having been begotten of God with His eternal life, that is, born of the Spirit in our spirit. Then we need to grow in life by walking according to the mingled spirit, maturing into sons of God who are led by the Spirit. Ultimately, we need to become fully mature heirs of God by sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings while being sustained by the bountiful supply of the Spirit in our spirit (Phil. 1:19; 3:10). According to Romans 8:17, we must first suffer with Christ in order to be joint heirs with Christ. What qualifies us to be heirs of God is not only our receiving of the eternal life through our divine birth but also our allowing this life to develop within us unto maturity through our participation in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of the church, His Body (Col. 1:24). Our participation in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings works out for us more and more surpassingly an eternal weight of glory, hastening our progression in life to maturity (2 Cor. 4:17). Hence, we may rest assured that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us as the heirs of God (Rom. 8:17).

The Firstfruits of the Spirit

All creation groans and travails in pain together, anxiously watching and eagerly



We need to become fully mature heirs of God by sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings while being sustained by the bountiful supply of the Spirit in our spirit. We must first suffer with Christ in order to be joint heirs with Christ.



In the midst of our suffering together with Christ and groaning in ourselves, the Spirit gives us the assurance, through our enjoyment of Him as the firstfruits, that we will enjoy a full harvest of God as our inheritance.

awaiting the revelation of the sons of God, the manifestation of the mature believers as heirs of glory (vv. 19, 22), and, “not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body” (v. 23). Since our body belongs to the old creation and has not yet been redeemed, we groan together with the creation, longing for full sonship, the redemption and transfiguration of our body. Nevertheless, while we groan, we, unlike the creation, may rejoice, for we possess the firstfruits of the Spirit. Gordon D. Fee notes that the genitive *the firstfruits of the Spirit* is appositional and means “the firstfruits, the Spirit Himself” (573), denoting that the Spirit is “the firstfruits of the future harvest” (571). Today the Spirit in our spirit is the firstfruits, the foretaste, of our full enjoyment of the Triune God as our inheritance, which enjoyment we will obtain at the redemption of our body. In the midst of our suffering together with Christ and groaning in ourselves, the Spirit gives us the assurance, through our enjoyment of Him as the firstfruits, that we will enjoy a full harvest of God as our inheritance when our body is transfigured in glory.

According to Henry Alford, *the firstfruits of the Spirit* refers to “the indwelling and influences of the Holy Spirit” as “an earnest of the full harvest of His complete possession of us, spirit and flesh and soul hereafter” (912). This is evident, Alford suggests, “from the analogy of St. Paul’s imagery regarding the Holy Spirit”; Paul speaks concerning the Spirit’s “full work in us as the efficient means of our glorification hereafter” (912). The Holy Spirit in our human spirit is a foretaste, a pledge, within us of the redemption of our body. As we earnestly await the day when our mortal body will be swallowed up by God’s resurrection life (2 Cor. 5:4), we are assured of this wonderful consummation of His full salvation within us, because He “has given to us the Spirit as a pledge” (v. 5), a guarantee, of our glorification. Paul underscores the Spirit’s role in our glorification by identifying the Spirit as the pledge of our inheritance and pointing to the redemption of our body as the culmination of the Spirit’s sealing work within us. In Ephesians 1:13-14 Paul says that we “were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession,” and in 4:30 he states that we were sealed in the Holy Spirit “unto the day of redemption.” Since we are God’s possession that “He obtained through His own blood” (Acts 20:28; cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20), *the redemption of the acquired possession* must refer to the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23). Beginning from the day that we are regenerated, the Spirit continually seals us by saturating our being with the element of God’s glory until we are redeemed in our body and thus fully mature in His life.

The Interceding Spirit

In order for us to reach full sonship, we need the Spirit’s interceding for us according to God. As we groan in ourselves for the completion of sonship, the redemption of our body (v. 23), “in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (v. 26). The intercession of the Spirit is “according to God” and for a specific purpose (v. 27): His “interceding is mainly that we may experience the transformation in life for growth into the maturity of sonship that we may be fully conformed to the image of God’s Son” (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 26, note 2). When we groan from our mingled spirit, the Spirit who dwells in our spirit joins in our groaning, interceding for us according to God. In this sense, the interceding of the indwelling Spirit is dependent on our groaning in the mingled spirit: “by taking the initiative to groan, we give the Spirit an opportunity to intercede on our behalf” (Lee, *Exodus* 887). We need to groan in our mingled spirit for the redemption of our body in order to afford the Spirit a way to intercede for us according to God’s desire that we would be molded to the image of His Son. When the Spirit intercedes for us, God the Father answers, causing all things—including tribulation, anguish,

persecution, peril, sword, and even death—to work together for good, which is that we might be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son until we are glorified with Him and brought into full sonship (vv. 29-30, 35-36, 38-39).

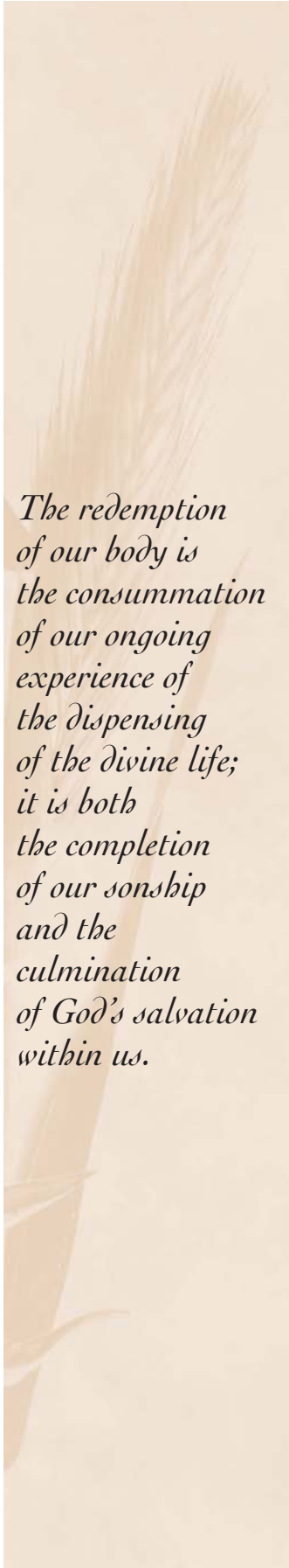
Giving Life to Our Mortal Bodies

The glorification of our tripartite being is the consummation of the indwelling Spirit's operation to impart the divine life from our mingled spirit through our soul and into our body. In Romans 8:11 Paul says, "If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." John Calvin asserts that in this verse Paul speak not of "the last resurrection, which shall take place in a moment," but "of a continued operation of the Spirit, which...restores in us celestial life" (Alford, 907). Although our regenerated spirit is life because of righteousness, our fallen body is dead because of indwelling sin (7:20; 8:10). However, our mortal body, a body of sin, which is presently subject to weakness, illness, and eventually death, is destined to be raised in incorruption and conformed to the Lord's own glorious body in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 52-54; 2 Cor. 5:4; Phil. 3:21). Whereas this destiny will not be fulfilled until the Lord's second coming, the divine life can be supplied to our dying body through the Spirit to a certain degree today. However, there is a particular requirement for the God of resurrection to dispense life into our body through the Spirit. This requirement is mentioned by Romans 8:11: the Spirit dwelling in us. The Greek word rendered "dwells" is the verb οἰκέω, which is derived from the noun οἶκος, meaning "dwelling place" and which connotes making one's home. In order for God to impart the divine life into our mortal body through His Spirit, we need to let Him make His home in us and thus take possession of our entire inner being (Eph. 3:17). The Spirit's dwelling in us is a matter of our living in the mingled spirit, as indicated by Romans 8:9: "You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." "If we allow the Spirit of the Triune God to make His home in us, that is, to settle Himself in us with adequate room, then in our experience we are in the spirit and are no longer in the flesh" (Lee, Recovery Version, v. 9, note 2). We need to remain in the mingled spirit by allowing the Spirit adequate room to take up residence in us and to occupy our inward parts so that through this indwelling Spirit, God may dispense His divine life into our tripartite being—from our mingled spirit into our soul and ultimately into our mortal body. The redemption of our body is the consummation of our ongoing experience of the dispensing of the divine life; it is both the completion of our sonship and the culmination of God's salvation within us.

Through the redemption of our body, the Spirit will set us free from the slavery of corruption and usher us into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, transfiguring our body of sin, death, and humiliation into a body of glory, a spiritual body, which is a resurrected body saturated and animated by the mingled spirit (vv. 11, 21; Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:44). This will mark the realization of "the hope of the glory of God," that is, the hope of being brought into the glory of God, which is His glorious expression (Rom. 5:2). As heirs of glory, we will enter into glory—the glory unto which God in eternity past prepared us—so that the unsearchable riches of His incomparable glory might be made known upon us as tripartite vessels of mercy filled with Him as the divine life (9:23).

The Mingled Spirit—the Unique Means to Bring Forth the Body of Christ

Our participation in God's organic salvation through our exercise of the mingled spirit is not merely for our personal spiritual development; it is ultimately for the producing of the Body of Christ, the corporate expression of the Triune God in Christ. The mingled spirit is the unique means by which God brings forth and builds up the organic



The redemption of our body is the consummation of our ongoing experience of the dispensing of the divine life; it is both the completion of our sonship and the culmination of God's salvation within us.

Body of Christ, where we are joined to Christ as the Head and to one another as fellow members in the divine life.

The Mingled Spirit—the Corporate Spirit of the Body of Christ

Prior to introducing the Body of Christ in Romans 12, Paul lays the necessary groundwork by revealing the corporate nature of the mingled spirit, referring to the mingled spirit in 8:16 as “our spirit.” The mingled spirit is not simply an individual believer’s spirit; it is the corporate spirit of the Body, which unites us not only with the Spirit of the Lord as the Head of the Body but also to the spirits of all the believers as the members of the Body. In 1:9 Paul speaks of “my spirit,” yet in 8:16 he speaks of “our spirit.” On the one hand, we all personally possess “my spirit”—a human spirit as an organ created by God and regenerated by and mingled with the Spirit of God. On the other hand, our regenerated human spirit is also “our spirit”—a corporate mingled spirit, in which is the entire Body of Christ. Elsewhere in his Epistles Paul identifies the church with both the Body of Christ and the house of God, indicating that Christ’s Body is God’s house (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Tim. 3:15). In Ephesians 2:22 Paul states that the church as the dwelling place of God is “in spirit,” indicating that the corporate habitation of God, which is the Body of Christ with all its members, is in the believers’ mingled spirit. Exploring the significance of Ephesians 2:22 in light of the truth concerning our spirit in Romans 8:16, Witness Lee states that “our spirit is universally spacious,” for it “includes the spirits of all the saints” throughout all of time and space (Ephesians 213).

Salvation in the divine life, which is executed by the Spirit in our spirit, renews and transforms us to be mature sons of God so that we may be members of the Body of Christ, organically joined and knit together in order to live the Body life.

For this reason, Paul refers to the mingled spirit as “one spirit” and “the same spirit.” Paul highlights the corporate dimension of the mingled spirit when he exhorts the believers in Philippi to stand firm “in one spirit”—their human spirit indwelt by the divine Spirit—striving together with one soul along with the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27) and when he tells the believers in Corinth that they have “the same spirit” of faith and that he and Titus walked in “the same spirit” and in the same steps (2 Cor. 4:13; 12:18). Because Paul was a spiritual man who continually lived and served in his mingled spirit, he could testify to the Corinthian believers that although he was absent from them in the body, he was nevertheless present with them in the spirit, and that his spirit was assembled with them, even attending their meeting (1 Cor. 5:3-4; cf. Col. 2:5). Outside of our mingled spirit we are detached from one another and cannot be coordinated together with one another in and for the Body of Christ. It is only in *our spirit*—the mingled spirit as the corporate spirit of the Body—that we can experience the divine and mystical reality of the organic Body of Christ, keeping the oneness of the unique Body and laboring together with the fellow members for the service of the universal Body.

The Body of Christ—the Issue of Salvation in Life Experienced in the Mingled Spirit

The saving in Christ’s life that produces sons of God through the exercise of the mingled spirit issues in the Body of Christ. Romans 12:2 exhorts the believers to “be transformed by the renewing of the mind” so that they may “prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.” As we have pointed out, both transformation and renewing as stages of salvation in life are applied to us by the Spirit of life in our spirit. After verse 2 mentions the will of God, verse 5 goes on to state that the believers “who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another,” indicating that the will of God is to gain the Body of Christ. This implies that salvation in the divine life, which is executed by the Spirit in our spirit, renews and transforms us to be mature sons of God so that we may be proper members of the Body of Christ, organically joined and knit together in order to live the Body life.

The Body of Christ is composed of Christ as the Head and the believers in Christ as the members. The Body of Christ is not merely an apt illustration of the church but the organic reality of the church; thus, the Head and members of the Body must be the same in life, nature, and expression. In Colossians 1:18 Paul speaks of Christ as the Head of the Body and identifies Him as “the Firstborn from the dead,” indicating that the Head of the Body is the Firstborn of God’s new creation in resurrection, that is, “the Firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). Since the Head of the Body is the firstborn Son of God, the members of the Body must be the many sons of God conformed to the image of the Firstborn through salvation in life. In order for us to be members of the Body Christ, we need to exercise our mingled spirit to partake of God’s dynamic organic salvation, which conforms us to the image of His firstborn Son.

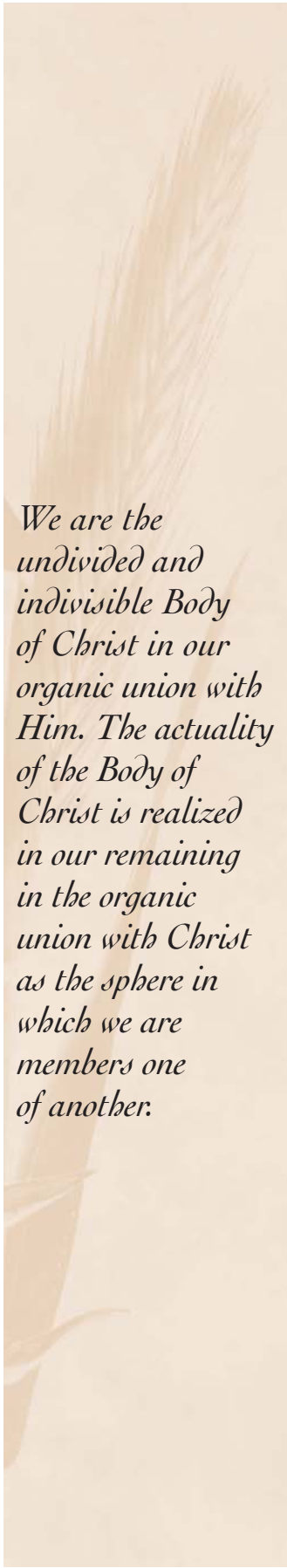
The Mingled Spirit Being the Reality of the Body of Christ

In Romans 12:5 Paul reveals the Body of Christ from the perspective of the believers’ organic union with Christ: “We who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” Since the mingled spirit is the means by which we realize our union with Christ in the divine life, it is by living in the mingled spirit that we can remain in the organic union with Christ and thus live in the Body of Christ in practicality. *One Body* refers to the unique mystical Body of Christ, and *in Christ* refers to our union with Christ in the divine life, by which we are joined to Him as the Head and to one another as fellow members. This indicates that the mystical Body of Christ is an organism produced and sustained by our union with Christ in the divine life and nature. We are the undivided and indivisible Body of Christ in our eternal organic union with Him. The actuality of the Body of Christ as an organic entity is realized in our remaining in the organic union with Christ as the sphere in which we are members one of another: “We are members one of another in Christ—not in ourselves—for Christ is both the element which makes us members one of another and the sphere in which we are members one of another” (Lee, *Conclusion* 3107). The Body of Christ exists in our organic union with Christ as the Spirit of life in our regenerated spirit.

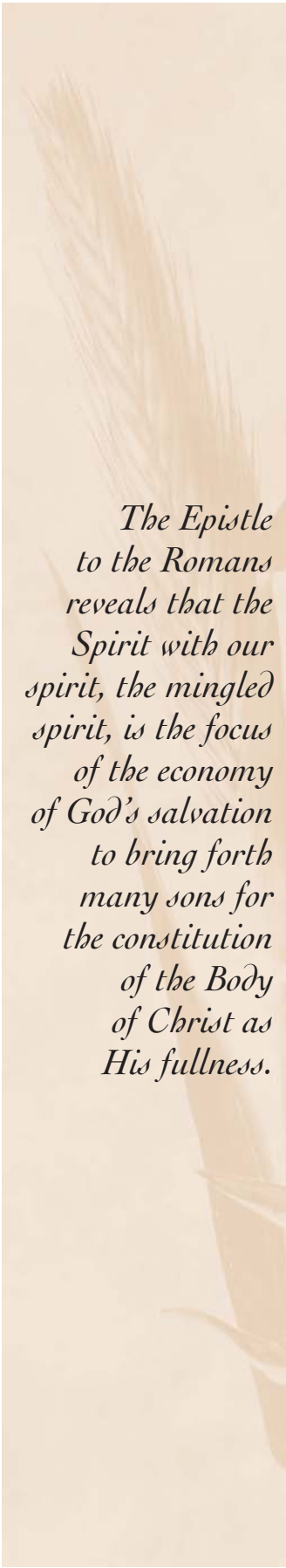
Hence, the reality of the Body of Christ is in the mingled spirit and even is the mingled spirit itself. Apart from the mingled spirit, there is no reality of the Body. The Body of Christ is produced by the mingling of the Spirit of Christ (the germinating factor of the Body) with our regenerated human spirit, and the building up of the Body is consummated by the impartation of Christ as the divine life in the mingled spirit into every part of our being. The Body of Christ is a divine-human organism composed of believers who not only possess the divine life but also mature in this life through a habitual living in the mingled spirit, thereby allowing the divine life to spread from the spirit into the remainder of their tripartite being. In order to contribute to the constitution and building up of the Body of Christ in its intrinsic reality, we need to remain in the mingled spirit.

Being Burning in Spirit

For this reason, shortly after revealing the Body of Christ as an organism produced and maintained by the life-union of Christ and the believers, Paul exhorts the believers to “not be slothful in zeal” but “burning in spirit, serving the Lord” (12:11). The Spirit as the divine fire is burning within us, causing our regenerated human spirit to be burning as well (Isa. 4:4; Rev. 4:5). Instead of quenching the Spirit, we should fan our spirit into flame so that we may serve the Lord with a fervent spirit—a spirit of power, love, and sobermindedness (1 Thes. 5:19; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Acts 18:25; cf. Rev. 3:19). We need to be burning *in* our mingled spirit, serving the Lord, because only by being in our mingled spirit can we live in the life union with Christ and thus live and serve in His organic Body.



We are the undivided and indivisible Body of Christ in our organic union with Him. The actuality of the Body of Christ is realized in our remaining in the organic union with Christ as the sphere in which we are members one of another.



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Conclusion

The Epistle to the Romans reveals that the Spirit with our spirit, the mingled spirit, is the focus of the economy of God's salvation to bring forth many sons for the constitution of the Body of Christ as His fullness. This dynamic salvation is based upon Christ's judicial redemption accomplished by His vicarious death, and it is carried out by the inner operation of Christ as the Spirit of life mingled with our spirit. Through our enjoyment of salvation in the divine life, we are regenerated, renewed, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified; we are delivered from sin, death, the flesh, worldliness, naturalness, self-likeness, and the slavery of corruption; and we become the same as the firstborn Son of God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in His Godhead.

Through regeneration Christ as the Spirit of life is joined to our human spirit, making our mingled spirit life and begetting us to be children of God. The dispensing of the divine life from our mingled spirit into our mind, the leading part of our soul, opens the way for the rest of our soul to be life so that we may become mature sons of God. Ultimately, the impartation of the divine life from the mingled spirit through our soul and into our body makes our tripartite being life and qualifies us to be heirs of God. In order to partake of organic salvation, we must cooperate with the saving work of the Spirit within us by exercising our mingled spirit as revealed in Romans 8—crying to the Father in the spirit of sonship, walking according to our spirit, setting our mind on the spirit, and groaning in our spirit for the redemption of our body. The goal of our experience of God's organic salvation through the exercise of the mingled spirit is not merely the cultivation of our personal spirituality but the fulfillment of God's will to obtain the Body of Christ. Our participation in God's salvation in life produces us as living, functioning, and coordinated members of the Body of Christ, which is a divine-human organism produced and maintained by the life union with Christ in our mingled spirit. May the Lord grant us to see the pivotal role of the mingled spirit in the execution of the economy of God's salvation, and may the Lord grace us to live according to the mingled spirit in order to experience all the stages of salvation in the divine life so that we may contribute to the accomplishment of God's will to gain the reality of the Body of Christ. **LFC**

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