

THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

Living a Life according to God's Heart and Will

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:22, 36; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:9-11; Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:1-21

- I. **The Old Testament contains a portrait of David—a man according to God's heart, who did the will of God and served his own generation by the counsel of God (Acts 13:22, 36); it was in David's heart to build a house for the name of Jehovah the God of Israel; today God is blessing us in every way for the fulfillment of His economy to build up the Body of Christ (1 Sam. 13:14a; 1 Kings 8:17; 1 Chron. 22:7; 28:2; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:16).**
- II. **God's great will in His New Testament economy, God's good pleasure, the counsel of His will, and His purpose are to have a Body for the enlargement and expression of Christ, the embodiment of the processed Triune God—1:9-11, 22-23; 3:9-11:**
 - A. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, man is for the producing of the church, and the church is the enlargement and expression of the processed Triune God; God's great will is to have a Body composed of human beings who are regenerated, sanctified, renewed, and transformed into the image of the processed Triune God—Zech. 12:1; John 1:12-13; Eph. 5:26; 2 Cor. 4:16; 3:18.
 - B. God's great will is also to have a church to be the organic Body of Christ for the manifestation of His multifarious wisdom—Eph. 3:9-10.
 - C. Each chapter of the book of Ephesians unveils the mystery of God's will (1:9), the mystery of the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God, from a particular point of view:
 1. Ephesians 1 reveals that the Body of Christ is the issue of the dispensing of the processed Trinity and the transmitting of the transcending Christ.
 2. Ephesians 2 reveals that the Body of Christ is the masterpiece of the Triune God as the new man—vv. 10, 15-16.
 3. Ephesians 3 reveals that the Body of Christ is the fullness of the Triune God by our being supplied with the riches of Christ and by Christ's making His home in our hearts—vv. 8, 14-19.
 4. Ephesians 4 reveals that the Body of Christ is the mingling of the processed Triune God with the regenerated believers and that this one Body is built up by the one ministry—vv. 4-6, 11-16.
 5. Ephesians 5 reveals that the Body of Christ is composed of the children of light to be the bride of Christ for the satisfaction of Christ—vv. 8-9, 25-27.
 6. Ephesians 6 reveals that the Body of Christ is the corporate warrior of the Triune God for the defeating of God's enemy—vv. 10-20.
 - D. God has blended the Body together (1 Cor. 12:24); the word *blended* also means "adjusted," "harmonized," "tempered," and "mingled":

1. In order to be blended in the Body life, we have to go through the cross and be by the Spirit, dispensing Christ to others for the sake of the Body of Christ.
2. Blending means that when we are about to do something, we always stop to fellowship with others.
3. The blending is for the building up of the universal Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as the final goal of God's economy according to His good pleasure (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10).

III. God's great will is to have Christ as the replacement for all the sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament so that we may enjoy Him as our all in all—Heb. 10:5-10; Psa. 40:6-8:

- A. As the unique sacrifice of the new covenant, Christ is the factor that enacts God's New Testament economy (Matt. 26:28) so that He may be its centrality and universality for the producing and building up of the church as His organic Body, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.
- B. Christ's replacing of all the Old Testament offerings, taking away all the Old Testament types and establishing Himself as everything to us, is God's great will; hence, Christ has changed the age for the consummating of God's new creation out of God's old creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15); His changing the age is greater than the creation of the universe mentioned in Genesis 1:
 1. The Old Testament predicted in Isaiah 53 that Christ would come to be the sacrifice for sin in order to replace and terminate the Levitical sacrifices (vv. 6, 11-12); God prepared a body for Christ so that He could offer Himself to God to replace all the offerings (Heb. 10:5).
 2. Christ took away "the first," the sacrifices of the old covenant, that He might establish Himself as "the second," the sacrifice of the new covenant—v. 9:
 - a. As "the second," Christ is everything—v. 9.
 - b. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all so that we may enjoy and partake of Him as our everything—v. 10.
- C. Christ is the reality of the offerings so that we may worship God in spirit and truthfulness (the divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity for the true worship of God)—John 4:23-24:
 1. The burnt offering, which was wholly for God's satisfaction, typifies Christ as God's pleasure and satisfaction, the One whose living on earth was absolutely for God—Lev. 1:3; Num. 28:2-3; John 7:16-18.
 2. The meal offering typifies Christ in His perfect humanity as food for God and for those who have fellowship with God and serve Him—Lev. 2:1, 4; John 7:46; 18:38; 19:4, 6.
 3. The peace offering typifies Christ as the Peacemaker, the One who became the peace and the fellowship between us and God by dying for us, enabling us to enjoy Christ with God and to have fellowship with God in Christ for our mutual satisfaction with God—Lev. 3:1; Eph. 2:14-15; John 12:1-3; 20:21.
 4. The sin offering typifies Christ as the One who was made sin for us and who died on the cross to deal with the sinful nature of our fallen being—Lev. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; John 1:29; 3:14.

5. The trespass offering typifies Christ as the One who bore our sins in His own body and was judged by God on the cross to deal with our sinful deeds that we might be forgiven in our sinful conduct—Lev. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Isa. 53:5-6, 10-11; John 4:15-18.
 6. The wave offering typifies Christ as the resurrected One in love—Lev. 7:30; 10:15.
 7. The heave offering typifies the powerful Christ in ascension and exaltation—7:32; Exo. 29:27; Eph. 1:21.
 8. The drink offering typifies Christ as the One poured out as wine before God for His satisfaction and also as the One who saturates us with Himself as heavenly wine to be poured out for God's enjoyment and satisfaction—Lev. 23:13; Exo. 29:40; Num. 28:7-10; Isa. 53:12; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Judg. 9:13.
- D. We need to live a life according to God's heart and will by daily enjoying Christ as the reality of all the offerings for the divine goal of the Triune God, which is to bring us all into Himself that we may take Him as our dwelling place and allow Him to take us as His dwelling place for His universal, enlarged, divine-human incorporation—John 14:23; Rev. 21:3, 22.

IV. God's great will is to have the believers in Christ practice the Body life, that is, to have the living of the Body of Christ—Rom. 12:1-21:

- A. We are "one Body in Christ," having an organic union with Him; this union makes us one in life with Him and with all the other members of His Body—vv. 4-5:
1. Two words from Romans 12:5 indicate the organic union—*in Christ; in Christ* always implies the thought or the fact that we are organically one with Christ.
 2. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ; this is why John 15 charges us to abide in Him; to abide in Him simply means to remain in the organic union.
- B. For the church life, the life of the Body of Christ, to be realized, our entire being is needed; a presented body, a transformed soul, and a burning spirit are indispensable to a proper church life—Rom. 12:1-2, 11:
1. We need to present our bodies as a living sacrifice for the church life:
 - a. *Bodies* in Romans 12:1 is plural, and *sacrifice* is singular; this indicates that although many bodies are presented, they become one sacrifice, implying that although we are many, our service in the Body of Christ should not be many individual services, separated and unrelated.
 - b. All our service should constitute one whole service, and this service must be unique because it is the service of the one Body of Christ.
 2. After presenting our body, we need to have our mind renewed—vv. 2-3:
 - a. The renewing of the mind, which results from setting the mind on the spirit (8:6), is the base for the transformation of our soul; our mind is the leading part of our soul, and as it is renewed, our will and emotion automatically follow to be renewed also.
 - b. To be renewed means that a new element is wrought into our being; this produces an inward metabolic transformation, making us suitable for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is the practice of the church life.

3. We must be burning in spirit that we may be stirred up and encouraged to go on in the church life in a positive way; dead, vain knowledge and doctrinal forms can make us degraded and lukewarm; we need to repent of our lukewarmness and be zealous, boiling, burning, that we may regain the enjoyment of the reality of Christ—12:11; Rev. 3:16, 19-22.
- C. When Christ as grace comes into us, this grace brings with it the element of certain skills and abilities, which, accompanying our growth in life, develop into the gifts in life that we may function in the Body of Christ to serve God—Rom. 12:4-8.
- D. Verses 9 through 21 show the normal Christian life that is the necessary base for the practice of the church life and that matches the church life; this is a life of the highest virtues for the Body life; we can have such a living for the Body life only by reigning in life—5:17.
- E. God's complete salvation (vv. 10-11) is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace (God Himself as our all-sufficient supply for our organic salvation) and of the gift of righteousness (God's judicial redemption applied to us in a practical way); when we are all reigning in life, living under the ruling of the divine life, the issue is the real and practical Body life.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**THE TOP REVELATION OF THE BIBLE—
THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your move among us and even for Your move within us. Lord, we believe that this recovery is Your testimony at the end of this age. Lord, we thank You for the environment. Oh, we thank You for arranging everything that we could come together. O Lord Jesus, in this dark age You have captured us, and You have put us together to come together all the time for Your Word. Lord, we believe that tonight You are one with us. Lord, You know that we do have a desire to be really one spirit with You. We do have a standing to believe that You are really one with us, even one with us in this matter of training. Lord, we do consecrate this Perfecting Training to You, and we offer ourselves to You anew. Lord, thank You for such a new start. Thank You that You have gained so many saints in this area who are seeking after You. Lord, we thank You that You have opened up Your Word so much more than ever before. Lord, we trust You for this year's Perfecting Training. Do grant us to have a good start, a glorious new beginning. Lord, come again to visit everyone tonight and reach everyone and touch everyone and grant everyone Your grace. Lord, this is all that we need. Anoint everyone. Anoint every part of the training meeting. Rescue this meeting out of any forms, any rituals. We like to get out of any forms, any rituals, and just to be in the spirit. Oh, do cover us. We again realize that this is a fighting for Your recovery and for Your testimony, so hide us and fight the war for us. We trust in You. Thank You, Lord, in Your precious name, Amen.

THE BODY

To begin this meeting I would like to ask a question: What is the top revelation in the holy Word? We know that the Bible has sixty-six books and that they were written over a period of at least sixteen hundred years. These sixty-six books cover a lot of things from eternity past to eternity future. They cover creation, salvation, and many other things. Bible students and Bible teachers have picked up a lot of subjects from the Bible, but we all have to see that

the Body is *the* top point. Among all the thousands of words in the Bible, the *Body* should stand out to us. The biggest word in the Bible is the *Body*.

You have to realize that the most missed and neglected and lost point in the Bible is that the church is the Body of Christ. Many of you came from the background of Christianity. I do not have the confidence that you ever heard an adequate teaching concerning the Body while you were there. I was with the Brethren for seven and a half years. They were very famous fifty years ago for knowing the Bible. Every week I went to five of their meetings. I never heard one message concerning the Body, but I heard many messages concerning ten horns and four beasts. I never heard one message teaching me that Christ has a mystical Body—that besides His personal body, He has a mystical Body.

After the war, at the end of the 1950s I came to this country. I heard a lot of talk about the Body. I heard terms such as *Body life* and *Body ministry*. I went to visit all those who were talking in this way. I discovered that nearly no one knew what they were talking about. At least there was no Body. Today the most missed item of the revelation in the Bible is this one thing—the Body.

In the last two years we have stressed very strongly that Paul's ministry is the completing ministry to complete the divine revelation. Suppose you remove not all the writings of Paul but only Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians from the Bible. Then the Bible would have a big gap. If you took away some other books, you might not feel that there was such a big gap, but Paul's writings are the completion of the divine revelation. You have to realize that this completing ministry is altogether focused on the Body. Even in these four books, if you take away Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 1 and 4, and Colossians 1 and 2, you take away the chapters concerning the Body of Christ from Paul's writings. From these chapters you can see the top point, the ultimate point, of God's divine revelation, the Body.

Have you ever considered what is the top item produced by God in this universe? The heavens were produced, the earth was produced, man was produced, and even thousands of items were produced. God worked in creation, and God has been working through all the generations. God is still working, and we do not know how long His working will last, but eventually, what will be the ultimate item that comes out of God's working? We have to see that it is the Body. You have to be deeply impressed that what will ultimately come out of God's working through all the centuries and all the generations will be a Body. Who is the Head of this Body? Christ is the Head. What will come out is just the Body. The Body is the ultimate item of God's continual working, so the Body is the top point of God's entire revelation. You have to realize that not only has this matter been missed in Christianity, but even among us in the Lord's recovery we could not see too much actuality of the Body. If you go to the Christian bookstores and pick up different expositions on Romans, you will see that one may stress justification, and another may go on to say something about sanctification, but it is hard for you to get one exposition on Romans that stresses the Body adequately. Some expositions may have taught something concerning the government in chapter 13, but they have not said much concerning the Body in chapter 12.

What about 1 Corinthians? When I was young, I learned that some Christians appreciated a book written by one of the Brethren teachers on 1 Corinthians. That book mainly says that 1 Corinthians solves ten problems among the believers. Although this book talks a lot about these ten problems, it does not talk about a particular positive thing, that is, the Body in chapter 12. By reading chapter 12 carefully, you could see that two-thirds of that chapter is occupied with the Body. Today many teachers and expositors of the Bible talk a lot about other points, but they do not talk about the Body. Why? Because it is surely easy to see divisions

or fornication or lawsuits or marriage and so forth, but it is hard for people to apprehend the Body. Of course, a lot of books were put out concerning the physical body of the Lord Jesus, which is signified by the bread in the bread-breaking meeting. Many of these were written especially against the heretical teachings of the Catholic Church, which say that that piece of bread becomes the actual physical body of Christ. But not many of the good writers talk about the other aspect of the Lord's body. One aspect of His body is His physical body; the other is the mystical Body. Very few have paid adequate attention to the mystical Body of Christ. When I was young, I saw all the so-called holy communions in Christianity. I would say that of the people who partook of the "holy communion," not one out of one hundred realized that the loaf also signifies the mystical Body of Christ. Rather, they simply realized that the loaf signifies the physical body of Christ broken on the cross for us.

It is so good that we can see what is the top thing in the Bible, the Body. But the question is: How could we sinners become the Body of Christ? It is not that difficult. We may use the example of a denture. Even the very best denture is not a real part of the body; rather, it is an artificial part and may be considered as foreign matter put into your body. How then can all the parts of your body be your body? Anything that is in your body must be organic. Recently, one young sister received a kidney transplant. Her brother's kidney was removed from him and transplanted into her body. That was not like the fitting of a denture. Transplanting the kidney into the sister's body was something altogether organic.

ORGANIC MEMBERS

First of all, we have to realize that we redeemed sinners have all been made part of Christ's Body. Also, we have to realize that all the parts of Christ's Body are organic. They are not only organic but also properly organic. The sister who received a kidney transplant passed through a lot of things. In other words, she passed through a lot of adjustment because the kidney was not properly organic. The surgeons had to do a lot of adjustment to make that kidney properly organic. To be properly organic in the Body does not mean that you simply get baptized and that you get into a so-called church, and then you become a member of the Body of Christ; rather, it means that you must be organically united with Christ. You must be a part properly planted into Christ's Body organically. Then you will have a proper organic union with the Body of Christ. Then you will become a part of the Body. Every British subject is a member of the Church of England, but we would say strongly that that is not the church, because it is not something organic.

Many Christians today teach about regeneration, but they never tell people that regeneration brings you into an organic union with Christ, making you a part of Christ. What verses or what portions of the Bible tell us that such an organic matter makes us members of His Body? Only four books in the entire Bible have verses that mention the Body of Christ. In the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels, there is no mention of the Body of Christ. Even in the book of Acts, which is very much related to the establishment of the church, there is no mention of the Body. Even in 2 Corinthians, which is deeper than 1 Corinthians, there is no mention of the Body. In no other Epistles does Paul mention the Body besides these four books. Furthermore, only the apostle Paul reveals the Body to us. Peter, John, James, and Jude do not mention the matter of the Body. Only the minister who completed the revelation, the apostle Paul, talks about the Body. And even among his fourteen books, only four mention the Body.

We need to ask a further question: among these four books—Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians—which touches the matter of the organic union? Even as the four Gospels show us one person from four different angles, so these four books view the Body

from four different directions. Each of these four books has its own angle of viewing the Body. Two words from Romans 12:5 indicate the organic union—*in Christ*. “In Christ” is a matter of the organic union. “We who are many are one Body in Christ.” Just this one little phrase tells us from which angle Romans 12 speaks of the Body. It speaks from the angle of the life union, from the angle of the organic union. How then could we get into Christ? We were not born in Christ; we were born in Adam, but by being reborn we have been transplanted into Christ. We were dead in Adam, and God took us out of Adam and transplanted us into Christ by rebirth. This little phrase *in Christ* has been used many times in the New Testament. Whenever you read *in Christ*, you must remember that this indicates the organic union with Christ. *In Christ* always implies the thought or the fact that you are organically one with Christ.

Why does Romans 12 talk about the function of the Body? Because it talks about the Body based upon the organic union we have in Christ. In this union with Christ there is life. Dentures may be put into my mouth, but there is no organic union. The denture will not function in an organic way because there is no organic union. We have to see that Romans 12 talks about the Body of Christ from the angle of the organic union, from the uniting life, from a life that unites us together not only with Christ but also with all the other members of Christ. Today the Christians know the Bible too superficially. Many teachers talk about Romans 12, but hardly one would tell you that Romans 12 talks about the Body from the angle of the organic union.

If we could not see the organic union that we have with Christ, we could never understand what the Body is. The Body does not mean simply that you love me and I love you. That is a society. In 1963 I was invited to visit many places throughout the U.S.A. Many small groups were “hot” at that time; they all liked to hug one another. Although that did not scare me to death, that bothered me with a kind of stinking odor. That was just a kind of hugging society.

When I was with the Bible-teaching assembly, I heard a lot of messages out of Ephesians 4 mostly concerning humility, the bond of love, meekness, and so forth. But for some reason there was hardly a message on the Body. Although they even talked about the oneness, they did not speak concerning the Body. Even if we are meek and humble and all really love one another, is that the Body? Even Confucius taught some of these things: you must be meek; you must be humble. Confucius taught meekness, humility, and kindness, but he never touched the organic union with Christ that we all may become the Body.

We all have to realize that the Body of Christ is altogether a matter of life that keeps us in an organic union with Christ. When we remain in this organic union, we are in the Body. When we do not remain in this organic union, we are out of the Body. You need to check yourself for one day to see how much time you remain in this organic union. You will have to admit that you do not remain very much in this organic union. Occasionally, we get there, but quite often we get out of there, so we are not in the Body. The actuality of the Body is the remaining in the organic union with Christ. If we are going to be actually living in the Body life, we must remain in the organic union with Christ. In other words, we must be remaining in Christ. So John 15 charges us to abide in Him. To abide in Him simply means to remain in this organic union. When we remain in this organic union, we are actually living in the Body. If we do not remain in this organic union with Christ, we have left the Body. As long as you say something by yourself, you have left the Body. This means that your gossip, your free talk, your loose conversation, is a strong sign that you have left the Body.

The Body is not an organization or a society. The Body is not just a bunch of Christians coming together. The Body is something that is held together by the organic union with Christ. When we remain in the organic union with Christ, we are just living in the Body.

Otherwise, we leave the Body. If we talk by ourselves, it is a strong sign that we have left the Body. So the Body is altogether a matter in the organic union with Christ. We are many yet one Body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). *In Christ* implies an organic union.

If you read Ephesians and Colossians carefully, you could see that Ephesians tells us that the church is the fullness of Christ, the new man, the household of God, the commonwealth, that is, the citizenship of God, and the habitation of God. The church is also the bride and the warrior. But you have to realize that the basic item is the Body, and all the other items are subsidiary. Actually, Ephesians does not talk about the new man; it talks about the Body as the new man. It does not talk about the fullness of Christ; it talks about the Body as the fullness of Christ. All the other terms are subsidiary. The basic term is only one—*the Body*. The Body is the house of God. The Body is the commonwealth of God. The Body is the bride. The Body is the warrior. It is not so good to turn it around and say that the warrior is the Body or that the house is the Body or that the new man is the Body. The Body is the main point, and all these other terms are subsidiary. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1980*, vol. 1, “Perfecting Training,” pp. 249-255)

IN CHRIST

[Previously,] I gave you that little phrase *in Christ*. This little phrase indicates the organic union that we have with Christ. As we are in Christ, surely there is a kind of union. When the Bible was being translated into the Chinese language, this term, *in Christ*, bothered the translators to the uttermost. Nearly all of them said that there was no way to translate the Bible into Chinese. In the Chinese language there is not such an expression to say that you are in someone. Humanly speaking, we would not say that one person is in another person. But the Bible has this expression, that we are in Christ. Even this kind of expression was first used by the Lord Jesus in John 15 where He said that He is the vine, we are the branches, and we should abide in Him (v. 5). Due to our background, we Christians take this kind of expression for granted. We never bothered to check it out. Even before I was saved, I heard messages concerning abiding in Him. Sometimes I did not pay attention to what they were talking about, but at other times I did pay attention and asked, “How could you abide in Jesus?” No doubt this expression strongly indicates that there is a kind of organic union, which spontaneously implies mingling. When you put tea into water, could you say that the tea abides in the water just in a kind of union without mingling? Likewise, how could we just be in union with Christ without mingling?

In Christ is a short phrase, but do not consider that this is a small expression. This is a great expression because it reveals such a great thing—that between you and Christ there is an organic union. If you do not have such an organic union, I would not call you a brother. A brother or a sister must be one in this organic union. Do not take this phrase, *in Christ*, for granted.

SUPPORTS OF THE FOCAL POINT

The Bible has a principle: every book in the Bible has a focal point, which is supported by many verses. These supports may be considered like the four legs supporting a table. Even a small table has four legs supporting it. To find out the supports of a focal point in a certain book, you have to take care of the context of the entire book. In Romans the expression *in Christ* does have adequate support. What are the verses that are the supports of this organic union “in Christ” found in Romans?

In chapters 1 through 4 it is hard to find any support of the organic union. But in chapter 5 there are several supports. Verse 10 says that we are saved in His life. We were justified,

reconciled, through the death of Christ, but we will be saved much more in His life. Then verse 17 says, "If, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." Martin Luther stressed the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness very much, but I doubt whether he stressed that the abundant grace and the gift of righteousness are for reigning in life. To reign in life is much higher than being saved in life. Then verse 18 uses the term *unto justification of life*. This means that justification is for life or unto life. Verse 21 goes on to say that grace might reign unto eternal life. *Unto* means "with a view to" or "resulting in." Grace reigns with a view to or resulting in life. In chapter 5 *life* is mentioned at least four times: first, we need to be saved in life; second, we need to reign in life; third, we are justified for life; and fourth, grace reigns, resulting in life. So according to chapter 5, life, not justification, is the focus.

Now let us go on to chapter 6. Verse 3 says, "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death." Many teachers have stressed that we are baptized into His death, but they have not stressed adequately that we have been baptized into Christ. That we have been baptized into Christ Jesus is the strongest support of the phrase *in Christ*. How did you get into Christ? You have been baptized into Christ. Although I do not like to speak concerning others' shortage, I must point out that many Christians today stress the tail more than the head. They pick up the tail and forget about the head. Many teachers have stressed that we have been baptized into His death. I have never heard a message at a baptism telling people that they have been baptized into Christ. They always said that we are baptized into the death of Christ. But this verse concerning being baptized into Christ is the strongest support of the thought of the organic union in Christ.

Verse 4 goes on to say that we "might walk in newness of life," and verse 5 says that "if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection." This indicates a process of growth where we are growing into His death and through His death into His resurrection. This is an organic union in which growth takes place so that one partakes of the life and characteristics of another. In 6:5 there is an organic union. This growing together with Christ is a kind of organic union. In this organic union the life grows. Growth takes place. One part partakes of the life and characteristics of the other part. That means we partake of the life and characteristics of Christ. This is the organic union.

Verse 8 goes on to say that "we will also live with Him." If we are not one with Him, how could we live with Him? It does not mean that we simply stay together with Him; it means that we live together with Him. Verse 11 says that we are "living to God in Christ Jesus." Verse 13 says that we need to present ourselves to God as alive from the dead. This also indicates our union with Christ. The last verse in this chapter also is a support for the organic union: "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 23).

Today the Pentecostal people often ask, Have you received the "gift"? My answer would be, What kind of gift do you mean? This would open their eyes. When they speak of receiving the "gift," they are referring mainly to speaking in tongues. But I have received a bigger gift than a tongue. I have received the eternal life. This is a much bigger gift. This shows the superficiality of today's Christians. We have received the gift of eternal life. This means that the organic union is a free gift.

Chapter 8 also has some strong supports for this matter of being in Christ as an organic union. Verse 2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Here is life, here is the Spirit of life, and here is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This is a strong support. Verse 6 says that "the mind set on the spirit is life and peace," and verse 10 says that

“the spirit is life because of righteousness.” In the *Life-study of Romans* we pointed out that these verses in chapter 8 reveal four layers of the matter of life. First, God’s Spirit is life. Second, our human spirit is life. Third, the mind is life, and finally, our body is life. This life first is the life of the Spirit. Then this life comes into our being, into our spirit. Then it saturates our soul and, eventually, saturates our body. This is the organic union.

Chapter 11, revealing the grafting, also is a strong support of the organic union. All of us were wild branches, yet thank the Lord, His grace has grafted us into Christ! Again, it is ridiculous to say that mingling is a heresy. The branches grafted into a tree are not only united but mingled. To say that they are only united and not mingled is terrible. They are not like two iron bars. Two iron bars may be united, but they are not mingled. But if a branch is grafted into a tree, no doubt the two are mingled. The two bars of iron can only have a kind of connecting. They do not have the organic union. An organic union is a matter of mingling.

From chapter 11 we go to chapter 12. Chapter 12 indicates that we need to consecrate our bodies so that our minds may be transformed to see and discern the will of God, which is just to have a Body for Christ produced out of the organic union. Verse 5 says, “We who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” This verse means that we who are many are just one Body in Christ, in this organic union. Have you seen all these supports of this one focal point—in Christ? Chapter 12 continues by saying that as a believer, based upon the organic union in Christ, you need to realize the Body life by having all three parts of your being exercised. Our body is mentioned in verse 1 where we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. So our body needs to be offered. Then in verse 2 we need to have our mind renewed. Our mind represents our soul. It is the main part of our soul. So this refers to the transformation of the soul for the Body life. The body needs to be presented, and the soul needs to be transformed. Then in verse 11 we have to be burning in spirit. This refers to the exercise of the human spirit, the mingled spirit, for the Body life. For the Body of Christ we have to offer our body. Then our soul needs to be transformed, and our spirit needs to be on fire. Thus, all three parts of our human being are exercised. In order to realize this focus of the Christian life, that is, the Body of Christ, we need to fully experience the organic union in Christ with a thorough realization that we are organically one with Christ in life.

To practice this Body life, you must first have your body offered to God. After having your body offered to God, you must have your soul transformed. You must be transformed in your soul by the renewing of your mind. Rarely can you hear teaching concerning this point among today’s Christians. You can hardly hear a message on transformation or on the renewing of the mind. In the past twenty years we have put out many messages on transformation. This is absolutely and thoroughly needed. Our body must be offered and consecrated, and our soul must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Then our spirit has to be burning, to be on fire. If this is your case, I have the full confidence that you are now practically in the Body life. If you do not realize the organic union in Christ and you do not have your body offered, your soul transformed by the renewing of the mind, or your spirit burning, you are just outside the Body and apart from the Body, practically speaking.

AN ENTRANCE INTO THE PRACTICAL BODY LIFE

From now on we will spend much of this Perfecting Training on Romans. If you have some leisure time, think about Romans, and pray about the Body of Christ. Restrict your consideration, your feeling, and your sensation about the Body of Christ to Romans. If time and occasion allow, I also hope you would fellowship with some others. It is best to fellowship with only two or three or at the most four. We, the married people, do have a privilege in that we

always have at least two. Fellowship about this, and pray. This is not a small thing. We need a strong revelation, and we need a stronger vision to see this matter. It is too mysterious. The mystical Body of Christ is too mysterious for us human beings to grasp. Yet we do have the life of this Body, and we also have the Spirit of this Body. Thank the Lord for this. So pray and exercise your inner being to think over this book concerning the Body. Also remind yourself of what we have covered in the past two Perfecting Training meetings. Do not consider that these are simply doctrines. You must consider that these are precious light from the very heart of God. They are altogether worthy of our thinking, considering, praying, and fellowshiping. This Perfecting Training has no intention to pass on to you mere doctrine. We have the heavy burden to help all of us enter into the practical Body life. We all need an entrance into the practical Body life. If we can have this kind of life, this kind of vision, of the Body, we will be able to enter into the practical Body life. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1980*, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," pp. 260-264)