

《Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship(Vol.1)》

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INTRODUCTION TO

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP

Volumes 41 through 46 of The Collected Works contain the record of numerous conferences, messages, and fellowships given by Watchman Nee between 1934 and 1942, most of which have not been previously published. The notes of Brother K. H. Weigh and his first wife are the primary source for this material. Notes from Elizabeth Rademacher's collection also have provided supplementary material for these volumes. The conference in Singapore in 1937 and the conference in Penang in 1938 were recorded by local saints in the two respective localities.

These six volumes contain a total of two hundred one chapters that are divided into sixteen sections:

VOLUME 41

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (1)

Section One: Messages and fellowship in Foochow in 1934, including two messages and miscellaneous fellowship (six chapters).

Section Two: Fellowship in various places in 1934, covering topics that include the key to studying the Bible, the excommunication of a worker, and the way to work (three chapters).

Section Three: The Overcomer Conference in Chuenchow in November 1935, including topics on the overcoming life and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (twenty-one chapters).

VOLUME 42

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (2)

Section Four: A conference in Amoy in October 1936, including topics on the work and the worker and being in Christ (eighteen chapters).

Section Five: A conference and fellowship in Foochow in December 1936, including messages on God's way of accomplishing His purpose and the overcoming life (fifteen chapters).

VOLUME 43

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (3)

Section Six: Messages in Canton in April 1937, including topics on the revelation of Jesus Christ, God interrupting man's speaking, and basic gospel truths (four chapters).

Section Seven: Fellowship with co-workers in Shanghai, June 1937. The record of two private fellowships (two chapters).

Section Eight: A conference in Singapore in August 1937, a conference on Christ's full salvation and the overcoming life (ten chapters).

Section Nine: A conference in Penang in April 1938, including messages on various subjects (five chapters).

Section Ten: A message given in Shanghai in 1938 on material offering and its relationship to our praise in the Lord's table meeting (one chapter).

VOLUME 44

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (4)

Section Eleven: A conference on God's eternal plan (ten chapters).

Section Twelve: A conference on the mystery of Christ given in Shanghai in 1939, including topics on the mystery of Christ and the Body of Christ (eleven chapters).

Section Thirteen: Messages in Shanghai in 1939, including messages that were primarily given in the mid-week church meetings (seven chapters).

Section Fourteen: Messages and fellowship in Shanghai in 1940, including a record of mid-week meetings, Lord's Day morning meetings, fellowship with new believers, and other talks (ten chapters).

VOLUME 45

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (5)

Section Fourteen (cont.): Messages and fellowship in Shanghai in 1940 (thirty chapters).

Section Fifteen: Messages and fellowship in Shanghai in 1941, including the record of various meetings and fellowship (six chapters).

VOLUME 46

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP (6)

Section Sixteen: Notes on messages and fellowship taken from Sister Elizabeth Rademacher's collection (forty-two chapters).

CONFERENCES, MESSAGES, AND FELLOWSHIP

(1)

PREFACE

Volume 41 of The Collected Works contains three sections that include various messages given by Watchman Nee in 1934 and 1935.

Section One contains two messages by Watchman Nee, given in Foochow during July and August of 1934, and notes from four private times of fellowship with Brother K. H. Weigh during the same period. The two messages cover deliverance from sin and the law and the relationship between life and light. The notes from Brother Weigh's fellowship are fragmentary in nature and do not have a particular theme. Instead of being published chronologically, these fragments have been grouped into related topics and published as four chapters. The first chapter deals with general spiritual topics. The second chapter deals with biblical exposition. The third chapter includes topics related to the church, and the fourth chapter deals with local problems in the assembly in Foochow and questions related to division.

Section Two contains three chapters of notes from fellowship given by Brother Watchman Nee. The dates and places are not known. Based on the content of the second chapter, however, there is reason to believe that they were spoken in 1934.

Section Three contains twenty-one messages given by Watchman Nee at a conference in Chuenchow in November 1935. According to Brother Weigh's notes, the meetings and fellowship followed the schedule that is listed below. The notes from a few of these meetings cannot be located, and at least one message was published in Volume 24, *The Overcoming Life*.

1. November 11, Evening: He Fills the Hungry with Good Things
2. November 12, Afternoon: Brother Nee's Testimony (unavailable)
3. November 12, Evening: *The Overcoming Life*
4. November 13, Afternoon: Christ as Everything (unavailable)
5. November 13, Evening: The Characteristics of the Overcoming Life (unavailable)
6. November 14, Afternoon: How to Experience Christ as the Overcoming Life
7. November 14, Evening: How to Experience the Overcoming Life (*The Overcoming Life*, Volume 24 of *The Collected Works*, chapter four)
8. November 15, Morning: Living by Faith (unavailable)
9. November 15, Evening: A Believer's Relationship with Christ
10. November 16, Morning: What is Faith
11. November 16, Afternoon: The Way of a Christian
12. November 16, Evening: Confession (unavailable)
13. November 17, Afternoon: Consecration
14. November 17, Evening: The Guarding of the Overcoming Life
15. November 18, Morning: Temptations, Failures, and Progress in the Overcoming Life
16. November 18, Afternoon: A Word of Explanation concerning the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
17. November 18, Evening: The Conditions for Receiving the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and Things to Watch Out For
18. November 19, Morning: The Manifestations and Evidences of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
19. November 19, Afternoon: The Works of the Holy Spirit and the Benefit of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
20. November 19, Evening: The Tone of an Overcoming Living
21. November 20, Morning: The Holy Spirit and the Law
22. November 20, Afternoon: Talks (1)
23. November 20, Evening: Being beside Ourselves to God

- 24. November 21, Morning: A Report on the Various Regions of Work in China
- 25. November 21, Afternoon: Gifts, Ministry, and Operations
- 26. November 21, Afternoon: Talks (2)
- 27. November 22, Afternoon: Talks (3)

SECTION ONE

MESSAGES AND FELLOWSHIP

GIVEN IN FOOCHOW

IN 1934

CHAPTER ONE

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN

AND FROM THE LAW

Date: July 29, 1934

Place: Foochow

Many people pay considerable attention to deliverance from sin, but they have no idea of what it means to be delivered from the law. Why did Paul mention deliverance from sin, that is, being dead to sin in Romans 6 and then speak about deliverance from the law in chapter seven? Why do we have to be delivered from the law after we are delivered from sin? What is the difference between deliverance from sin and deliverance from the law? What is the relationship between sin and the law? Is there any correlation between deliverance from the law and deliverance from sin?

TRUE DELIVERANCE FROM SIN ONLY BEING

REALIZED THROUGH DELIVERANCE FROM THE LAW

Romans 6:14 says that sin will not lord it over us because we are not under the law but under grace. This means that we are first delivered from the law and then from sin. When we are no longer under the law, sin will not lord it over us. Yet many believers turn this around. They only pay attention to the matter of deliverance from sin and overlook the matter of deliverance from the law. Sin and the law are linked to each another. This is analogous to the principle of Chinese medicine. Western medicine deals with a sickness either internally by medication or externally by surgery. But in Chinese medicine there is no such thing as an external treatment, because Chinese medicine only tries to deal with the root of illnesses. It does not independently tackle the outward symptoms of illnesses. Sin is the outward symptom of a sickness, whereas the law is the root of the sickness. Man sins because he is under the law. The law is the cause, while sin

is the effect. It is useless for anyone to just deal with the outward effect without first dealing with the root cause.

Many people have been troubled by the problem of sin for years and have been struggling without any success. They have failed because they have only taken care of the matter of deliverance from sin without understanding the need to be delivered from the law. In Romans 6 Paul told us how we can be delivered from sin. In chapter seven he goes on to say that it is not enough to just be delivered from sin; we must know how to be delivered from the bondage of the law as well. Actually, Romans 6 is the same as Romans 7, and Romans 7 is the same as Romans 6. Chapter seven is necessary because something is left unresolved in chapter six. Romans 7:8 says that "without the law sin is dead." Strictly speaking, without deliverance from the law in chapter seven, there can be no deliverance from sin in chapter six. Only after we are delivered from the law can we be truly delivered from sin.

THE DEFINITION OF THE LAW

We must next ask, "What is the law? What is the definition of the law?" Many people think that being delivered from the law is being freed from the Ten Commandments. Some may think that being delivered from the law is being freed from the ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament, such as the statutes governing the priestly services. They may also think that being delivered from the law is being freed from moral precepts. Actually, the removal of the letter of the law cannot keep anyone from committing sin. God's demand on man in the entire Old Testament is summed up in the law. The law is God's demand on man. Keeping the law means that God has a demand and that we try to do His will and please Him according to our own effort. This is keeping the law.

In the New Testament, God has set the law aside and replaced it with grace. God no longer asks man to do anything to please Him. This is a very significant word. Keeping the law is doing something to please God, whereas being delivered from the law is no longer doing anything to please God. God has no intention for us to do anything by ourselves to please Him. If we cannot get through on this point, we cannot get through on the matter of sin.

GOD'S VALUATION OF MAN

Let us first consider God's thought concerning man. The real issue is not what the environment says or what other men say, but what God says. God's thought concerning man is that man cannot please Him by doing anything himself. In

himself, man is full of sin and totally incapable of pleasing God. In God's eyes, man only deserves to die. He is hopeless, and nothing in him can ever please God. Nothing that issues from man can please God. God has only one valuation of man; He has only one view concerning man—death. This is why the Bible says that we are dead in Christ. This is God's valuation of us.

God has only one valuation concerning us—death. There is a Foochow native expression, Gai-si, which means "deserving death." God has no intention that we improve ourselves, do better, or advance step by step. We are totally incapable of doing these things. However, we do not recognize this fact; we think that we can still do many things. For example, after a man has believed in the Lord, he may say to himself, "I can get up at six o'clock in the morning to read the Bible and to pray. I can be patient, and I can love." God never says that we can make it, and He does not even have an expectation that we can make it. The cross is God's ultimate valuation of us. It is easy to acknowledge this fact while we are listening to a message, but in our practice in daily life, we still try to please God. This is where the root of our problem lies.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Why do we need to be baptized? Baptism is our answer to God's demand. God demands that we die, and we answer this demand by being baptized. "Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). Through the cross God signals that we must die and that we deserve nothing but death. The death of the cross is God's demand on us; it is God's valuation of us. We must answer this demand by being baptized. "We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death" (v. 4). Only a dead person can be buried. Baptism is a kind of burial; it declares that we have died and that we deserve only to be buried in the grave. First Peter 3:21 says that baptism is "the appeal of a good conscience unto God." God has pronounced our death, and Christ included us in His death when He died on the cross. When we acknowledge this fact, we offer ourselves up to be baptized. Hence, baptism is our acknowledgement to God that we deserve to die and that we have indeed died in the death of Christ. Baptism is our answer before God of a good conscience. Baptism is not a formality of joining a religion. It is a reckoning, an acknowledgement, and an answer to God's valuation concerning us.

MAN'S END BEING GOD'S BEGINNING

If we clearly see this, we will be delivered from the law. We know that we deserve only to die and that we are not qualified to please God with any of our work. As soon as we try to do anything to please God, we should consider what the Lord has done on the cross and realize that we have been freed from the law. We have been crucified with Christ. God has no intention that we do anything anymore. We are crucified already. This is God's valuation, and this is the stand we should take.

Yet many of us try to accomplish something by our flesh. We try to do something according to the power of the flesh in order to please God. But when God opens our eyes, we will see that no one except the Lord Himself can ever please God. "And those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). If we had been able to do God's will, God would have kept us and not crucified us. Consider our experience. We have stumbled enough already. Why are we still walking according to our self? God has no further demand on us, yet we still have demands on ourselves! This was the experience of the man in Romans 7. He was trying to will by himself. The man in Romans 7 repeatedly tried to will by himself. The word "I" is repeated many times in this chapter; it shows us the root of the problem. If a man continually wills in himself, it shows that he has not yet been delivered from the law. Every time he fails, he wills again. This cycle will go on until one day he completely loses hope in himself. Then he will cry as Paul did, "Wretched man that I am!" (7:24). Only then will he experience deliverance.

God does not expect us not to sin. God gave the law in order for man to break it. In this way man is exposed and sin is made manifest. "I did not know sin except through the law" (7:7). If we realize that the law is not for us to keep and that we deserve only to die, we will see that the cross is our only stand. If we stand firmly on this position, Romans 6 will become our experience. As long as we are not delivered from the law, we are not delivered from sin. As soon as we are delivered from the law, we are delivered from sin.

It is futile for us to hope that we can be delivered from sin when we are not delivered from the law. We can only be delivered from sin when we stand on the ground of resurrection. If we are not delivered from the law, we have not died. Consequently, we cannot stand on the ground of resurrection. Romans 7:4 says, "So then, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ so that you might be joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God." Whenever we give up hope in our old man, we accept the Lord's accomplished fact in Romans 6:6. Yet

we often overturn the accomplished fact of the cross. The cross shows us that our old man has died, but we still walk according to the old man. This is denying the work of the Lord on the cross.

We are not here to deal with sin; we are here to deal with the law. When we die to the law, we die to sin as well. "Without the law sin is dead" (7:8). As soon as we are freed from the law, we are freed from sin. Yet we often bring back many matters which the cross has put to death. Many believers say, "I cannot imagine that I could still commit such a sin!" I would reply, "Is that so? Don't you realize that you can commit a greater sin than that?" As long as a man is in the flesh, he can commit any sin. No one can accomplish God's will in the flesh. Unless we stand on the ground of death and resurrection, we can never be freed from sin and can never accomplish God's will. Only those who have died to the law through the body of Christ can be "joined to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God" (7:4).

Once I spoke with a man who was over seventy years old about the matter of deliverance from the law. He remarked that this was the most glorious fact in the whole world. I asked when he was delivered from the law, and he answered, "Fifty years ago." Then he went to say, "It is good to hear your preaching on the deliverance from the law and from sin today. The day that I saw I was delivered from the law, I was in the heavens. I struggled to please God for many years after I was saved. But the more I tried, the more I failed. I thought that God had the greatest demands in the whole universe, and I discovered that I could not meet even His slightest demand. One day when I was reading Romans 7, the light suddenly dawned. I saw that the Lord had not only delivered me from my sin but also had delivered me from the law. I jumped up in amazement and said, 'Lord, is it true that You will no longer have any demand on me? If it is, I do not have to do anything for You any longer!'"

THE WILLING IN PHILIPPIANS 2:13

Philippians 2:13 says that "it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." The willing in this verse is different from the willing in Romans 7. This is not a willing that one struggles to achieve by gritting teeth. It is the result of the operation of God's power within us. Such a willing and working is spontaneous.

Dr. F. B. Meyer once said that when God has a demand, it does not matter whether or not we are willing; all that we have to do is ask God to make us willing. Once he prayed to the Lord, "God, I am not willing, but work in me until I

am willing." A few days after he prayed, he became willing. On the wall of his house was a frame which read, "Lord, I am willing to be made willing."

One sister in Shanghai always ill-treated those in her house. She prayed that God would make her love others. The Lord's love touched her, and He operated in her to make her willing to love others. As a result she began to love others from her heart. This is not a kind of love that one can muster up with will-power; it is the result of the Lord's operation in a person, which expresses itself in a spontaneous love for others.

Believers must not only be willing in their conduct, but also willing in their mentality. In order for us to become willing in our conduct, we must first become willing in our mentality. Hence, we have to ask God to make our heart willing to do His will. Psalm 119:36 says, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies." Acts 16:14 says that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia the seller of purple-dyed goods so that she gave heed to the things being spoken by Paul. This is not a passive act; we are still responsible for our conduct. At the same time, however, the Holy Spirit has to bring a person's mentality to the point where it agrees to yield. Hence, our willing and working are not according to ourselves, but according to His operation. May the Lord operate in us to will and to work for the accomplishment of His will.

* * *

A quotation from Watchman Nee's Bible:

The initiation of the work—God's will.

The carrying out of the work—God's power.

The result of the work—God's glory.

CHAPTER TWO

LIFE AND LIGHT

Date: August 20, 1934, morning

Place: Foochow

Scripture Reading: John 1:4

INTRODUCTION

Today believers need light. It is absurd for a child of God to have life but be without light. Those who have life should surely have light. John 1:4 says that in Him is life, and this life is the light of men. The life of the Lord is the light of men. When a man receives the Lord's life, he receives light. On the Lord's side, there is first life and then light. On our side, there is first light and then life. The spiritual

depth that a believer possesses is dependent on the amount of light he has received.

LIGHT, REVELATION, MANIFESTATION, AND VISION

What does the Bible say about light, revelation, manifestation, and vision? Light is necessary to enlighten God's revelation and to make manifest what is hidden. A revelation is God's removal of a veil to show us something, as described in Revelation 1:1. After there is revelation, there is still the need for God's enlightening. Manifestation is the exposure of a revelation after it has been enlightened by the light. Finally, a vision is what we see after a revelation has been enlightened by the light. For example, Paul spoke of the vision he received from heaven (Acts 26:19), and Proverbs says that the people perish where there is no vision (29:18).

THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING LIGHT

There are a few conditions for receiving God's light. First, a man must be in the proper realm before he can receive light. In other words, he must be in a realm where light can reach. For example, the light in a room can only enlighten that room; if you are sitting in the next room, you will not be able to read with the light from the adjacent room. The psalmist said, "In Your light we see light" (Psa. 36:9). We can only receive God's light in the realm where His light shines. Second, in order to receive light, we must have God's word. The psalmist said that the Lord's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (119:105). We must spend much time to read God's Word before we will receive light. Light is with God and not within man's heart. This is why the psalmist said that the Lord's word is the light unto our path. Third, in order to receive God's light, we have to draw near to God. We must be one who is near God, and one who draws nigh to Him, because only God is light. He is the source of light. When we are near Him and when we draw nigh to Him, we receive light. Luke 11 says that the eye is the lamp of the body (v. 34). The lamp does not have light in itself; it can only be a means through which light manifests itself. The eye is the means through which we see light, but light itself is God. If the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light (Matt. 6:22). A man must first establish an intimate fellowship with the Lord before he will see light.

KNOWLEDGE AND LIGHT

Knowledge is absolutely different from light. Those who have light surely have the knowledge, but those who have knowledge do not necessarily have light.

There is a big difference between a blind man's knowledge of colors and a child's experience of them. A blind man may have the knowledge of colors, but he has never seen them. A child may not have the knowledge of colors, but he knows what colors are from his experience. It is a pity that believers today pay so much attention to knowledge instead of light.

The realization of sin is not a question of knowledge but a question of light. A student once said to Mr. Bengal, a famous Bible expositor, "I have recently discovered the doctrine of sin from the book of Romans." Mr. Bengal looked at him and said, "Do you mean to tell me that today is the first time that you have known about the doctrine of sin? By now you should have realized that your whole person is sin from your daily experience!"

I once asked a person who prayed frequently with Mr. Sparks, "What words are most often repeated in Mr. Sparks' prayer?" The man answered, "Lord! Let Your church see." What the church needs today is not more knowledge but more light and more seeing.

LIGHT AND THE WORK OF GOD

God works through His light. His work in man begins with light. The work in Genesis began with light. With light there was the separation. On the fourth day, the light took on tangible shapes.

In John 9, the Lord healed the blind man with the spittle mixed with clay (vv. 1-11; cf. Mark 8:22-26). Clay signifies the flesh and the earthly things, while the spittle signifies the Lord's divinity, which produces something of life. This life becomes the light of man. The Lord mixing spittle with the clay means that divinity is mixed with humanity. The Lord's incarnation is the best illustration of the mingling of divinity with humanity. The spittle and the clay signify the light of life in divinity mingled with humanity to produce the anointing, which brings healing to the blind man. After the blind man was healed, he did not see clearly at first; he saw men walking as trees. The Lord touched his eyes again, and when the blind man looked a second time, his eyes were fully recovered. This signifies that believers sometimes receive light but are still not too clear. They become clear only after they have received further light. We can testify from our experience that light is cumulative. The light that we have today is far more than the light we received years ago.

MISCELLANEOUS FELLOWSHIP

The Destruction of Jerusalem

We praise the Lord for the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If Jerusalem had remained, there would still be sacerdotal sacrifices, and the priestly service after the order of Melchisedec could not have been instituted. If the temple had not been destroyed, the believers would have esteemed the physical temple and not considered the church as God's temple. Finally, when worship centers around an outward physical building, the believers no longer worship in spirit and in reality (see John 4:21-24).

Doing God's Will

A worker must learn to know God's will and must learn to not work for God. Most workers know that once they have God's command, they should act according to such command. But many people work even when there is no clear command from the Lord. Presumption is working without command, while disobedience is failing to work when there is a command. In either case, this is lawlessness.

Every worker can know God's will in a direct way, and there is no need for us to beg to know His desire. If I assume responsibility for informing my servant about even the smallest task, such as fetching a small pair of scissors, how much more will the Lord be responsible for giving His servants detailed instructions for what He wants to do? Once we are clear about the Lord's will, we should no longer be affected by men. Once Paul became clear of the Lord's will, he was bold to say that he did not confer with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:16). He did not compromise the truth with anyone, including Peter and John. Every worker of God must have a direct and subjective knowledge of the Lord. Paul was able to boast of "my gospel" (Rom. 2:16; 16:25). His gospel was not from men. Every worker should be able to boast as Paul did of "my gospel."

Confession

Confession is toward God and not toward men. When we sin, we sin against God. Therefore, when we confess, we confess to God. It is wrong for anyone to confess to men in a loose way. The extent of confession should only be the extent of one's sin. If one commits a sin before God, he should only confess to God. The confession in 1 John 1:9 is a confession before God. It means to call sin a sin. When God considers something to be a sin and we also call it a sin, this is confession. As one believer said, "We should give sin the right name." This is what it means to confess—to call sin a sin.

Many people confess their sins to men. They think that once they confess their sins to men, their hearts will have peace, and they think that everything will be settled. Yet they have only confessed to men; they have not confessed to God.

This kind of confession is only a performance; it has no value whatsoever before the Lord. It will not remove man's sin before God. Only the Lord's blood has the power to wash us of our sins. Although confession before men will render a person some psychological relief, it will not remove his sin-record before God.

The Oxford movement in the eighteenth century emphasized confession to men. They only paid attention to the act of confession and neglected man's deliverance before God. Dr. Stearn once said that the salvation they spoke of was only a kind of psychological deliverance; it was not a genuine salvation. Confession alone cannot save men. Only the Lord's blood can save men. First John 1:9 tells us that the Lord's blood can wash away all sins and unrighteousnesses. Many people do not have an opportunity to settle with men the sins they committed in this world. For example, the thief who was crucified beside the Lord did not have an opportunity to confess his sins to anyone. Yet he was still saved, because he trusted in the Lord's salvation (Luke 23:42-43).

CHAPTER THREE

PRIVATE TALKS

(1)

GENERAL SPIRITUAL TOPICS

The Universe Revealing God's Glory, While Christ Revealing God Himself (July 25)

Nature reveals only God's glory, but Christ reveals God Himself. God is in Christ. At the most the universe can reveal God's glory (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:20); only Christ can reveal God Himself, because God is in Christ.

There Is a God (July 25)

Once I spoke with a college student about the existence of God. The student argued that there is no God, and I said to him, "Then you must be God. If you know that there is no God, you must be God yourself. If you know that there is no God, you must have travelled throughout the whole earth. If one cannot find God in Shanghai, He may be in Nanking. In order for you to say that there is no God, you must have been to Shanghai and Nanking. But if God is not in Nanking, He may be in Tientsin. Therefore, you must have been to Tientsin as well. If God is not found in China, He may be found in another country! This means that you have been to all the countries in the world. If God is not in one place, He may be in another place. In order for you to say that there is no God, you must have been to all these places! God may be hiding at the North Pole or the South Pole,

or He may be hiding in the jungle or the wilderness. You must have been to the North Pole, the South Pole, and all the jungles and wildernesses in the world. In order for you to say that there is no God, you must have been to all these places! Perhaps God is not living on this earth, but is living on the moon. This would mean that you must have been to the moon also. God may also be living on other planets or hiding in outer space. This means that you also must have been to all the planets and to outer space as well. Hence, you must have been all over the universe and have searched everywhere. If you are qualified to say that there is no God, then you must be God.

"This is not all. You can say that there is no God today. But how can you be sure that there was no God in Shanghai yesterday. Perhaps God will come tomorrow. If you cannot find God this year, how do you know that there was no God last year? How can you be sure that you will not find God next year? Moreover, even if you are sure that there is no God today, how can you be sure that there was no God a thousand years ago? You must be a person who lives forever. You must be one who knows everything about the future, and one who is not bound by time and space. You must be one who can be simultaneously in Tientsin as well as in all the other countries of the world. You must be able to be in the east, the west, the North Pole, and the South Pole at the same time. You must be omnipresent. You must have searched through time and space in order to conclude that there is no God. If this is the case, I do not need to look anywhere else. You are God! If you are not God, you are not qualified to say that there is no God."

The Error of Modernism (July 25)

Brother Jiang's father-in-law received a wrong diagnosis from the doctor; therefore, his sickness never healed. This is analogous to the Modernists who claim that a man can be saved only if he performs good works. Saying this proves that one is ignorant of the true nature of man. Those who say this do not know man's true self. The Bible says that man is born in sin (Psa. 51:5). Man's nature is constituted of nothing but sin. Sin is something that originates from man's inward being.

The Definition of the Church (July 28)

The definition of the church: All that is of Christ in all the saints.

One Who Hated God Being Saved (August 2)

There was an opera star in England named Miss Christiana Fry. She was born of a rich family and endowed with beauty and wealth. Once she was in a beautiful

dress and met a preacher on her way home. The preacher told her that she was going down the wrong path and that she should believe in the Lord. She rejected his word. After she returned home, she said to God, "God, I hate You. I despise what You love, and I love what You hate. Even if you want to give me grace, I will not want it." Later she added, "But God, give me what I do not want. Give me what I do not have." Eventually she became a Christian and wrote a book called Christ Our Example. This proves that even those who hate and reject God can be saved.

Confession (August 2)

Today many people consider confession as a big thing. They even consider it to be something bigger than the Lord's blood, as if forgiveness of sins comes from confession. The work of Dr. John Sung gives people such an impression. Many people do not believe that forgiveness of sin is through the precious blood of the Lord. Even if a man has not confessed his sin, the Lord's blood is still efficacious as long as he believes in the blood.

How Does the Blood Wash Us of Our Sins?

(July 25)

How does the blood wash us of our sins? When a sinner sins, there is the sin-record before the Lord. When a man believes in the Lord, his name is written in the book of life, and his sin-records before the Lord are erased. After a man believes in the Lord, his sins are removed before God by the blood of the Lord. Read Revelation 20:12, 15 and Matthew 12:36-37. The Bible says that one's name can be "erased" from the book of life (Rev. 3:5; Exo. 32:32; Psa. 69:28), but this kind of "erasing" is not eternal perdition. Once a believer's name is recorded in the book of life, it can never be removed. When he sins, his name receives a mark against it.

In typology, when the priests slaughtered the animals on the altar, the blood was drained under the altar (signifying the washing of our conscience by the blood of the Lord) on the one hand, and the priests brought the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat on the other hand. When God saw the blood, He was satisfied. In the Holy of Holies, the law within the ark was covered by the blood, showing that God's righteous requirements have been silenced by the blood. Because of this God can now forgive our sins.

Personal Sin and Representative Sin (July 25)

There is a difference between representative sin and personal sin. Personal sin is what a person commits when he acts as an individual. Representative sin is

what a person commits when he acts in a representative position. A person's position as a master or a servant or as a male or a female is more than a personal position; it is a matter of representation. Matthew mentions being compelled to go a mile, being slapped on the right cheek, or being sued for a tunic. As far as personal conduct is concerned, it is enough for a person to endure all these treatments. But as far as him being a representative is concerned, enduring all these is not enough. We are God's children; this is a matter of representation, and we must go an extra mile, turn the other cheek, and give others the cloak as well. Only then will we properly represent God. God's love is shed abroad like the sunshine and the rain; He does not withdraw them because of man's scorn. If our heavenly Father is this way, we must be the same because we represent Him. Those who have not reached this standard may not have committed any personal sin, but they have committed a representative sin.

Testimony at Home (August 2)

God's love for the world has the nation as the basic unit. The church has the city as the basic unit, while humanity as a whole has the family as the basic unit. Noah, Abraham, Ahab, Korah, Lydia, etc., were all mentioned together with their family as a basic unit. The judgment on a family will come upon the head of the household, who is the male. The Lord will ask how the head has dealt with his family. With a female, the Lord will only ask her to be accountable for herself. A male carries a double role; he must act in accordance with Ephesians 6:4. There was a professor from Princeton who had several sons. None of them believed in the Lord. When a colleague of his reminded him that he should bring his sons to the Lord, he began to admonish his sons concerning the way of the Lord. Yet none of them believed by the time they graduated. Later the professor died, and his children were still unbelievers. By the time these children grew old, however, they remembered the words of their father and were all saved. I have seen dozens of cases like this.

The Place of the Male and the Female (July 28)

In the Bible the male represents truth and stands for objective things, whereas the female represents experience and stands for subjective things. In a family the male must assume the responsibility of authority and supply.

A Talk with George Cutting (July 28)

When I was in England, I visited George Cutting. At that time he was quite old. I talked with him for about half an hour. The clearest word that came out of his

mouth was, "Our Lord needs us and we need Him." Cutting's book, *Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment*, has sold more than 10 million copies. Next to the Bible, it is the most widely circulated book.

Living in His Presence All the Time (July 25)

Mr. Sparks said that many people do not live in God's presence during ordinary times; they turn to God only when there is a crisis. If we practice living in His presence during ordinary times, we will save ourselves from many cumbersome procedures.

Reckoning at the Time

of the Resurrection of the Righteous (July 25)

Once I went with an older brother to shop. When he was ready to leave, he paid his money quickly, turned to me, and said, "It is better to reckon everything now than to reckon it at the time of the resurrection of the righteous." I asked him what he meant, and he answered that a debt today will cost more on that day; a dollar today is worth only a dollar, but on that day, it will be compounded through interest.

Famous Examples

of Answers to Prayers (July 28)

(1) Once George Müller was going to Quebec. He was scheduled to arrive on Saturday afternoon, but the fog was too heavy and his ship was detained for twenty four hours. He tried to persuade the captain to set sail in spite of the fog, saying that he had to arrive in Quebec by Saturday afternoon. At first the captain would not give in, saying, "Do you not know how heavy the fog is?" Müller answered, "No, my eyes do not see the fog; they only see the living God." The captain thought that this man must have just come out of a mental asylum. Mr. Müller turned back into the cabin and prayed to the Lord, "I have promised others that I will be there for my speaking. If I miss the appointment, I will let them down. Let the captain of this ship know that you are God by blowing the fog away." After he prayed he went back to the deck and told the captain, "You can set sail now. The fog is retreating." Indeed, the fog began to move away. Later, the captain of the ship testified that he had thought that Mr. Müller was mentally sick. However, when he saw with his own eyes how God had heard Mr. Müller's prayer, he could not help but be convinced.

(2) Once there was a famine in the province of Shensi, and a few believers were praying. Suddenly a strong wind blew toward them and brought chestnuts which piled up three or four feet high. Later when they testified about this in a meeting,

a few hundred believers from the province of Suiyuen remembered that at the time they prayed, a strong wind came and cleaned up the chestnuts from their threshing floor. The huge black cloud took all the chestnuts and moved in the direction of the Shensi province.

About Evan Roberts (July 28)

One of Mr. Evan Roberts's frequent prayers was, "Bend me low, Lord." Another frequent prayer was, "Bend the church low to save the world." These two prayers were his lifelong prayers and were recorded in The Overcomer magazine between 1913 and 1914.

Mr. Roberts was an uneducated coal miner. At first he prayed alone in open fields. Later, as more joined him, there were revival meetings everywhere, and meetings began in a few dozen places. During their meetings, one could hear children crying and carrying on, yet there was no disorder because God was presiding over the meetings. One man by the name of Williams was a newspaper reporter. He went to the meetings to look for Mr. Roberts but did not find him. Eventually, he found him in a school where many elementary school students were gathering together to pray. When the children saw Mr. Williams, they surrounded him and asked him to preach to them. Mr. Williams was taken by surprise. He had spoken on numerous occasions, but he did not know what a message was. The children next asked if he was saved and asked him to pray. When he knelt down to pray, the children surrounded him. Later, he found Mr. Roberts sitting on the fourth row in a meeting. Mr. Williams went over and sat by him. Mr. Roberts was silent for a long time and only opened his mouth to adjust one man who was calling a hymn. After Mr. Williams saw all these things, he resigned from his work at the newspaper company and followed Mr. Roberts to learn from him the way to pray.

Mr. Roberts preached between the age of nineteen and twenty-six. Then he became sick, and he is still too sick to work today. He is still alive today and in his fifties. A believer who talked with him for about two hours testified later that he had never met a person with as little self-consciousness as Mr. Roberts had.

In collaboration with Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis, he wrote War on the Saints, a book on spiritual warfare. Prior to him, no one knew anything about the spiritual warfare spoken of in Ephesians 6.

Experience of Healing (August 31)

I was sick for one hundred sixty-five days. The last episode was the most trying of all. I could not sleep at night, and I was constantly sweating. During my

sickness, many prayers seemed to have disappeared from me; I was not able to hold on to any promise from the Lord or trust in His healing.

Once when Brother Chang Kwang-rong saw my pain, he said, "I wish I could die for you." I would not allow others to give me any medicine. I said, "I will not take any medicine. If I die, God is responsible for my death. But if you give me medicine and I die, you will have to be responsible for my death."

On the last day of my sickness, the head nurse in the Health Department called my friends and relatives and asked them to make preparations for my funeral. Many people came and wept. On that day, I heard a soft voice coming from afar, saying, "Watchman Nee, I have healed you." Then I asked someone to fetch my clothing and shoes and to hire a car for me. I took the car and rode to Miss Dora Yu's house. She thought that I was a ghost. After I was healed, I was able to walk downstairs by myself. I was healed on Friday. By Saturday, I was able to mend my own shoes, and on the Lord's Day I preached for over an hour.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIVATE TALKS

(2)

Date: 1934

Place: Foochow

ON BIBLICAL EXPOSITION

Biblical Manuscripts and the Apocrypha (July 31)

The Old Testament: The Old Testament we have today is the Old Testament that the Lord Jesus used in His days. At that time the Old Testament had been translated into Greek. Although there were Old Testament apocryphal writings, the Lord did not acknowledge them. The Lord only acknowledged the Old Testament that we have today. We find the proof of this in Luke 24:44. Hence, there is absolutely no error in the Old Testament, and no part was missing.

The New Testament: There are only three extant manuscripts of the New Testament: the Vaticanus, the Sinaiticus, and the Alexandrianus. Historically, there are four to five hundred copies of parts of the four gospels in existence. The New Testament does not have an apocrypha, and no part of it has been lost. John Calvin said that in reading the Apocrypha, his spirit spontaneously told him that it was not inspired by the Spirit.

Dr. Scofield said that it is all right if the Bible has one part in ten thousand that is in error, because that one part has nothing to do with the truth of the Bible.

The Order of the Four Gospels (August 2)

The first three gospels were written in Judea, whereas the Gospel of John was written in Ephesus. Mark and John were written chronologically; Matthew was written according to the order of doctrines, whereas Luke was written according to the order of spiritual teachings.

Comments on Matthew (August 2)

The good earth in Matthew 13:8 refers to a good heart, an honest heart. The Holy Spirit is the comforter. A comforter is one who is alongside. During the three and a half years that the Lord was on the earth, He was first a Friend to sinners. He did not come first to be the Savior. He was first a Friend to sinners and then the Savior to sinners. He first had to be a Friend before men could love Him. The Lord did this to prepare men's hearts to receive Him as the Savior. People often do not believe when we talk to them about repentance and faith in God. We should first let the sinners know that the Lord is their Friend. Then they will easily receive Him as their Savior.

The casting of the net and the collecting of the fish in Matthew 13 portray the things in the coming kingdom (vv. 47-48).

The Lord had three kinds of brothers: those in the flesh, the Jews, and the New Testament believers.

The Spreading in Acts (August 2)

The church committed one grave mistake after Pentecost—it did not follow the commandment of Acts 1:8. After Acts 9, we have a record of Paul as a messenger of the gospel to the Gentiles. Yet before Paul went out for his work, Peter had already gone down to Caesarea. His going to Caesarea was opposed by the believers in Jerusalem. However, without Peter's going, it is doubtful whether Paul could have started a work there at a later date.

Romans 2:12 (August 2)

According to Romans 2:12, those who have never heard the gospel will not necessarily perish. When I was in Canada, I preached on the subject of "Seven Kinds of People Who Can Be Saved without Believing or Knowing the Truth." Among those who can be saved are those who do not know that there is a God, those who do not know that Jesus is the Savior, and those who do not know of the forgiveness of the cross.

The Man in Romans 7 (August 2)

Chapters one through eight of Romans are doctrinal, nine through eleven are illustrative, and twelve through sixteen are experiential. Chapter seven describes the condition of a person before he is saved. The proof of this is in verse 14. Verses 1 through 6 describe the condition of a saved person, whereas verse 14 describes the condition of an unsaved person. Verse 6 says that we (the saved ones) have died to the law in which we were held and are therefore discharged or freed from the law. Yet verse 14 says that we are fleshy, sold under sin. This must refer to an unsaved person, because this person is not yet freed from the law. (July 25)

In the Solomon Islands, there was a worker called Northcote Codeck, who claimed that his work had no need of Romans 7, because he taught consecration from the beginning.

The Man Who Sinned in 1 Corinthians 5

(August 2)

First Corinthians 5 mentions the fornicators, the covetous, the idolaters, revilers, drunkards, and those who are rapacious (v. 11). These are not verbs but descriptions. They describe certain kinds of persons.

Paradise (July 31)

Hades is in the center of the earth; it is divided into a suffering part and Paradise (see Luke 16:22-26). In 2 Corinthians 12:2 and 4, the original Greek says that Paul was caught up to the third heavens and was caught away to Paradise. The Lord said that He would be in the center of the earth for three days (Matt. 12:40). On the cross He told the thief who was crucified beside Him that he would be with Him in Paradise that same day (Luke 23:43). This proves that Paradise is in the center of the earth. Ephesians 4:8 says that the Lord led captive those taken captive; it does not say that he led Paradise captive and took Paradise to the third heavens. This proves that Paradise and the third heavens are in two different places.

The Subject of the Book of Philippians (July 28)

The subject of the book of Philippians is not rejoicing, but the exhortation of two sisters to be reconciled to each other. In chapter one, Paul showed that he was always reconciled to others. In chapter two, he showed that Christ was always reconciled to God.

The Three Peaks in the New Testament (July 28)

There are three peaks in the New Testament: Romans, Ephesians, and Hebrews. Romans is on sin and salvation, Ephesians is on the church in eternity, and Hebrews is on the Lord as the High Priest.

The Second Epistles in the New Testament

(July 28)

Why are there the first and the second epistles in the New Testament? This is because man did not take heed to the first epistle, and there was the need to write a second epistle. Hence, every second epistle mentions the subject of separation. For example, 2 Corinthians 6:17 mentions separation from the unclean; 2 Timothy 3:5 mentions turning away from those who have an outward form of godliness.

Second Timothy mainly tells us to turn back to three things: the teaching of Paul, to the Old Testament, and to turn away from those who have an outward form of godliness in order to turn back to the reality of godliness.

Today the church is in desolation. The ones mentioned in 2 Timothy 3 are those who are in the church. Hence, there is the need for some to separate themselves to be the overcomers. Of the seven churches in Revelation, the first three have passed away: (1) The church in Ephesus signifies the church at the time of the apostles. (2) The church in Smyrna signifies the suffering church, which was persecuted by the Roman emperors. (3) The church in Pergamos saw the gradual formation of the papal system. The last four churches will remain until the Lord comes back: (4) The church in Thyatira, which is the Roman Catholic Church, with the papal corruption. This is the church prior to the time of Martin Luther. (5) The church in Sardis, which signifies the Protestant church. This was the beginning of the recovery of the church. (6) The church in Philadelphia, which signifies the faithful little flock. (7) The church in Laodicea, which signifies a degradation from the church in Philadelphia.

The City in Revelation (August 2)

In Genesis the serpent crept in because there was a garden. But in Revelation the serpent can no longer creep in, because there is a city.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRIVATE TALKS

(3)

Date: 1934

Place: Foochow

ON THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH LIFE

The Ground of Locality of a Church

There are many advantages in having the city as the unit of the church. Although not all the cities in the Bible have walls, cities historically experience the least amount of changes. There should be only one church in the city of Foochow, yet it can have seven or eight meeting places. All seven or eight places are under the same administration of the one church, and there is only one set of elders and deacons for this one church. A city, a town, or a village is the sphere of administration of a church. When speaking of the province of Galatia, the Bible refers to the churches in Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1). But in regard to Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and the seven cities in Revelation, the Bible speaks of the church in each locality; the names of the churches are derived from the names of the cities. In England there are two cities which are very close together; they have two churches. In the United States, New York City is composed of three former cities which were combined to form one greater New York City. Before they were combined, there were three churches, but after they were combined, there should only be one church.

The local church is the highest administration on earth; it is directly responsible to God. If a problem occurs in a locality, the church can only try to deal with it by itself; there is no higher place of appeal. Other churches can only give their advice. For example, Paul could not interfere with the fornicator spoken of in 1 Corinthians 5. He could only deliver the sinning one in his spirit to Satan. Acts 15 gives us another example. At that time, some people went from Jerusalem to Antioch and taught that believers should be circumcised and keep the laws of Moses. Paul went up to Jerusalem to settle this dispute, but this does not mean that Jerusalem was the center. It merely means that the matter originated from Jerusalem. (August 1)

God ordains that the church should take the locality as its unit. No unit that is greater than a locality or smaller than a locality can form the basis of a church. The table meeting at Pai-Ya-Tan (White Teeth Lake) has the following extra-local

characteristics: (1) It can hire pastors, (2) it pays salary, (3) it can dismiss workers, and (4) all decisions are made by itself. (July 31)

The Oneness of the Church (July 31)

The principle of the oneness of the church lies first in considering others better than oneself, and second in keeping all the good things of the Adamic old man from creeping into the church.

The Bible never commands us to like people; it only commands us to love others. Likes and dislikes are things in the Adamic realm. We cannot base our choice on our own disposition, and we cannot associate ourselves only with those who have our same disposition. We can see the work of Christ in every believer's character. For example, Americans are different from Englishmen (e.g., consider Dr. Stearns and his wife). It would be a disaster if we did things in the church according to our own disposition.

Elders and deacons are restricted to a locality, whereas truth is a matter for all the churches; therefore, it must be ascertained by the teachers. All those who are led by the Holy Spirit will surely have the same revelation. If any one individual does not accept a truth, he alone has to bear the responsibility for his refusal. After a teacher has ascertained a truth, all the churches should follow and submit to this truth.

The Question of Sects

The principle in ascertaining a sect: (1) It has its own distinctive name, (2) it has its own distinctive organization, and (3) it has its own distinctive fellowship. (July 31)

When Dr. Stearns discussed the matter of leaving the denominations with Mr. Sparks, he was asked, "If you are truly under the headship of Christ, would you come under the Presbyterians?" This made Dr. Stearns clear about the matter of leaving the denominations.

We should speak to students about the church. We should let them know that we fellowship with all the saints and that we take care of the Body life. (August 2)

Among the Workers (August 2)

If a worker cannot work together with another worker, there must be something wrong with his spiritual life. We should learn to work together with others. This is like a couple living together; both have to learn to rub off each other's rough spots.

The Prayer Meeting (August 1)

Any problem in the church that cannot be solved by the brothers should be settled by prayers of authority. It should never be settled by the consent of the majority. Prayers of authority should constitute at least half of all our prayers.

The Bread-breaking Meeting (July 28)

It is better to break the bread in the evening. The reasons are as follows: (1) We labor in the day for the Lord and enter into the enjoyment in the evening, and (2) indifferent ones also are screened out by holding the meeting in the evening.

Concerning Visiting a Place

and Breaking the Bread There (July 25)

If you are a guest in a place and only stay there temporarily, it is permissible to break bread and remember the Lord with the ones who are there. But once the matter of receiving arises, it touches the matter of church ministry. We have to be careful and not act rashly.

The Preaching Meeting (July 28)

There are three things to watch for in preparing a message: (1) the message, (2) the material, and (3) the method.

Funeral Meetings (August 1)

It is better for believers to personally conduct the funerals of their fellow believers. For example, in the Bible we have the Lord's death, Stephen's death, and the death of the condemned couple Ananias and Sapphira. All of their funerals were handled by the believers.

CHAPTER SIX

PRIVATE TALKS

(4)

Date: 1934

Place: Foochow

ON THE ASSEMBLY IN FOOCHOW AND ON DIVISION

(Editor's Note: In 1934 there was a meeting in She-Er-Jen-Pai, a district in the city of Foochow. The meeting was not a part of any denomination, and it had knowledge of the church in Shanghai. The leaders of that meeting were a Miss Ding Shu-shin and John Wang. Brother K. H. Weigh as well as Watchman Nee's mother met with this assembly at one time. Miss Ding was opposed to the practice of head covering and later also sought for the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Brother Weigh did not agree with her stand of opposing the

head covering. The following are records of Brother Nee's talk with Brother Weigh concerning the subject and Brother Nee's advice.)

Since its severance from the denominations, the meeting in She-Er-Jen-Pai has never stood clearly on the proper ground of the church. This is a historical fact. This puts it at a distance from the other assemblies. Its initial testimony was merely a testimony for the truth of salvation. Later, it advanced to stand for the truth of baptism and then for the truth of the Lord's table. But it was never clear about the church ministry. As far as church ministry is concerned, it should submit itself to the assemblies which have advanced further in this aspect of the truth. The late-comers should submit to the early-comers. For example, it is only proper for the newly raised assembly in Swatow to follow the practice of the church in Shanghai. (July 31)

This time my coming to Foochow is only for settling general questions. The local problems in Foochow should be settled by the local brothers themselves.

Our problem with the meeting in Tsing-Tao-Kuan is a moral issue. It is related to the setting up of the Lord's table meeting there. We cannot participate in the breaking of bread in that meeting. However, our problem with She-Er-Jen-Pai has to do with the truth, such as the truth concerning head covering.

We can only take one of two stands concerning the head covering (with respect to the forbidding of the head covering in She-Er-Jen-Pai). Either we go to the meeting and cover our head, or we do not go to the meeting at all. Both stands are correct (see 1 Cor. 11:3-15).

It is unreasonable for She-Er-Jen-Pai to demand that others take off their head covering. Miss Ding demanded that everyone take off their head covering while waiting to be clear about the Lord's will. She also said that since most people did not cover their head, the minority should go along with the majority and wait on the Lord's leading in this way. But why would she not ask those who have not covered their head to cover their head while waiting on the Lord? Suppose the majority of them covered their head. Would Miss Ding also cover her head to wait on the Lord?

Miss Ding said that humanity as a whole already has its head covered in the order of God's creation and that there is no need to have a physical sign. I would ask, "If we are dead in Christ already, why do we have to be baptized?"

Miss Ding left the denominations through the help of Hwa Wei-cheng's Bible teachings at Tien-An Chapel. You do not have to argue with her about her isolated issues one by one. [This probably refers to such issues as head

covering.] All you have to do is to ask, "What right does a man have to express his opinion before God or to question God? (Rom. 9:19-21). Toward God's Word there is no need for us to ask why. As long as we know that it is God's Word, that is enough."

Those whose flesh is not thoroughly crucified often ask why. Even many preachers often try to study the "whys." But a spiritual man does not ask why; he only asks what.

Moreover, according to the teaching of the Bible, a woman does not have any place in teaching the truths (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:12). We see no such thing in the Bible. Even if Miss Ding is opposed to the matter of head covering, she should not be teaching this as a teaching.

In the event that there is a division in She-Er-Jen-Pai, it will not be the result of a dispute concerning head covering. There have been a series of factors accumulating throughout the years, leading to the present outbreak. (July 25)

Of course, I have to say a word to you as well. You were wrong as well. If you were unhappy with the meeting in She-Er-Jen-Pai in any way, you should have discussed it with the responsible ones there and not have criticized them behind their backs. (August 2)

**Events Leading to the Separation between
the Way of Watchman Nee and John Wang
Brother Weigh's Abbreviated Record
of Brother Nee's Letter to John Wang**

"Yesterday I was praying singlemindedly and searching my heart day and night. I felt that your attitude and motive were very questionable [referring to what John Wang did when he was in Shanghai]. From the few conversations I had with you, I felt that the difference between us still exists. From this night forward, the arguments between us should end right here. You can take your way. I guarantee you that I will not bother you anymore. Concerning the meeting in Foochow [in She-Er-Jen-Pai], I cannot render any help to the situation, and neither will I do anything to damage it. I admit that you have won your arguments. However, in your conversation with a certain sister last night about forcing others to take off their head covering, I am afraid that you overstepped in the matter of exercising your authority. Mr. Panton said that over-law is lawlessness. Your exercise of authority is for achieving your private end."

Brother Nee's Declaration at 7 p.m. on August 31 at the Lawn Close to Sister Chia's House

1. From tonight on, I will officially withdraw my declaration concerning the meeting in She-Er-Jen-Pai.
2. John Wang is playing with our feelings.
3. I have urged John to settle the issue of head covering with a certain sister, but John argued that the sister was being disobedient.
4. Some sisters who were dissatisfied with the meeting in She-Er-Jen-Pai urged John Wang to settle the issue of the head covering. John told my mother [Brother Nee's mother] that he was reluctant to get involved in the dispute. Yet at the same time that he said this, he also told the sisters to submit and take off their head coverings.

Brother Weigh Asked concerning What Should Be Done in the Event That There Was a Separation from She-Er-Jen-Pai

Brother Nee's answer: First, after you go down from the mountain here, you should talk the problem over with the brothers in She-Er-Jen-Pai just by yourself. Second, after attending one meeting, you should again ask them what attitude they will adopt. Third, you should stop attending their meeting temporarily if they will not answer. You can gather some people to meet with you on the Lord's Day or have prayer meetings or Bible study meetings. Fourth, you should write an open letter to all the brothers and sisters in She-Er-Jen-Pai and explain the whole story concerning the dispute with the matter of the head covering. Fifth, before you stop attending their meetings, you should write a letter to the responsible ones in She-Er-Jen-Pai. Tell them that you are waiting for them to settle the issue, that you feel that their attitude is wrong, and that they have abused their authority.

The Two Reasons for Excommunication from Foochow in 1924

I was excommunicated in Foochow in 1924 for two reasons. First, I opposed inviting Mr. Woodberry from the Christian and Missionary Alliance to ordain some of us to be pastors. Second, I opposed putting up a sign that said "The Foochow Church." Later, the brothers tried to change the name to "The Chuan-Chien-Shan Church." [Chuan-Chien-Shan is the name of a district in the city of Foochow.] I opposed it because such names cannot include all the believers in Foochow. For example, there are various Chinese Associations in the city of San Francisco,

each affiliated with a different province. There is constant fighting among them, sometimes even with firearms. Suppose a few Chinese among them put up another sign that just said "The Chinese Association." This sign would be torn down immediately. They can only claim to represent all the Chinese in San Francisco when all the Chinese in the different associations have become one in everything. Of course, under the present circumstance, a few of them who are of one mind can still bind themselves together and have an unofficial Chinese Association that does not bear an official name and which includes all Chinese. Such an association would be standing on the ground of the Chinese Association, but would not declare anything in an outward way. Our practice of the local church should be the same in principle. If there is absolutely no other denomination in a locality, an assembly can declare itself to be the local church in that locality. If any denomination comes afterward to set up another congregation, it is setting up a division. The one who is there first has the right of priority. In a place where there are existing denominations already, one can only say that his meeting is one that meets in the name of the Lord. The words church and assembly are the same in Greek, which is ekklesia.

When the above two issues were raised on one Lord's Day morning, I spoke on the subject of the way of the ark. In the Old Testament, after the ark was separated from the tabernacle, the center of worship followed the movement of the ark; the tabernacle became a useless form. The same is true in principle with our assembly today. What is crucial is not the outward tabernacle, which typifies formal Christianity. What counts is the testimony of Christ within, which is typified by the ark. We follow the ark, not the tabernacle. After the ark and the tabernacle were separated, God's eyes only rested on the ark, not on the tabernacle. Those who have acquired wisdom as Solomon did should run to the ark and no longer care for the tabernacle (1 Kings 3:4-15).

SECTION TWO

FELLOWSHIP

IN VARIOUS PLACES IN 1934

CHAPTER SEVEN

KEYS TO STUDYING THE BIBLE

In studying the Bible we have to pay attention to the following points:

GRASPING THE MAIN THEME

In studying the Bible, the first thing we have to do is to find the main subject. Then we can go into the details. We must first have a grasp of the main subject of a portion of the Word, and then we must find out the various details. The details are supplementary, while the skeleton is the main subject. For example, Leviticus speaks of many kinds of offerings. It is of little use to merely understand the facts concerning the various offerings. We must see how the work of Christ satisfies God and how He satisfies the believers. In this way, we can relate all the offerings to God's pleasure in Christ and the saints' enjoyment of Christ. For example, the sin offering satisfies God, and Christ's death satisfies both God and the believers.

FINDING OUT THE LINES

One must also find the proper lines in God's Word before he can have God's revelation and light. It is useless to struggle laboriously or to resort to some study techniques. When I was still in Trinity College, I read the Old Testament seven or eight times and the New Testament twenty or thirty times within a year. But I did not gain much from that kind of reading. In studying the Word, we can skim over the general verses, but we should pay attention to the crucial verses. I have been studying the Old and the New Testament in the Holy Spirit concerning the truth of Christ's coming again. I am still not finished with this study. I think that I would need fifty years to study this truth in a thorough way. If our daily reading of the Scripture in the morning and evening is a routine work, we will not receive much benefit from it. However, there are times in our reading and our time of fellowship when we are touched and overwhelmed by a certain truth. If we pay attention to the crucial truths in the Bible, we will readily receive God's revelations.

FORGETTING WHAT ONE READS

When we come to the Word, we should read through it consistently without trying to do anything more with it. It is even better if we would forget what we have read. Later, at an unexpected time, God will spontaneously reveal to us what we have read in the way that He sees fit. It is useless for us to strenuously try to understand the Word. Concordance-like expositions are unprofitable; we need divine exposition.

VIEWING FROM THE BROAD ANGLE

In studying the Word, one must view things from a broad angle, yet concentrate his study on the detailed points. This is like the engineers who work at the Canton-Swatow railway; their eyes must be set on the broad topography between Canton and Swatow and must not be caught up with the little ponds,

houses, and hills along the route. In studying the Word, we have to pay attention to the big points and not be preoccupied with the small points. This is like connecting two points; the fastest way is to draw a straight line instead of meandering around in circles. Once my sister-in-law went to a department store to buy a pair of shorts. She spent over two hours in the store. The delay was caused by stopping to look at such things as toothbrushes and handkerchiefs. In studying the Word, we must first find the main highway and deal with the side streets afterward. This does not mean that the small points are not important; it means that we are putting them aside until later.

TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS

The Bible says that the Lord went into Jerusalem on a colt. If we waste our time studying such things as the color of the colt, the age of it, etc., we are being caught up with inconsequential things. Paul had a thorn. If we waste our time studying what kind of thorn it was or arguing if it was an eye disease or malaria, we are just studying the map and not actually embarking on the journey. If a man spends all of his time reading a map instead of walking, he is wasting time and energy, and his work is futile. Some have tried to determine whether the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a fig tree, vine tree, pomegranate tree, or olive tree. This is silly. The same is true when some try to find out who Cain's wife was. This kind of study does not bring any profit to the spiritual life.

NOT ACCORDING TO ANY FORM

There is no need to adhere to any form when reading the Bible. Some have asked how I live. I answered that I live in a very nonrigid fashion. Sometimes I visit people at midnight. Sometimes others visit me at six o'clock in the morning. The same should be true with our reading of the Word. We must follow the Spirit, not the form.

REACHING GOD'S STANDARD

When most people think of sanctification, they think of the negative aspect of deliverance from sin. But biblical sanctification is toward God. Being sanctified is being separated unto God. Once we lay hold of the source, the other negative things will be dealt with easily. If the source of sanctification is God Himself, all the sins will be dealt with easily. Our view must be elevated to God's standard. Even in saving men, our center should be God, not man, because God wants to gain many sons. Therefore, we should work to save men, not because they are suffering, but because God wants to have sons. If our work is man-centered, we

will not be able to sleep well when we get to heaven because we will see others still in hell. Some mothers will not be able to say "hallelujah" in heaven when they see their children in hell. Nothing of what we do should be earth-centered, and nothing should be self-centered. Everything should be divine and God-centered.

WAITING FOR THE LORD'S COMING

When I first read Sister Dora Yu's book, *The Prayer Life*, and saw two chapters on the Lord's coming, I was stirred up to study the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation very much. Later I met Miss M.E. Barber, who did not talk about the prophecies of the Lord's coming at all. I was very proud and thought that I understood much about prophecy. Yet in the course of our conversation, I found that she was the one who was truly waiting for the Lord's coming. My studying was genuine, but my waiting was not. I studied about the Lord's coming, but I was not waiting for it. However, she not only studied the prophecies of the Lord's coming, but she was genuinely waiting for it. Her studying and her waiting were both genuine.

THE NEED FOR EXPERIENCE

In 1922 Miss Barber explained the book, *More Than Conquerors*, by Jessie Penn-Lewis to me. She often said, "We need her to tell us about her experience of the cross." I was quite puzzled and could not understand what she was talking about. Later I gradually learned that a man does not need the doctrine of victory and of being more than conquerors, but the experience of the cross. A man will have the genuine experience of victory only after he has accepted the cross.

A Western missionary who was over forty years old could not overcome a certain habit of snacking. She wept about it for two weeks, but was still unable to overcome the sin. Every meeting she came with tears in her eyes. I asked her for the reason, and she told me that she had committed some very serious sins. When I asked about it, she told me that she could not overcome concerning certain kinds of food. She was sorrowful because she could not overcome when she saw that many others had experienced the overcoming life. Later, I talked with her about the secret to victory. When she went home, she committed the matter to the Lord, and the Lord brought her through. She later testified that during that week she was so exuberant that she did not know if she was living on earth or in heaven. Later, I found that she fasted more than anyone else. She fasted once or twice a week and sometimes fasted for over twenty consecutive days.

Romans 7 can be called a chapter of desperation. This chapter tells us that a man must give up hope in himself before he can overcome. If a man has not reached his end, God will not begin His work.

In America a believer had a frame on his wall that read "Let God." He prayed to "let God" do many things for him, but failed again and again. One day either the wind or some naughty children took away the letter "d" in the word God, and only "Let Go" was left! These two simple words helped him to overcome.

GENUINE SPIRITUALITY

If a meeting renders others a spiritual supply, that meeting has spiritual worth to it. When others attend your meeting, they can only receive the supply which you already have. Others can never receive more than your capacity to give. In spiritual matters, it is a matter of whether or not we have the real thing. If we are spiritual, we are spiritual. If we are not spiritual, we are not spiritual; there is no way for us to perform anything. If someone has accomplished something that has spiritual value to it, there is no need for us to be jealous of him. The Brethren are sound in theology, and they can analyze doctrines well, yet there is not much spiritual worth to their work.

First Corinthians 8:2 says, "If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he has not yet come to know as he ought to know." To think that one knows anything is spiritual pride. Those who think that they know anything actually have nothing, yet they presume that they have something. My Bible is very clean because every time I read it or speak about it, I forget what I read or spoke, and put it behind me. In this way, I am not tempted to speak from memory at a later date when the light is gone. Once we have delivered a message, we should try not to ever repeat it again, unless we have more light on it at a later date.

GENUINE LOVE

Whether or not you can love a person depends on your knowledge of him. First, you have to know how much he loves you, and then you have to know why he is so lovable. Once you know these things, you will love him willingly. True love is having no complaint in the midst of sufferings. If you love your father, you will be happy when he chastises you for your mistakes. You will wish that he chastised you more, if that will make his heart happy. Once a brother said to me, "If you love a person, you will be happy even if he rebukes you." Love suffers willingly for the sake of rendering joy to others. This is true between friends and between fathers and sons. It is also true between us and the Lord.

Hence, the more we know the Lord, the more we will love Him. In order to know the Lord, we have to know His Word. The Lord's Word is simply the Lord Himself. Through the Lord's Word, we know how He loves us and how lovable He is. This knowledge will attract us to love Him and follow Him willingly.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF A WORKER

INTRODUCTION

It is a serious thing for a sinner saved by grace to excommunicate another sinner saved by grace. We are not sitting on a throne of judgment; we are not the judge.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD A BROTHER WHO HAS SINNED

We should have a proper attitude toward a brother who has sinned. We must be humble. If we are proud, we will fall as well. First Corinthians 10:12 says, "So then let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Tonight while we are sitting here, we have to ask ourselves, "What is our attitude toward our brother who has sinned?"

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE CO-WORKERS

The Bible does not have the so-called missions that we see today. Co-workers were free to come and go, and no one could stop them. They bore a direct relationship with God. Philippians 1:15 says, "Some preach Christ even because of envy and strife, and some also because of good will." Paul was not under anyone, and no one was under him. The Lord said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you" (Matt. 20:25-26a).

Does this then mean that the workers are free to do whatever they like? No. Acts 13:1-3 speaks of the laying on of hands. Laying hands on someone is being identified with someone and being bound to someone. In the Old Testament, when the priests offered the sacrifices, they laid hands on the head of the animals being offered. This signifies that the one who offers the offerings is one with the offerings. In Acts 13, Barnabas and Saul received the laying on of hands from the other prophets and teachers. We think that apostles are greater than prophets and that the apostles should have therefore laid hands on the prophets, but in Acts 13 we see prophets laying hands on the apostles. This shows that the laying on of hands is not a matter of being greater or smaller. It is a matter of union and limitation. Concerning the co-worker whom we are excommunicating, we can testify that we have never laid hands on him. We did not excommunicate

him earlier because we did not have any definite proof. Even if we had proof in the past, we could not have excommunicated him because the other brothers and sisters would not have let him go. But the Lord has done a work today and personally stepped in to clear up the matter.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A WORKER

A worker must be tested before he can be qualified to be a worker. One who has failed the test is not qualified to be a worker.

THE MEANING OF RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation implies consent. However, we have never recommended this brother to anyone.

PUTTING AWAY THE SINNING ONE

The church does not have the power to guarantee that any believer will be kept from sinning, but it does have the power to put away believers who are sinning. We are ashamed that such things have happened among us, but we cannot allow sin to remain in the church. It would have been easier to cover this matter up than to deal with it. Yet covering things up is a shame. We cannot guarantee that a lump will be free from leaven, but when there is leaven, we have to put it away (1 Cor. 5:6-7a). Strictly speaking, no one has the power to excommunicate another brother. A person first puts himself away before the Lord; he first loses his fellowship with the Lord. Afterwards, the church executes the putting away. This is like a house whose electric power has been cut off. The light bulbs in the house will not shine; there is no need for anyone to turn the switch off. In the same way, a man is excommunicated from the church because he is first excommunicated from the presence of God.

First Corinthians 5:2 tells us that when someone has sinned in the church, we should not be boastful; rather, we should mourn. We should realize that we also have sins. Perhaps we have hidden sins. We must be humble and ask God to cleanse us from our sins. We are here to judge sin, not our brother. Were it not for the grace of God, we would be worse than he is. Why is it that so many have wept this time?

If anyone asks about the excommunication of our brother, we can answer in a simple way, "It is necessary for the church to be holy. According to the teaching of the Scripture, we have to excommunicate him." We should not speculate if certain brothers or sisters have any sinful relationship with him.

HISTORY

In 1927 while I was in Nanking, through Brother K. H. Weigh's introduction, this brother came to me and was saved after talking with me. While he worked in the Customs Department, he became fallen. Later he repented but fell again when he worked for the Political Party Office in Foochow. (Brother Faithful Luk's sister-in-law can testify to this.) Then he repented again and went to study in Cheloo University in Shantung. When I was conducting meetings in Shantung, he was revived. Later, he came to Shanghai and went with my mother to visit places like Swatow, Amoy, and Canton. In Tsinan, Shanghai Ching-Shin Girls' School, Foochow, Swatow, as well as Canton, he sinned by seducing women. Although he repented, he could never overcome this sin.

CHAPTER NINE

THE WAY TO WORK

THE NEED OF A VISION IN GOD'S WORK

The Israelites first received the pattern on the mount from God before they built the tabernacle. We must first have a vision before we can obey it. Paul said, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

Some people have a fleshly vision, but we must have a heavenly vision. Before the Lord, we must be clear about the pattern that is according to God's eternal plan. All the men whom God greatly used in the past had a vision. We must first have a vision before we can become useful. Joseph's dream was his vision, and his dream was fulfilled in the end.

OUR TEACHING MUST HAVE A MAIN THEME AND FOCUS

There must be a main theme to our teaching. When you read the writings and expositions of persons like Mrs. Penn-Lewis, George Müller, and A. B. Simpson, you can see that their teachings all had some main themes to them.

Whatever we speak must focus on some specific points. It hurts to poke someone with your finger, but it does not hurt as much if you hit him with your palm because the palm has spread out the area of pressure. We must focus a message around a point before it can prick men's hearts. The world is dull of hearing. This is why Isaiah 28:13 says that when Jehovah speaks, He speaks here a little and there a little. We who speak for the Lord must speak with a certain distinctiveness in the truth.

In order to help others go on, we need to have a definite plan. We should write down and list out all the things that we should do with regard to people, events, and things. In speaking to others, we should explain things in a clear way. We

should help others to be thoroughly clear about the basic matters and then go on to speak about the more advanced subjects. We should render general help to a general audience and render specific help to a specific audience. The Lord has commissioned us in these days to concentrate on a specific ministry.

SECTION THREE

OVERCOMER CONFERENCE

IN CHUENCHOW,

NOVEMBER 1935

CHAPTER TEN

HE FILLS THE HUNGRY

WITH GOOD THINGS

Date: November 11, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:53; Mark 10:51

GOD'S RICHES BEING RESERVED FOR THE HUNGRY

We must realize that God's blessing to man is based on one condition. In order for God to bless a man, he must satisfy one condition: he must be hungry. "The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty" (Luke 1:53). If we are not hungry, we cannot expect to receive anything from God. God's riches and grace are reserved for only one kind of people: those who are hungry. Many people are often dissatisfied and unhappy. However, dissatisfaction and unhappiness are not necessarily the same as hunger. A man may be unhappy and dissatisfied, yet at the same time, refuse to seek for more because he is not hungry even though he is dissatisfied. What does it mean to be hungry? It is being empty before God and feeling unfulfilled within. An empty and unfulfilled feeling is an impetus for a person to seek after God. However, if a person is not hungry, he can sit in the same place for days without doing anything. God has promised to fill only those who are hungry. He has not promised to fill those who are dissatisfied. Those who are full, that is, who think that they are rich, will be sent away empty-handed.

MISS BARBER'S EXAMPLE

Miss Barber used to tell others that from her youth through her old age she had an eternal hunger for God. She told others that whenever her eyes were not set on the Lord, she would not feel hungry. But whenever her eyes were set on the Lord, she would be continually hungry before the Lord. She was hungry

continually, and the Lord filled her continually. Today we find many believers who are dissatisfied, but we find very few who are hungry. The prodigal son in Luke 15 returned home because he was hungry. He could have filled himself with carob pods. This would not have satisfied him, but neither would he have gone hungry, and he would not have thought about returning home. This is the condition with many people. They live daily in dissatisfaction, yet their stomachs are filled with carob pods. Hence, we see that dissatisfaction is one thing, while hunger is another. Many believers know the doctrine of overcoming; they may even be able to give a message on overcoming. They can lay out the doctrine on the overcoming life from the first point to the last and do a clear analysis of the subject. Yet they still have not overcome. It is one thing to have the doctrine of the overcoming life, it is another thing to overcome. The doctrine of the overcoming life is easy. Those who are smart and have a good memory can understand and remember it readily. But when they are faced with various circumstances, they find that they cannot overcome at all. Hearing a message on overcoming is not an end in itself; one does not overcome simply by listening to a message on overcoming. Only one kind of people will overcome: those who are hungry to experience it. God grants the overcoming experience to those who are hungry. If a man is not hungry, he cannot live an overcoming life. Today we need a hunger for God, because all those whom God uses and blesses are desperate ones.

JACOB AND PAUL

In Genesis 32 in the Old Testament, we have a record of Jacob wrestling with an angel. Although the hollow of his thigh was touched, he spoke to the angel, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (v. 26). Although Jacob was ruthless, his disposition met the condition for God's blessing; he was desperately seeking. If God did not bless him, he would not let God go. As a result, God had to bless him. In the New Testament, Paul was the same type of person. He risked his life to become an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 20:24). As a result, he received much blessing from God.

GOD BLESSING THOSE WHO ARE DESPERATE

Many people are not hungry for God. They are not desperate to pursue after God, yet they put all the blame on the leading brothers. They do not grow spiritually, yet they blame their lack of growth on the other brothers. They are dissatisfied, but they are not hungry. The manifestations of dissatisfaction are

discouragement and withdrawal. All those who are genuinely hungry are desperate to pursue after God. God's blessing is surely with these people. A preacher once said to the Lord, "O God, if You do not fill me up, I will quit preaching." He was discouraged and told God that he would not be a preacher anymore unless God filled him up. This is dissatisfaction; it is not being hungry. Another lady preacher told the Lord, "O God, if You do not fill me up, I will die." She was after God; she was serious with God, and she would not let God go. This is the kind of people that God blesses. Their hearts are hungry, and their attitude is desperate. God's riches will not fail to fill up these emptied vessels.

You have come to attend this conference at this time. What do you want from the Lord? What do you expect the Lord to fill you with? Do you have any sin which you are not able to overcome? Are you here to ask the Lord to do something for you? Do you have a temper which plagues you? Have you come for the Lord to liberate you? Are you defeated by your love for the world? Do you have dozens or even hundreds of other sins that you are not able to overcome? If your thoughts are unclean, if you cannot overcome your disposition, if you do not have an uninterrupted fellowship with the Lord, if you are afraid to pray, or if you see no result to your work, now is the time for you to ask the Lord to give you the abundant life and fill you up with the Spirit. If you ask of the Lord, He will bless you abundantly, and the Spirit will fill you up.

Although spiritual blessings come without a price and are free, the Lord will not scatter them on the street and let people pick them up mindlessly. The Lord's blessings are for those who want them; He does not give to those who do not want them. The three friends of Daniel who were thrown into the fiery furnace said to Nebuchadnezzar, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing furnace of fire, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image that you have set up" (Dan. 3:17-18). The words "But if He does not" speak of their absoluteness towards God. They risked their lives and were not afraid to die. God cannot do anything except to bless this kind of people. God has to reveal Himself to such ones.

Brothers and sisters, we have to pray for God to dig in us, empty us, and create a hunger in us. God fills the hungry with good things. If we are emptied, hungry, and desperate, God will fill us up abundantly, and we will be fully satisfied.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Date: November 12, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 1:30

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

God has no intention for man to live by his own life. In eternity past God ordained that man would live out the life of God. This is why God is not satisfied with man simply living by his human life. According to His eternal purpose, God intends for man to live by His life. Man did not realize this in the garden of Eden. Even if he did realize this, he did not accept it. Hence, one day Christ came into the world as a man. He was crucified on the cross; He died, resurrected, and came back as the Spirit so that man might receive God's life through Him. In this way, Christ became the receivable Christ. Those who have believed in Him have received such a Christ. Many people know that they receive the forgiveness of sins when they receive Christ. However, God is not satisfied with forgiving sins alone; He wants man to no longer live in sin. He wants man to accept this receivable Christ into him to be his life so that he can live victoriously.

WRONG CONCEPTS AMONG CHRISTIANS

CONCERNING OVERCOMING

Trying to Meet God's Demand

by One's Own Strength

When a Christian first believes in the Lord, he surely has God's life in him. Yet many people do not have a clear understanding of how Christ becomes their life and how He lives within them. They develop many wrong concepts about this matter because they lack the proper knowledge. After a Christian is regenerated, he begins to have new inclinations. He wants what he formerly did not want and rejects what he formerly embraced. Man's wrong concepts come in when he strives to walk in God's will, resolving not to sin anymore and trying to live out the virtues of Christ. Many are renewed in their conscience after they are saved, and they are more sensitive toward sin, yet they do not have the power to do God's will and do not have the strength to overcome sin. As a result they live in deep remorse. Previously, when they lived in sin, they did not know that it was sin and did not feel any sorrow. They simply lived in a loose way. But now they have obtained a new life with a new nature and new inclinations. Christ is now living within them as their life. This brings in new demands that they find impossible to

fulfill. Formerly, they suffered under sin. Now they suffer under the burden of holiness. For example, they may realize that Christians should not be proud or jealous or lose their temper, and they may resolve not to be proud or jealous or lose their temper. To their dismay, however, they find that they can do none of these things. Formerly, they did not realize that these were sins. They did not know what holiness is, and they had no desire to live a holy life. Now they know what holiness is, and they have a desire to live a holy life. But in spite of their knowledge and desire, they find that they cannot make it. This is the kind of suffering that many Christians experience after they are saved. This suffering for holiness is often more painful than the suffering they experienced before they were saved.

Some people can act like good Christians before men, but they realize their own evil before God. Some can pretend to be zealous and faithful in serving the Lord before men, but they know that their life is a series of failures. Their experience tells them that they are zigzagging between victory and failure; they alternate between overcoming and failing. Their life is a perpetual cycle of victories and failures. They know very well that they do not have the strength in themselves to do what they desire to do. Their thoughts and concepts are changed; they are clearly more noble than before. Furthermore, their inward being urges them to change for the better. Yet the life they have and the source of power within them have not changed. They are unable to supply adequate strength to meet their inward demands. Daily they are clear what they should do, and daily they aspire to overcome and be holy, yet daily they fail.

During this period, many Christians acquire new knowledge and experience new demands. As a result, they often make up their minds to do something, to fulfill the inner demands, and to act according to their new aspirations. They try hard to deal with their own sins and to be humble and meek before the Lord, hoping that they will be inwardly free from unclean thoughts and outwardly free from unkind words. They hope to live a life before men that is according to the God-prescribed pattern shown in the Scriptures. They remind themselves repeatedly that they have to do good and that they have to strive to achieve their goal. Yet they find to their surprise that when they do not consciously try to do anything, they live in peace. But once they make up their mind to do anything, they fail no matter how hard they try. At this stage many Christians become discouraged and disheartened. Some even begin to doubt if they are saved. This is the common experience shared by many Christians.

What we have just described is an interesting phenomenon. It is the first mistake Christians commit in their Christian life. They think that God gave them a new life so that they could have a new knowledge and a new understanding of what is good and evil, right and wrong. When they were living in sin, they did not know to differentiate between good and evil. But once they desire to meet God's standard, they fall into a different kind of misunderstanding. What a tragedy this is! They think that God gives them a new life for no other reason than to give them new desires, new cravings, new inclinations, and new hopes so that they will strive for heavenly and spiritual things. Since they are Christians, they think that they should act according to these new desires. They think that receiving a new life means nothing more than receiving a new attitude, a new hope, and a new inclination, and that they still need to exercise their own strength to fulfill these new demands. This is a great mistake.

The new life is God's new law within us. This new law, of course, has new demands. Because it has demands, we exert as much strength as we can to act according to this new law. Yet the new demands that God puts within us can never be met by ourselves. Man only has the human life. This human life is natural and common; it cannot meet the needs of the new law. The old life cannot satisfy the demands of the new law. For example, consider a fish. Even if I could give it a new demand to fly and even if I had the power to put a new desire to fly within it, the fish could not fly because there is no flying power within the life of the fish. Although it can aspire to fly, it cannot actually fly. The same is true with Christians today. The new life brings new desires and new inclinations. Yet the old life cannot meet the demands of the new life. This is the kind of Christians we find in Romans 7. The Christian in Romans 7 is one who aspires to meet the demands of God's law by his own strength, but who fails. I have never seen a Christian who can meet God's demand by his own strength. Nothing that comes out of our old life can meet God's demand.

Asking God to Grant Us the Power to Overcome

Another group of people know that they have received a new life, new standards, and new demands and aspirations. They know that they are weak and prone to defeat and failure. They think that they should ask God to grant them strength and help them to overcome sin. They think that they should ask God to empower them for their new living. They think that God will grant them the necessary strength if they pray enough. They think that once God hears their prayer, they

will overcome many sins and be able to do good and live out God's requirements. These Christians know that it is wrong to make resolutions, and they know that they cannot do anything by their own strength. Therefore, they pray for God to give them the strength. Even though they cannot make it by their own strength, they think that they can surely make it if they have God's strength. As a result they beseech God, pray, and even fast. They shut themselves up behind closed doors to pray to the Lord, or they leave the secular world behind to pray on the mountains or by the sea. They think that God will answer their prayers if they are earnest enough. The amazing thing is that even though God seems to answer other prayers, He never answers their prayer for victory over sin. They are surprised that their sin can torment them to the extent that they become totally defeated in its face. They think that they are not desperate enough; consequently, they pray day and night, asking God to grant them the power to overcome their sin. When they lock themselves up in their rooms, they are kept from their sins, and they think that they have overcome. But as soon as they finish praying and walk out of their rooms, temptations and Satan are waiting outside the door, and they fail again.

Tonight I will not ask if you have prayed. I will only ask one penetrating question: How many of you have overcome sin through praying for God's help? You may have prayed for God to make you a strong Christian. You may have prayed for Him to give you strength and help. God may answer your prayer and make you strong, but you still cannot overcome your sin. This is an amazing fact. God never helps you overcome. He never helps you stop yourself from sinning.

Asking God for Virtues

After many failures, some Christians become aware of the sins they frequently commit. They know why they fail. I am afraid many of you have not yet realized your habitual sins. Some are better and know their habitual sins. Some realize that they are too quick and excessive in their speaking. Some realize that their thoughts are unclean and unpresentable before men. Some realize that they are too blunt; they know that they hurt others all the time. They know that they are not meek. Some realize that they have a bad temper, and some realize that they are proud. Many people realize their habitual sins and then pursue the virtues that are the opposite of their sins. For example, those who are proud seek humility. Those who are jealous seek to be lowly. Those who have a bad temper seek patience. Those who have unclean thoughts seek to have a clean heart. Whatever sins they have, they seek virtues that are opposite of their sins. While

one is seeking patience, he may think that he is not all that bad. He thinks that he only has a little shortcoming in his conduct; he only needs a little patience. He prays for God to send a package of patience from heaven. The amazing thing is that this patience never comes. No matter how hard he tries, patience never comes. He tells the Lord that he lacks a certain virtue and that he aspires to have it from the Lord. But no matter how hard he prays, the Lord will not give it to him.

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION

My burden is not to speak about the wrong concepts of Christians. I have mentioned only these three, but other concepts are similar in principle. My purpose for bringing them up is to show that they are dead ends for a Christian. They are not the biblical way. God has no intention for a Christian to live this way. If we live according to these principles, we will fail all the time. God has given us a new life. This new life brings us not only new knowledge and new desires, but also new energy and new strength to meet the new desires and new demands. The new desires and new demands come from the new life, just as the new source of supply to meet these new desires and new demands also comes from this new life. When we were regenerated, we not only received new desires and new knowledge, which aspire to overcome our lusts and our sins, but we also received new power to meet the demands of this new life.

GOD INTENDS FOR CHRIST TO BE OUR LIFE AND SATISFACTION

The new life and new power that God has given to us is simply Christ Himself. Today Christ lives within us. What is He doing within us? He is within us as our life, and He is within us to be with us all the time. The Lord said that He will not leave us as orphans (John 14:18). We can say that the wretched man in Romans 7 is an orphan, and we can call Romans 7 a chapter about orphans. The man in Romans 7 had new demands and new desires, yet he could not meet these needs. He was like an orphan hungry for food, but who was without food. The weather was cold and he needed clothing, yet he was without clothing. He had to find all these things by himself. Yet even when he willed to have these things, he could not have them. The Lord said that He would live within us and meet all our needs. Tonight I am not just preaching a Christ who has died for us. I am not just preaching a crucified Christ but a Christ who is living in us, a Christ who supplies all our needs.

We should not be satisfied with the Christ we knew in the past. In John 4 the Lord told the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water gushing up into eternal life" (vv. 13-14). This is the life in the Spirit which Christ gives to us. This life is a spring. Christ does not give us something that can be contained in a bucket or exhausted in a few days. Christ supplies a spring within us. We can draw from it all the time "into eternal life." It will not run out even when we see God face to face. Christ is in us as our life, and He is supplying all of our needs.

Many Christians say that they are saved, but their lives do not appear any different from those who are not saved. I have often joked that some Christians are "not quite saved." Do not be mistaken. I am not saying that they are not saved. I am saying that they do not appear to be quite saved. This means that they have not reached the biblical definition of being saved. Can you say that you have Christ as your Shepherd and that you "shall not want"? Is Christ your Shepherd? Can you say that you have no want? You may have to confess that you have many wants. If you answer in this way, it proves that you need to know Christ in a deeper way. The Christ mentioned in the Bible is One who can satisfy your heart. He will make your heart thirsty again and again, yet He will satisfy your thirst again and again. I must say Hallelujah! The Lord has given us a spring. This is not like listening to a sermon once a week on Sunday and then running out of the supply for the other six days of the week. He is a spring within us which wells up into eternal life. A Christian has no need of a bucket because there is a well within him. The water within many Christians seems to come from a bucket; it quickly runs out. But the Bible says that there is a spring within a Christian, which wells up into eternal life. The source of supply in a tap is the reservoir; the supply is not from the house itself. In the same way, the source of life of a Christian is Christ; it is not from himself. What a difference this is from the man in Romans 7, who wills and fails again and again.

GOD INTENDS FOR CHRIST TO BECOME OUR VICTORY

Many people think that they are too weak and that they have failed too often. They ask God to strengthen them. They think that as long as they have the power, they can overcome sin. Yet even if they had the power, they could not overcome sin. They are often amazed when they are overcome by their sin. But in themselves can they do anything other than sin? It should not be a surprise at

all for them to sin. A Western missionary once said to me, "I sin often. I am sick of my sins. I cannot overcome no matter how hard I try. My work in China has failed." While I was listening, I was laughing. She asked, "Why are you laughing?" I said, "You feel strange that you sin. But I do not feel strange at all. To me this is most common. I may be surprised if you committed greater sins, but I am not surprised that you are committing these kinds of sins." She said, "I have been preaching in China for seven years. I know that God has called me, and I have experienced Him a little. Yet I always fail. How can I work any longer? God has to give me the strength to overcome my sins." I said, "If you prayed for anything else, God might answer you. But if you pray for God to give you the strength to overcome your sins, He will not answer. He will not give you the strength to overcome your sins."

I told her that her mistake was in trying to mend the old creation with the new creation. She was weak, and she asked for strength to overcome her sin. Yet the power of the new life, the power of God, is not given to us to sustain our old man or to empower it to overcome sins. God never does this. We need to ask God to grant us new light and new revelation. We need Him to show us that it is not a surprise for us to be weak. It is absolutely right that we should overcome sin. The problem is that the human life will always remain the human life. This life does not have the power to overcome sin. God has no intention for us to overcome sin with our human life, and He has no intention to sustain our old life with His power. God intends for Christ to be our life, our strength, and our victory.

THE WAY TO RECEIVE THE OVERCOMING LIFE

How does God give us the overcoming life? He gives us the overcoming life by giving us His Son, who becomes our victory. Paul said, "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21a). Paul did not say that we should live by Christ, that we should live by His strength, or that we should live by His life. He said that for him to live was Christ. Our greatest misconception is to think that God gives us Christ to help us to overcome our sins. It is true that we have to overcome sin. But the way is not by Christ granting us the strength to overcome our sin. The biblical way is to set ourselves aside and to allow Christ to overcome for us. Christ died for us on the cross. Now Christ is living within us and for us. If Christ were not living for us and if Christ only died for us on the cross, it would be impossible for us to overcome. Christ is not here to sustain us or to strengthen us to overcome our sins. He is here to set us aside and to live within us in our place. He is

overcoming sin for us. This is why Paul said that for him to live was Christ. Only when Christ lives for us can we say that for us to live is Christ. If Christ is not living for us, we cannot say that for us to live is Christ. We are not living by Him, and we are not living by imitating Him or living by drawing from His strength. For us to live is Christ. It is not a matter of Christ strengthening us, but a matter of Christ becoming our life.

VICTORY BEING CHRIST LIVING FOR US WITHIN

Three years ago I was working in America. One day after a meeting, a doctor invited me to go to his home. His wife said to me, "Please pray for me." I asked, "Why do you want me to pray for you?" She said, "I have several naughty boys, and they make me lose my temper all the time. I tried to be patient when the first child was born, and I tried to endure when the second child was born. However, when the third child came along, I felt powerless. When all four are together, I can no longer hold back, and I begin to lose my temper. The more they are together, the more I lose my temper. I cannot be patient. What should I do?" I smiled at her and said, "Do you really want to be patient?" She answered, "It would be wonderful if God would grant me patience. Then I could keep from losing my temper." I said, "You are not lacking in patience." She said, "What do you mean? If I am not lacking in patience, what do I lack?" I said, "You lack Christ. You do not lack patience. If you pray for patience, God will never give it to you, because Christ is our patience." Christ does not help us become patient; He does not give us the power to be patient. He is patience within us. There is a great difference between these two things. We do not lack patience; we lack Christ. Christ is our patience. He does not help us become patient. He does not give us the strength to make us patient. He is living within us and for us, and He is living out His patience within us. Christ within is our patience.

First Corinthians 1:30 says, "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption." This verse shows us that God has made Christ our sanctification. It does not say that Christ helps us to become sanctified or gives us the strength for sanctification. Christ does not give us the strength for us to be sanctified. Rather, He becomes our sanctification. Christ is our very sanctification. This is victory. Victory is for Christ to be our life.

Many people are familiar with Galatians 2:20. But few see the real significance of this verse. We often think, "Since it should be no longer I that live, I must strive and struggle to live no longer." Actually, it is not a matter of us striving or

struggling to live; it is a matter of Christ living. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who is living. This means that Christ is living instead of us. Christ has redeemed us from sin on the cross, and He is now living within us and for us. This is an exchanged life: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

THE OVERCOMING LIFE BEING AN EXCHANGE RATHER THAN A CHANGE

Last year in Chefoo, a Christian said to me, "I need a great change. Once I am changed, everything will be fine." I said, "Your hope can never be realized." He said, "You do not know me. How do you know that there is no hope in me?" I said, "I knew you long ago. Before you were born, I knew you already. What are you? You are hopelessness itself. God has said in the Bible that there is no hope in you. If there were some hope in you, God would not have crucified you. The cross is God's valuation of you. It means that you only deserve to die. You are worthy of nothing but death. You should die, and you must die. You are absolutely useless. God was not mistreating you when He crucified you. You say that you want to change, but I say that you can never change for the better. You can never improve. This hope can never be realized. It does not matter how much a cow changes; it will still be a cow. It does not matter how much a pig changes; it will still be a pig. No matter how much you change, you will still be yourself. You want to change. But let me say something to you. Add the letters e and x to the word change and make it exchange. What you need is not a change, but an exchange."

No matter how much I, Watchman Nee, change, the life within me will always be the life of a sinner. God's way of salvation and His method of deliverance is not changing what is evil and weak within me into something that is good and powerful. God's way of salvation is to set me aside. Henceforth, it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me. God has exchanged my life for the life of Christ. It is not a change, but an exchange. God put Christ within us so that He would live instead of us. This is victory. A man may have a bad temper, but God's way of salvation is not to change his bad temper. His way of salvation is to put Christ within him so that Christ becomes his patience and meekness. God intends that Christ be our sanctification, righteousness, humility, patience, etc. This means that everything is Christ. It is Christ who is everything to us. This is the meaning of victory.

Victory is something that God gives to us; it is not something we strive to attain. Many people read only the letter of the Bible but do not understand the reality behind the letter of the Word. They do not understand what Galatians 2:20 means. Over ten years ago, when I was first saved, someone read me a story about a little eight-year-old girl. She was saved and had the excellent experience of overcoming sin, and she knew what victory meant to her. During a meeting at the Keswick Convention, someone asked how she would overcome when temptation came. She answered, "Every time temptation comes, I will not speak to it, I will not fight against it, and I will not ask it to go away. When Satan knocks on my door, I tell the Lord, 'Lord, You open the door for me.' When Satan hears the Lord opening the door, he will say, 'Sir, sorry, I have knocked on the wrong door,' and he will turn and run away immediately." The first time I heard this story, I smiled like you do today. At that time, even though I knew that the little girl was right, I did not know how right she was because I did not have the experience yet. During the past few years, I have learned this secret of overcoming sin. The secret is for Christ to deal with the sins instead of dealing with them myself. I do not need to resist sins; Christ resists them for me. I do not have to fight against temptations; Christ fights against them for me. I do not have to reject Satan; Christ rejects him for me. I do not have to overcome sin; Christ overcomes it for me. I do not have to exercise patience; Christ becomes my patience for me. I do not have to be pure and humble; Christ is my purity and humility.

The Son of God is in me; Christ is in me. This is my victory, and this is my everything. I cannot help but praise Him. The Son of God was willing to die on the cross for me. Today He is willing to live within me. He is sitting on the throne in heaven, but at the same time, He is also living within me. God has given His Son's life to us for this very purpose. He has set aside man's life and put His Son's life within us. Our living and our everything depends on Christ. Many people think that as long as they receive a package of patience, humility, or love from heaven everything will be solved. But we have to realize that God's salvation in Christ is a wholesale transaction instead of a retail transaction. We do not need to ask for a little today and a little tomorrow. He has put everything within us once and for all.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT BEING CHRIST

Many people say that there are nine kinds of fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22 and 23. They think that the Holy Spirit has nine different kinds of fruit and

that we take in this fruit one by one. This is like saying that we first take in a fruit called love. Now love is within us, but we do not have joy yet. So we move on and take in another fruit called joy. After we have joy, we move on to take in peace. But there is not such a thing. We have to realize that the word fruit in the phrase the fruit of the Spirit is singular in the original language. There is only one fruit of the Holy Spirit. Love, joy, peace, endurance, etc. are all part of the one fruit of the Spirit. Once we have the fruit of the Spirit, we have all nine virtues. If we do not have the fruit of the Spirit, we do not have any of the nine virtues. We cannot say that we have one kind but are short of the other eight. If we have one, we have all. If we are short of one, we are short of all. Christ is the fruit of the Spirit. When we receive Christ into us, we have the entire fruit of the Spirit.

We often ask what the fruit of the Spirit is. But God asks who the fruit of the Spirit is. The fruit of the Spirit is just Christ Himself. When we have Christ, we have the fruit of the Spirit. If we have Christ, we have everything. In the eyes of God, we do not obtain these things item by item. Rather, we obtain the whole Christ once for all. Once we have Christ, we have the fruit of the Spirit. Many people have tried to buy a little grace from God here and there. The result is nothing but failure. Let me ask: You have been praying for patience for a long time, but have you received it yet? Christ is in us as our life, and He is living for us. What else do we need? Once we see that Christ is our life and that He is living for us, we will immediately have all the grace that we need. The Chinese have an expression: "As long as the green mountain remains, there is no fear that one will run out of wood for fire." Christ is our "green mountain," and the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are the trees growing on this "mountain." If we want to be overcoming in our lives, our eyes have to be set continually on Christ.

The kind of Christians that God is after are not those who imitate Christ or those who have received a little power here and there. The kind of Christians that God is after are those who will set aside themselves and allow Christ to live instead of them. With this replacement, there will be the proper walk. When Christ lives for us and within us, we become Christ, and we can overcome. Otherwise, we will not live Christ, and we will not overcome no matter how we live. Victory is Christ becoming everything within us and living for us. This is the overcoming life.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HOW TO EXPERIENCE CHRIST

AS THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Date: November 14, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:27; 2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 8:1

This afternoon we will consider how we can experience Christ as our life. I am not saying that we do not have this life. I am saying that in addition to having this life we can experience Christ as our life. If we have Christ living within us, we will have the same holy life as Christ. He will live a holy life from within us. Only Christ's life is holy, and only He can live the holy life. We are sinners. Our life is the human life; it can only sin and never do good. If our life is not exchanged, it can never be changed. This afternoon we will see how we can experience Christ's life and how we can allow Him to live within us.

Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "It is no longer I...but...Christ." We cannot fool anyone with this word. We cannot just claim this with our mouth, while our conscience condemns us. Paul was able to honestly say, "It is no longer I...but...Christ." This is the overcoming life. The overcoming life is not one which boasts of its own ability or victory. The overcoming life is one which says, "It is no longer I...but...Christ." This afternoon we will concentrate on this subject. Simply put, if a man wants to experience Christ as his life, there are two necessary conditions. The first is letting go, and the second is believing.

LETTING GO

Seeing That We Cannot Make It

What does it mean to let go? In order for a Christian to let go, he must go through certain experiences. There are three steps that he must take. There is no way to skip a step or change them. They are indispensable; one cannot have the overcoming life by any other means. Luke 18:27 says, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God." This verse is part of a story about a young man who came to Jesus to ask how he could inherit and enjoy eternal life. The Lord said that in order for him to inherit eternal life, he must not commit fornication or murder and must not steal or bear false witness, but must honor his father and mother. Since he had kept all these commandments, the man was happy when he heard the Lord's word. He thought that these commandments were easy to keep. He thought that they were not a problem to him because he had kept all of them from his youth. He was not short in any of them. But then the

Lord said that he still lacked one thing. What was the one thing that he lacked? The Lord said, "All that you have, sell and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow Me" (v. 22). After the Lord said this, the man felt helpless. He thought that the price was too great, and he walked away in sorrow.

The Lord turned then to the disciples and said, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to go into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (vv. 24-25). When the disciples heard this, they asked the Lord, "Then who can be saved?" (v. 26). (Most people today think that they are rich. How many realize that they are poor?) The Lord said, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (v. 27). Why did the Lord say this? The problem with the young man was not that he was rich, nor was it that he was unwilling to sell all. His problem lay in the fact that he only had a view of himself. When he first came to the Lord, he saw himself and thought that he could make it. In effect, he told the Lord that he could make it. The Lord then gave him a new commandment, and he looked at himself again and said that he could not make it. He was only looking at himself. He first looked at what he could do and then at what he could not do. He never saw God's work and power. This is why the Lord said that the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. He meant that even though the young man could not make it, God could make it. The young man could not give his wealth to the poor. Yet God could make him give it to the poor. It was not a matter of being able in himself, but a matter of God being the able One. The young man did not see this and, therefore, went away in sorrow.

The Lord told the young man to sell and distribute all that he had to the poor. A rich man may be alarmed when he hears such a word and may say, "I cannot be a Christian anymore. What should I do if I sell all that I have?" The Lord's intention is not to have our money or all that we have. His intention is to prove to us that we cannot make it. Ananias and Sapphira had money and property. Peter said that while the property remained in their hand, it was their own. Even after it was sold, it was still under their disposal (Acts 5:4). If one does not have the leading of the Spirit, he does not have to sell anything or offer it up. Philemon was also a rich man. Paul did not tell him to sell and distribute all that he had to the poor. The Lord asked the young man to sell all that he had because the young man claimed that he had kept all the commandments. When the Lord

gave him the commandment to sell all that he had and follow Him, he had to concede that he could not make it.

The same is true with us. We may not be proud, jealous, or stubborn. We may not have committed fornication and may be loving and patient, having practiced these things for many years. We may feel that we are almost there. Once we feel this way, the Lord will say to us, "Still you lack one thing." Eventually, we find that we cannot make it. We may overcome many sins, but there will be one sin we cannot overcome. Every Christian has one or two particular sins. Everyone has one or two sins which he or she is very familiar with. These sins have a special attachment to certain ones; they come and visit them all the time, following them wherever they go. The Lord said, "Still you lack one thing." This one thing does not refer to the selling of all that we have, but to the one thing that we cannot do. If we think that we are able, God will find one thing to prove to us that we cannot make it.

There was a Western missionary who was a very seeking Christian. Once she came to me and said, "With me there is one sin. Please pray for me." I prayed for her every day. For about two weeks, she kept begging in tears, saying, "God, deliver me from this sin." I thought that she was suffering so much because her sin was very serious. I asked her to tell me about this serious sin. She said, "From my youth I have had a habit of eating snacks. I eat snacks all day long. I can overcome many sins, but I cannot overcome this one sin. Previously, I did not think that this was a sin, but now I know that this is a sin. However, I cannot overcome it." I am always happy to see someone who sins so much that he finds himself unable to stop sinning. It is a joy to see someone unable to overcome his sin. The worst thing for a man is to sin and be able to overcome it. If we sin so much that we cannot stop and find no way to overcome, then God is ready to save us. This sister lacked one thing. She did not know that she had this one sin and did not realize that this was a sin. Once she realized that it was a sin, she found that she could not overcome it. She was willing to see her husband give up a job earning \$800 per month and instead take up work for \$100. She was willing to suffer many painful things for the Lord. She loved the Lord very much and loved the Chinese, but she was not able to overcome one thing. The thing that the young man lacked was victory over money, and the thing that she lacked was victory over snacks.

Every person has one particular sin which he cannot overcome. Why does the Lord put such a thing before us? It is to prove to us that we cannot make it, that

we are helpless, and that we have esteemed ourselves too highly. It is true that we have not committed fornication or murder and that we may not be proud or jealous, but we always fail when we try to get rid of that one thing! We may boast that we are not like this or that person. But the Lord will say to us that we still lack one thing; there is one thing which we cannot overcome. We still lack one thing. The Lord proved to the young man that he could not make it. Eternal life is the life of Christ. In order to have this life, we must realize that we are fully incapable of doing anything. Once we realize this, God's life will manifest His power in us. If we have not been brought to the point where we fully realize our own inability, we will not allow God's life to live out of us.

The worst fear that I have is for a man to sin too little. Such a person is neither good nor bad, and neither Christ nor Satan is particularly fond of him. I love to see a person who finds himself unable to overcome a particular sin no matter how hard he tries. Some may have committed some filthy, base, and deplorable sins. Others may have committed some refined sins. No matter what kind of sin it may be, it is a sin which binds a person. It may only be one or two sins, but one cannot overcome them no matter how hard he tries. When this happens, there is hope for the person. The most difficult thing for a person to realize is that he cannot make it on his own. If a man sees that he cannot make it, he is close to salvation. If anyone this afternoon realizes that he cannot make it, he is close to experiencing the overcoming life. If we still do not realize that we cannot make it or if we only have an overcoming doctrine without an overcoming life, we have to ask God to give us the light and show us that we cannot make it at all.

Not Trying to Make It

After we realize that we cannot make it, what should we do? After we realize that we cannot make it, we must not try to make it. I know many brothers and sisters who have come to me and wept before me and before the Lord about their inability to overcome their sins. They are not like others, who let everything go by easily. They are very remorseful about their sins. They feel that they cannot get through if they do not overcome their sin. Over a dozen people have come to me and said that if they cannot overcome their sin, they would rather die. What should we do when we realize that we cannot overcome our sin and are completely powerless? If we want deliverance, the first thing we should do is not to try to make it. We should not try to change ourselves or make any resolutions. We should not waste time in ourselves or make up our minds to do anything.

This is the most crucial step. Many people realize that they cannot make it in themselves. They acknowledge that they cannot make it, yet they are constantly trying to make it. They still strive and struggle to overcome. When they do this, God cannot do anything with them.

Last summer I met a Western missionary who had one sin which she could not overcome. At that time she did not realize that Christ is her victory, and she did not know that Christ is in her to live for her. Yet she wanted to experience this life. I asked her, "Do you realize that you cannot make it?" She answered, "I knew that long ago, yet I have one sin which I keep committing. I really cannot overcome it." I asked, "What do you do when that sin comes to you?" She said, "I pray to resist this temptation, I pray for God to deliver me from it, or I pray for God to grant me the strength so that the sin will not prevail over me." I said, "You do not have to go on. I know the rest of your history. After you pray and stand up, you commit the same sin again. As soon as you walk out the door, you do the same thing. Every time after you pray, your sin comes back to you." I then told her, "You have made a great mistake. You know very well that you cannot make it, yet you still try to make it and you strive to make it. When sin comes to you, you still try to fight it. Since you know that you cannot make it, why are you still praying, resisting, and asking God to give you the strength to overcome your temptation? You are praying this way because you think that you are still good and that you can still do something."

I then told her that the way to freedom is first to let go. As soon as she decided to give up on improving, she would be nearer to victory. She said, "If I sin when I resist, would it not be unthinkable to not resist?" I said, "Resisting means that you are still living and working. When this happens, God cannot do anything. If you want God to come into you, you must first let go. You have to realize that God's power is already in you. He can live for you. Now is not the time to consider who you are, but who God is."

One summer I was preaching the gospel in the villages with over twenty brothers. The weather was hot, and we could not take our bath indoors. Therefore, we all went to the river to take our bath. While a few brothers were swimming, one brother had a cramp and began to drown. He kicked his limbs frantically and shouted for help. One of the brothers among us was Wei-san Wang, who was very good at swimming. He had served in the navy. I urged him to quickly jump into the water to save the drowning brother. Yet he stood in the same place and would not move. I was quite desperate and somewhat angry at him for loving his

own life so much. When the drowning brother was nearly exhausted and sinking, Brother Wang jumped into the water and swam toward him. With one arm around the drowning one's waist and swimming with the other arm, Brother Wang brought him safely to shore. Later I asked Brother Wang, "Why did you not save him earlier? You could have saved him some suffering, and he would not have taken in so much water." He said, "If I had tried to save him earlier, he would have been struggling for his life and would have grabbed on to anything he could have gotten hold of, and both of us would have drowned. There is a secret to saving a drowning man: Do not save anyone who is living and do not save anyone who is dead; only save those who are half dead. Do not save the dead because it is hopeless to save them. Do not save the living, because they are still kicking with their strength. When you approach them, they will hold on to you and neither they nor you will be able to swim, and both will drown. This is why you should save only those who are half dead, those whom you can grab hold of, but who cannot grab hold of you. In this way, you will be safe, and they will be saved."

We are like the man who was drowning. God will only save us after we have exhausted all of our strength. But the problem is that men often try to make it when they know very well that they cannot make it. We pray, make resolutions, and struggle. This makes it impossible for God to save us. We must be like the drowning man who had exhausted all of his strength in struggling and striving; then God will save us. If we are still kicking with our arms and legs and still making up our minds and struggling, we are still trying to make it and are not yet depleted of our strength. God will wait and not do anything. He will wait until we give up trying to save ourselves, and then He will step forward to save us. Therefore, we must not only be clear that we cannot make it, but must also give up trying to make it. Satan loves to see us stepping forward to fight with him. Once we step forward, he wins the victory. His trick is to induce us to move. As soon as we move, he wins. God has to wait until we drop both of our hands and have completely surrendered. Only then will we overcome. This is the meaning of letting go. Letting go is dropping all of our ability and setting aside our own life completely. By acknowledging that we cannot make it and by saying that we have no intention to try to make it, we will overcome.

Boasting in One's Own Weakness

Many people are familiar with the first part of 2 Corinthians 12:9, but they forget about the second part of this verse. Today we will pay special attention to the second part of this verse. Paul said that he most gladly boasted in his weaknesses so that the power of Christ might tabernacle over him. Weakness implies that a man is very vulnerable. When Paul was weak, what did he do? Did he cry? No, he boasted. He boasted that weakness to him was a grace and a glory. He boasted and gloried in his weaknesses. He said, "I am indeed weak. But I thank and praise the Lord." This was Paul's attitude. This was his boast and his glory. "I may be weak, but I thank and praise Him. I cannot overcome the temptations, yet I thank God in all things." Have we thanked God in this way? Have we given thanks in everything? We should go to the Lord and say, "I thank You that I cannot remove my filthy thoughts, pride, jealousy, and temper. God, I do not intend to remove my filthy thoughts, pride, jealousy, and temper. I cannot do anything, and I do not intend to do anything. I thank and praise you that I cannot make it. I am weak, and I boast in my weakness."

Last year I met a brother who was a general in the Manchuria Volunteer Army. He fought many battles against the Japanese in Manchuria. During the war, his sense of moral and human decency went completely bankrupt. Later he heard that a brother was preaching the gospel in a certain place. He went and was saved and became a good Christian. Eventually, he also married a sister in the Lord. Because he was fearful of the Japanese, he decided to move to Shantung to practice medicine. There was a meeting in the place where he was, and he went and joined their meetings. When I was there last year, I met him. The first day I met him, I felt that there was something strange about him. He dressed well and was a nice man, but he seemed a little impolite. When he came into the room, he did not take off his hat. I became interested in him and took special notice of him. During those few days, I was conducting a conference on the subject of Christ as our life. One day after a meeting, he told me that he had something very important to discuss with me. I told him that he could come the next day. He asked if he could come at six in the morning. I told him that I was staying at someone else's home and that it might not be convenient for the host to receive him so early. I suggested that he should come at seven instead. The next morning I went downstairs after my morning watch, and he was waiting for me at seven o'clock.

He was a husky and tall man, a typical northern Chinese. Yet he began to cry in front of me and said, "I have one sin which I have not been able to overcome for

a long time. When I was in the army, others were smoking opium, but I chose to smoke cigarettes instead. Sometimes I would smoke over twenty cigarettes a day. Later, I became a Christian and married my present wife. I want very much to quit smoking. I have tried many times but failed again and again. I have been quitting and smoking, quitting and smoking, continually. I am very much bothered by this. It became worse when I moved to Shantung. If I smoke on the streets, I worry that some brothers may see me. If I smoke in the hospital, I am afraid that the nurses who are sisters may see and criticize me. If I smoke at home, my wife will bother me. The only way I can smoke is to smoke in secret. As soon as I hear someone coming, I hide my cigarette. This is a great suffering to me, but I can do nothing about it. In the past, I killed my enemies with a gun, but I could not stop my smoking, even if I had a gun. During the past few months, I have been very troubled by this matter. Mr. Nee, what should I do?"

While he was speaking, I looked at him and laughed. I said, "I am so happy to meet people like you." He said, "Mr. Nee, please do not make fun of me. I am desperate, and yet you are laughing." I said, "It does not matter if you smoke, and it does not matter if you cannot quit. All you need to do is one thing." He said, "What is it?" I said, "Suppose I come to your hospital today to be a patient and signed a contract with you to stay in the hospital indefinitely. What would you say?" He said, "If you are not sick, the hospital cannot admit you." I then asked, "What kind of people do you admit?" He answered, "Only those who are sick." I said, "That is right. Now you should go to the Lord and say, 'Lord, I thank and praise You because I smoke. I thank and praise You because I cannot quit smoking. I can quit for five days, but then I have to smoke again. I am qualified to come to You. Your Word says that a healthy person does not need a doctor; only those who are sick need a doctor. If I could make it by myself, I would not need You. But I cannot make it; therefore, I need You. I am a patient, Lord. I come to You. I thank and praise You.'" He replied, "I can praise Him for many other things, but I cannot praise Him for this. I have never thanked and praised Him according to your prayer."

I then showed him 2 Corinthians 12:9 and told him how Paul would much rather boast in his weaknesses so that the power of Christ might tabernacle over him. I said, "You weep for your weakness, but Paul boasted in his weaknesses. What a difference there is! You have to boast in your weakness. You have to say to the Lord, 'I have sinned, and I cannot overcome my sin. I cannot quit smoking by myself, and I will no longer resolve to quit. I commit myself to You.'" After this the

two of us knelt down to pray. He prayed to the Lord saying, "I am a sinner, and I cannot overcome my sin. I will not try to make it, and I will not even think about making it anymore. I commit this matter to you. May Your power be manifested in me. Lord, I thank You. I cannot do it, but You can do it."

After he made such a prayer, he said nothing more, but picked up his hat and was ready to go. I called him back and asked, "Will you smoke after you go home?" He said, "By myself I will smoke and I cannot quit. But God will quit for me. If I quit, it is the Lord who is quitting for me." After he returned home, I was concerned for him and wondered if he was truly released. After two days I did not hear any news from him. Every day he stood up after the meeting and left. I sent men to inquire about his condition, but received no reply. One time after my message I saw him again and asked him, "Are you still smoking?" He answered, "No! But I argued with my wife for a whole day." I thought, "One sin has left and another is coming along the way!" He went on, "I argued with my wife and told her that I had tried quitting without success and that she had been grating on me for over two years without result, but this time God did it for me. I dropped it just like that." I said, "If that is what you were arguing about, it is all right." I stayed there for three more weeks. He testified at the end, "My addiction to cigarettes is completely gone. I have no desire to smoke any longer. Satan tempted me twice, but I did not tell him that I would not smoke anymore. I merely said that by myself I could still smoke, but that God could stop smoking for me. I do not have to be concerned about the matter anymore. It was wonderful. When I did not move, even when temptation came along, I found that I was able to overcome." Today he is still victorious. Some time ago, I received a letter from Shantung saying that this brother has indeed overcome.

Brothers and sisters, you must realize that you cannot make it, and you must not try to make it. Furthermore, you must boast of the fact that you cannot make it. If you do this, nothing will stop God's power from being manifested in you. If you move, you will frustrate God's power. Do not try to make it. Let the temptation come and go. There is no need to resist the temptations. (Of course, resisting Satan is another thing that has to do with spiritual warfare.) There is no need for you to be concerned with anything. You only need to say, "Thank the Lord, I cannot make it. I cannot overcome." Many people like to put their titles on their name cards. We should write on our name cards "Specialist in Sin." We are experts at sinning. We cannot do anything other than committing sins. We have to say to the Lord, "I can only sin. I am weak and can do nothing. You are the

One who can make it. Please be the One who makes it for me. I thank You that I have no way to help myself. You have the way. I am powerless, but You have the power to resist for me." If we stand on this ground, we will overcome all the time. I can give a testimony concerning myself. At one time I had a bad temper. Two classmates of mine can testify concerning this. Many years ago when I was in Shanghai, Satan came to me again and again to tempt me. Sometimes others would say something that was irritating. I did not want to hear it, and I felt uncomfortable inside when I did. Satan would come and tempt me and stir up my temper. I knew that I could not control my temper; I wanted to lose my temper. Before I knew the overcoming truth, I would suppress my temper. Sometimes the temper was not in my mouth, but it would still be inside me. Even when I appeared calm and meek outwardly, I was still fighting the temptation. I was merely suppressing my temper with my own strength. Later Christ showed me a little of what victory is. He showed me that Christ within could overcome my temper. Every time I began to lose my temper, I told the Lord, "I can lose my temper. I enjoy losing my temper. I am about to lose my temper, and I even want to lose my temper. But Lord, You do not lose any temper. You are my victory within. I cannot make it, but You can. I cannot do it, but You can. I believe that You can overcome my temper." By praying this way, I experienced the overcoming life. Our victory is absolutely in Christ, not in ourselves. If we drop ourselves and do not struggle, strive, or come up with our own ways, and instead believe in Christ and trust in Him as our victory, we will experience the overcoming power of Christ continually.

BELIEVING

In order to receive and experience the overcoming life, there are four steps we have to take. First, we have to see that we cannot do anything. Second, we have to give up trying to do anything. Third, we have to boast in our weaknesses. Fourth, we have to believe that God is able, that is, we have to believe that God can make it for us. As long as we act according to these four steps, no temptation can stand in our way. I grouped the first three things together under the heading of letting go. The last step is to believe.

Have you come to God once in a definite way and said to Him, "I know that I cannot make it. I cannot change myself and it is impossible for me to change. I do not intend to change anymore. I commit everything to Your hand"? Once you commit everything into the Lord's hand and let go, you have only taken the first

step towards victory. The next step is to believe. Letting go is passive, whereas believing is active. In addition to letting go, you must still believe that God is able, that He can overcome for you.

Once I met a Western missionary who often joined us for breakfast when we were having meetings. She heard the teaching on the overcoming life, yet she still did not understand it. I asked her, "Others have overcome in a short time. Why have you not overcome after two weeks? Have you let go yet?" She said, "Yes, I have. I know that I cannot make it, but I still have not overcome." I said, "If you have let go, you should have experienced it. Have you offended anyone?" She said, "I dare not say that I can overcome any sin. I dare not say that I will overcome if I do this or that." I said, "You know sin very well, but you do not know the Lord enough." I opened the Bible and showed her in Romans that we will bear fruit unto sanctification if we offer up ourselves to God as those raised from the dead (6:13, 19). What is consecration? Consecration is presenting ourselves to God. It is offering up ourselves to God and allowing Him to do whatever He wants to do. God says, "You only deserve to die. I have crucified you on the cross. You do not have to do anything. All you have to do is to hand yourself over to Me. I can make you bear fruit."

She told me that she dared not say this. My face immediately became stern. I stood before her and pointed at her face, saying, "Do you know whose word you are doubting? God said that if you hand yourself over to Him and consecrate yourself to Him, He will make you holy. But even though you have consecrated yourself, acknowledged that you are unable to do anything, and have offered up everything to God, you say that God has not done His part. This verse says that man has his part and God has His part. If man has done his part, God will do His part. But even though you say that you have let go and done what you should do, you say that God has not given you the victory. Do you know what your word means? You are saying that God has made a contract with you and that you have done your part, but that God has not done His part. You are saying that God is not righteous, that He is dishonest, and that He is unfaithful." She said, "How can I dare say this!" I said, "If that is not what you mean, then you have to say, 'God, I have committed myself into Your hand. I know that I will surely overcome because I have done my part, and You will surely do Your part. You will surely cause me to overcome because I have committed myself to You.'" After one lets go, he has to testify, saying, "Thank the Lord. I believe that He has done what I committed to Him." God will work in you only to the extent that you

have committed yourself to Him. Once you believe, the matter passes into Christ's hand, and He will take over.

A Christian was riding a bicycle in a rural countryside. He reached an open deserted place, where there was an old well. He wanted to go to the bottom of the well, and so he tied a rope to the edge of the well and lowered himself down the well. When he reached the end of the rope, he could not feel the bottom of the well. He tried to climb back up, but did not have the strength. Hanging with his hands on the rope, he was unable to go either down or up. He cried for help, but the place was deserted, and no one heeded to his call. He hung on for a while, but the weight of his body became heavier and heavier. For two hours he was helplessly hanging there. Finally, he could stand it no longer. He was a Christian and he thought that he should pray. He said, "God, I am about to fall. Let me fall into eternity." After he prayed, he let go of the rope, thinking that he would certainly die. But he was only a few inches from the ground. After he fell to the bottom of the well, he regretted that he had suffered so much because he had not let go of the rope any sooner. This is the way we are towards Christ. We think that we will fall into Hades unless we struggle, strive, and make resolutions. Actually, if we would let go, we would not fall into Hades. We would fall on Christ the Rock. We have to believe that as we let go, God will take over. He will give us the power. He will make us overcome. We only have to believe in Him.

Friends, once our life runs out, God's life will operate. Once we let go, God will take over, and His life will be lived out of us. Whenever we stop living our own life, God's life will be lived out of us. As soon as we put ourselves aside, God's life will be lived out of us. If we want to experience Christ as our overcoming life, the first thing to do is to let go and see that we cannot make it, to give up trying, and to boast in our weaknesses. After we have completely let go, we have to believe that God is able to make Christ our overcoming life, and that He can manifest Christ's life and power through us.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

Date: November 15, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

GLORIOUS GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, Adam was commanded by God to obey His word after he was created. If Adam had obeyed God, he would have pleased God. At the time

of Moses, God decreed the law and He intended for the Israelites to keep the law. God said that those who kept it would live. God gave many commandments and laws for man to keep. In the Old Testament, God gave the commandments and man was to keep the commandments. God was the One who gave the law, and man was the one who obeyed the law. Although God still has His commandments for man in the New Testament, they are not to be kept by man but by God Himself. The Old Testament is a matter of God demanding and man meeting the demands, whereas the New Testament is a matter of God demanding and then meeting the demands. In the New Testament, man bears no responsibility whatsoever. Brothers and sisters, do you think that I have made a mistake? No, this is the glorious grace of the New Testament.

CHRIST ANSWERING GOD'S DEMAND

Some have said that the responsibility placed on man in Matthew 5 is greater than the responsibility placed on man in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, "it was said to the ancients, `You shall not murder, and whoever murders shall be liable to the judgment'" (v. 21), but in the New Testament, the Lord said, "Every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment" (v. 22). The Old Testament says, "You shall not commit adultery" (v. 27), but in the New Testament, the Lord said, "Every one who looks at a woman in order to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (v. 28). This means that even a thought in the heart is not allowed. This may sound like a higher requirement than those in the Old Testament and that our burdens are heavier. But we do not have to bear any responsibility of our own because the Lord Jesus said, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (11:30). This means that we do not need to bear any responsibility; we can let go and the Lord will bear the responsibility. God is fulfilling His requirements through Christ who is living in us. Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us." Everything of Christ is ours. His love, purity, patience, meekness, and all of His virtues are ours. We do not have anything to do with meekness directly. First we have the indwelling Christ, then we have meekness, love, purity, and patience, etc. Our relationship is firstly and directly with Christ.

A BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

The Bible shows five relationships that we have with Christ. The first is the relationship between the vine and the branches (John 15:1-8). The second is the relationship between the Head and the members (1 Cor. 12:27). The third is the

relationship typified by Christ's flesh becoming our food, that is, as our bread of life (John 6:35, 51-56). The fourth is the relationship between the bride and the Bridegroom (John 3:29a; Eph. 5:22-33). The fifth is the relationship between the Father of the orphan and the orphan (John 14:18).

The Vine and the Branches

John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches." The word "are" in this verse is very precious. This speaks of a fact. We do not have to ask to be a branch; we are the branches. We often look at ourselves and find no fruit, and we are hesitant to say that we are the branches. However, God said, "You are the branches." We are the branches. If God says that we are the branches, we are the branches.

During a certain period of his life, Mr. Hudson Taylor experienced constant failure. He experienced weaknesses constantly. He wrote to his sister that he was experiencing much turmoil in his mind. He felt that he lacked holiness, life, and power. He thought that everything would be well if he could only continually abide in Christ. For a few months he prayed, struggled, fasted, made resolutions, read the Word, and spent much time meditating on the Lord, but nothing worked. He wished to remain in Christ all the time, but it seemed as if he could only do so for a little while. He felt that he was detached from Christ. He thought that everything would be well as long as he abided in Christ, yet he could not abide in Him continually. In his diary he recorded a story. One day he was praying and considering how he would have the strength to overcome his sins if he could only abide in Christ and receive nourishment and supply from Him. He prayed repeatedly and went to the Word repeatedly. When he came to John 15:5, which says, "I am the vine; you are the branches," he suddenly exclaimed, "I must be the greatest fool in the whole world! I have been praying all this time to be a branch, to abide in Christ. But the Lord said, 'You are a branch already, and you are already in Me.'"

Mr. Taylor testified, saying, "From the day I understood this truth, I became a new Hudson Taylor." From that time forward, he realized that the branches of the vine do not have the responsibility of bearing fruit; it is the vine that bears this responsibility. The Lord is the vine as well as the branches, the leaves, the root, the fruit, and even the sunshine and the soil. He is everything to the vine. The husbandman is the Father, and the vine bears fruit through the branches. There is no need for us to struggle to be branches, and there is no need to force

ourselves to bear fruit. All that we have to do is to remain in our position as branches.

The Head and the Members

Our second relationship with the Lord is one which is between the Head and the body. Christ is the Head, and we are the members of His Body. The fingers are organically joined to the body and do not need to bear any responsibility of their own. The head will supply all their needs. Those who have wounded themselves and have lost too much blood need a transfusion of blood. Ordinarily, however, a person does not need any infusion of blood because he has the ability within him to produce blood. The head of the body supplies the needs of the whole body. In the same way, Christ is the Head and we are the members of His Body. He is responsible for meeting all the needs of the members.

The Lord as Our Bread of Life

Another relationship we have with the Lord relates to His being our bread of life. He is here for us to eat, and He is here to be our life. In John 6 the Lord said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst....Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within yourselves....He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him" (vv. 35, 53, 56). The Lord descended from heaven to be our bread, meet our needs, satisfy us, and give us the strength to live on this earth. As the living Father has sent Him and He lives by the Father, so he who eats Him shall also live because of Him (v. 57).

The Bridegroom and the Bride

Ephesians 5 says that Christ is the Husband and the church is the bride. This speaks of another relationship we have with the Lord. Everything that a bride has is found in the bridegroom. After the bride marries the bridegroom, everything of the bridegroom belongs to the bride. A girl may have some debts before her marriage. But after she is married, the bridegroom will take over all the debts of the bride. In addition, all that the bridegroom has will become the bride's. Our Lord is the Lord of all. Everything belongs to Him. We might have been a poor girl, but now we are married to Christ. Once we belong to Christ, everything becomes ours (1 Cor. 3:21).

The Father of the Orphan and the Orphan

An orphan does not have a father or a mother. He has to make all of his own provisions. He has to take care of his own food, clothing, shelter, and travel. The Lord said that He has not left us as orphans. Today He has become our Father. He is not only helping us by standing beside us; He is abiding in us to be the Father to us. He is supplying all of our needs (cf. Matt. 10:19-20).

BELIEVING IN GOD'S FACTS

The above five relationships between a believer and the Lord are spiritual facts, and they are recorded in God's Word. We do not need to do much. All we have to do is believe and receive, and these facts will become our experience. We believe in God's Word, which says that we are the branches of the vine, that we are the members in the Body of Christ, that the Lord is our bread of life, that we have been married to Christ, and that Christ is the Father to us the orphans. When we believe in these facts, we will enter into the enjoyment of the Lord's full provisions.

A brother once came to me and asked, "How can I overcome?" I said, "First, you have to let go. Second, you have to believe. Letting go is giving up your struggling, and believing is accepting the facts that God has accomplished in Christ." He told me that he had let go and believed, but had not experienced victory yet. I told him, "Brother, what would you do if you purchased my land and signed a contract, and then someone came and built a little hut on it, claiming that he would not move away because it was his land? All you have to do is show him the grant deed and prove that you purchased the land. Either the grant deed is wrong or he is wrong. Are you going to believe in your own defeat, or are you going to believe in God's Word?" God's Word is the fact; it is God's contract with us. We have to believe what God's Word says and ignore the interference the devil puts in our mind.

We often say that we have let go. Actually we have not really let go. This is like two friends, one fighting to give the other some money and the other fighting to refuse it. The two fight back and forth with the money. Finally, one puts the money on the floor and walks away. The other will surely go and pick it up. But our experience is like a person who puts the money on the floor and then feels uneasy, turning his head back to check on the money every few steps as he walks away. If a person does this, the other party surely will not pick up the money. Only when we have completely let go of ourselves will God pick us up.

In Chefoo, Mrs. Witness Lee once came and said to me, "I have surrendered and I fully believe that the Lord is my victory. I have indeed broken through in the

matter of overcoming. Yet my victory is very short-lived. After a week, I am defeated again. What is happening to me?" I asked, "Has Christ changed?" She answered "No." I said, "Has God's Word changed?" Again she answered "No." Then I said, "Suppose your son is out in the streets one day and a person comes along and says to him, 'You are not born of your mother. You were bought.' Your son may come back crying and ask if he was bought. Of course, you will say to him, 'You are born of me. Do not listen to strangers telling you all kinds of nonsense.' After hearing this, he may feel relieved and go out to play again. The same man may come again, say the same thing to him, and add that others are also saying this. Your son may come back crying again. What will you say to him then? You will surely say, 'Son, are you going to believe in a stranger's word, or are you going to believe in your mother's word? Whose word is more trustworthy?' Today we act the same way. We believe Satan's word which seems to be backed up with all kinds of proofs, rather than believing in God's Word. Every time Satan comes to trouble us, we should declare 'Satan's words are lies, and only God's Word is real.'" This is faith. This kind of faith has passed through the test; this kind of faith glorifies God's name.

Mr. W—— was an Anglican preacher. One day his daughter died. After he returned home from her funeral, he considered what he should speak the next day, which was the Lord's Day. He chose the subject of his sermon from 2 Corinthians 12:9, which says, "My grace is sufficient for you." He knelt down and prayed for God to bless the subject. While he was praying, he asked himself, "Is God's grace sufficient after all? If God's grace is not sufficient for me, how can I tell others that God's grace is sufficient for them? My daughter has died, and I am grieved and cannot get over it. This means that God's grace is not sufficient for me. I cannot lie." He thought of changing the subject, but there was no time to prepare for another one. He could only pray, saying, "God, I want to experience Your sufficient grace; may Your grace become sufficient for me." He prayed for a long time, but it did not seem to have any effect on him. At that moment, he looked up and glanced at a verse on the mantel. The verse had been left there by his mother on her way to the funeral. It was 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you." The words "My" and "you" were printed in blue, and the words "is sufficient" were printed in red, while the rest of the letters were printed in black. Suddenly, light dawned on him. He said, "The Lord says that His grace is sufficient for me, yet I am still praying for His grace to become sufficient to me." He confessed his sins and, at the same time, thanked and praised the Lord for

His sufficient grace. He was filled with joy and thanksgiving. The next day when he was on the platform, he delivered the best sermon of his life. Someone asked what his secret was, and he answered that he had seen what faith was after his daughter's funeral. Faith is not asking God to fulfill His promise. Faith is thanking and praising God for what He has said.

A brother spoke once on the overcoming experience. After he spoke, he asked if there were any questions. He noticed that one sister was weeping silently. Another old sister stood up and said, "I have been praying for the past few years for victory, but I have not yet overcome. What is wrong with me?" The brother answered, "There is nothing wrong with you. The only problem is that you have prayed too much. If you would turn your prayers into praises, everything would be fine." Right after he said this, another brother stood up and said, "I have prayed for victory for eleven years, but have never been able to overcome. This sister's question and your answer have just brought victory to me." The preacher then turned to the young sister and asked how she felt. She said that she also had been touched by the question and answer and had also broken through. This is faith. Faith is believing that the Lord has overcome and that He has given us His victory. That evening all three overcame at the same time.

FAITH

Faith as the Starting Point

Romans 1:17 says, "For the righteousness of God is revealed in it out of faith to faith." This means from faith to faith. "Out of faith" is one thing and "to faith" is another thing. It is one thing to go from Amoy to Chuenchow, and it is another thing to go from Chuenchow to Amoy. A prayer that issues out of faith is one thing, and a prayer that results in faith is another thing. "Out of faith" means that faith is the starting point. "To faith" means that faith is the goal. Only faith can produce a work of faith; no work can produce faith.

Suppose a sick brother has received a promise that God will heal him. He begins to praise the Lord, and the Lord heals him in two days. After this, he testifies about it. From this we see that there are seven steps to healing by faith: (1) sickness, (2) prayer, (3) receiving a promise, (4) believing in the promise, (5) praise, (6) healing, and (7) testifying. If another brother tried to do the first five steps but could not experience the sixth, what would be the reason? The first brother believed that his sickness was going to be healed and then praised. His praise issued from his faith, whereas the second brother praised in order to reach

the goal of faith. He regarded praise as the means to arrive at faith. The first brother's praise was a result, whereas the second brother's praise was a means. The second brother hoped to be healed through praising. He did not have genuine faith. Therefore, it did not work. We can only praise because of faith, not in order to produce faith.

Once I was very sick. The Lord promised that I would live by faith, stand by faith, and walk by faith. When God spoke to me, I believed His word and prayed no more. I believed in God's promise for my living, standing, and walking. As a result, I lived, stood, and walked. Later, another sister became sick, and she tried to duplicate my experience. She tried to make herself strong, but she could not do it. She wanted to work herself to a position of faith, but this was impossible. She did not have any faith, yet she wanted to produce faith. This will never work. The experience of faith is based on the Lord's promises, and praise issues from faith. One does not experience faith by copying someone else's act of faith, and one cannot praise himself into faith. One can copy formulas of faith; however, formulas are useless. Only living faith will produce results.

FAITH BEING FOLLOWED

BY VISIONS AND REVELATIONS

When I was in Shanghai, I spoke on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I said that first there is faith, and then there is praise. A man must first have faith before he can have the work of faith, which is praise. Praise is not the means by which we reach faith. Trying to reach faith by practicing the work of faith, that is, through praises, will not work. When we talk about the assurance of salvation, we can render either help or damage to people. Some nominal Christians in the denominations are not yet regenerated. When they hear a word on the assurance of salvation, they are relieved to know that they are no longer bound for hell. Faith, however, must be accompanied by visions and revelations. The Bible does not say that faith is receiving, but it does say that faith can receive. Receiving is a function of faith. Faith can appropriate, but appropriation is not necessarily faith. For example, a man can walk, but this does not mean that anything that can walk is a man. Faith must be accompanied by visions and revelations. One cannot take someone else's visions and revelations and make them his own faith. Faith must be built upon one's own visions and revelations.

FAITH BEING THE ORGAN

TO SUBSTANTIATE SPIRITUAL THINGS

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." This verse gives us the definition of faith. Faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, in the same way that our five senses substantiate the things that are outside of us. The eyes are related to colors and shapes; they substantiate the color and shape of objects. A blind man does not know anything about the colors in the world or the shape of objects. There are, no doubt, objects in the world, but a blind man cannot see them with his eyes. There is no seeing organ to substantiate color and shape for him. A blind man's world does not have any color. Today the eyes of our faith need to be opened to see visions and revelations. When they are opened, we will substantiate spiritual things.

God's Word shows us that the Lord is the vine and that we are the branches. This is a fact that will never change. But if we lack the organ to see this vision, we will not experience this reality. God's facts will not change whether or not we believe. Our unbelief cannot change God's view, but if we believe in these facts, we will enjoy what God has prepared for us. In the spiritual realm, a person enters into the enjoyment once he sees. When a person opens his eyes, he will see the scenery before him. If he does not open his eyes, the scenery will still be there, but he will not be able to enjoy it. We know that our old man is evil; we cannot change him, and it is impossible to chase him out. However, if a man comes into God's presence, and if he sees what God sees, he will realize that in the eyes of God his old man is crucified. He will immediately be released and everything will be done for him. God's facts do not change, whether we see them or not. Whether or not we see, we are crucified already. In God's eyes this is a fact. The Bible records what God sees. The Bible records all the wonderful "colors" and "shapes" of the spiritual things. The Bible is like a spiritual art gallery. When we read the Bible to a person who is spiritually blind, and when he opens his eyes of faith, he will see what God sees, and every word and letter of the Bible will become real to him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WHAT IS FAITH

Date: November 16, 1935, morning

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Heb. 11:1

FAITH BEING THE SUBSTANTIATION OF SPIRITUAL THINGS

Hebrews 11:1 is the only verse in the Bible that gives a definition of faith. This verse tells us that faith is the substantiation of things hoped for. Faith makes the things that are hoped for real. This is like the nose making smells real, the eyes making colors real, and the ears making sound real. Only faith can make spiritual things real. Faith is spiritual experience. Without faith there is no spiritual experience. A man may have eyes, but all the colors in the world will be invisible to him if he shuts his eyes. The same is true with faith. When we do not exercise faith, we do not see anything spiritual. But when we allow faith to make spiritual things real to us, all spiritual experiences become real. Many believers' prayers never reach God because their prayers are void of faith. Only prayers that are out of faith will touch God, and only these prayers will bring in the spiritual things. Suppose a man has been blind for thirty years, never having seen a color in his life. Once his eyes are opened, he will immediately see colors. The Lord says that He is the vine and we are the branches. If we believe in this word, this word will become reality to us immediately. When a man exercises his eyes to see, things will be there. But if he does not exercise his eyes to see, things will seem to be nonexistent. The same is true with spiritual things. Faith substantiates spiritual things.

FAITH REQUIRING REVELATION FROM GOD

Faith is given to us when we are saved (Eph. 2:8). This is like saying that a child is born with two eyes. If a man does not see, he can only blame himself for not seeing. His eyes are present, and they belong to him, but he can choose to see or not to see. In the same way, as soon as we are saved, faith is in us. Whether or not we appropriate spiritual things depends on whether we exercise our faith. Many people have faith already, yet they do not exercise their faith to believe. We need to ask God to show us a revelation. God's revelation can unlock our faith. Revelation is like God lifting the veil and showing us what is behind it. If I am hiding behind a veil, you will not know what I am doing. However, if you have

faith, it will be as if you move beyond the veil and see everything that I am doing behind the veil.

Before we have faith, we can only vaguely comprehend the truths in the Bible. We cannot understand them clearly, because the veil is not yet lifted. However, after we have faith, everything becomes real. Once we have faith, we can say, "Now I know, because the veil has been removed." In the past, we might have been veiled concerning some truths. Now the veil is lifted, and everything becomes clear. Who has lifted the veil? God has lifted it through His revelations and has made all the spiritual things behind the veil real to us.

THE NEED TO BE HUNGRY FOR REVELATION

God's revelation is His lifting of the veil. In addition to believing, a man must be hungry if he is to receive any revelation. Only a hungry heart will receive God's revelation. A hungry heart is a desperate heart. If we are desperate, we will see God's revelation as soon as it appears. If we come to this meeting only as spectators, we may gain many doctrines and even be able to analyze these doctrines clearly, but our analysis will only remain an analysis; it will not become our revelation. Doctrines will not make us see, and we will not gain anything. On God's side, He is willing to give us revelation, but on man's side, we must be thirsty and desperate. If we take this attitude, we will receive revelation every time we read the Word or come to a meeting. In a meeting it is easy to jot teachings down in our notebooks. Our minds may be filled with the knowledge, but if our hearts are not open to God, we will still not receive any revelation. If our hearts are not open to the Lord, we will never gain anything. We must pray humbly before the Lord, saying, "Lord, forgive me. Break me! Open my heart!"

Under normal circumstances, salvation and victory occur at the same time. This can be seen from the Israelites in the Old Testament, who ate the flesh of the lamb on the day that they struck the blood of the lamb on the side posts and the upper doorposts. The striking of the blood of the lamb was for their salvation, whereas the eating of the flesh of the lamb was for their empowering. We should experience salvation and empowering at the same time. Unfortunately the condition of most Christians is abnormal today, and we find that we have to preach the overcoming life to them after they are saved. Our preaching of the overcoming life today is a kind of make-up lesson. Recently when I was conducting conferences elsewhere, some brothers and sisters complained that I did not preach this message earlier. We received the overcoming life at the time we were saved. The victory that I am speaking of today is nothing more than a

make-up lesson. This lesson tells us that we are not just saved but are able to overcome.

THE CAPACITY OF OUR FAITH

There are different capacities to faith. Every person has a different capacity of faith before God, in the same way that cups, bowls, and tumblers all have different capacities. Mr. George Müller had a great faith; his capacity was great, and God did much through him. However, faith is equally whole in everyone (2 Pet. 1:1). This is the same as saying that fullness is fullness, whether it is in a great vessel or a small vessel. In the eyes of God, the measure of faith can decrease or increase. Revelation gives one sight and faith, but following revelation, one has to exercise his faith. When faith is added to revelation we have reality. Colossians 3:4 says, "Christ our life." For Jesus Christ to become our life, God has to show this to us as a revelation on the one hand, and we have to believe it on the other hand. Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." It is God's responsibility to operate, and it is our responsibility to will and work, or putting it another way, it is His responsibility to will and work through me. A ten-thousand-ton ship at a shipyard requires only a little girl's hand to cut the ribbon, launching the whole ship into the water. God's will may be likened to a ten-thousand-ton ship. As soon as I will and work, His purpose is realized.

The more we see that our sins are alive and the more we acknowledge that we are the chiefest of all sinners, the more we will experience a breakthrough in the matter of overcoming. Victory is not a change for the better. I am an utterly hopeless sinner; fifty years from now, I will still be a sinner. The Lord has no intention to change me for the better. He wants to give me another life. The overcoming life that He gives us is an exchange; it is not a change in our own life. Everything is accomplished by the Lord. From the day we were saved, the Lord has granted us the victory. If our faith is great, we will see more of what God has given us. If our faith is small, we will see less of what He has given us.

Faith is not acquiring something new. Faith is seeing what God has already given us. If we do not have faith, spiritual things will still exist, but they will appear as if they do not exist at all. The eyes see things, but as soon as the eyes are closed, the things become invisible. The things are still there, but to the eyes, they are gone. Revelation is always available, but it is possible for man to be without faith. The more revelation we have, the more faith we possess. The less revelation we

have, the less faith we possess. The more we see the Lord's revelation, the more we will progress; the less we see, the less we will progress.

FAITH NOT BEING DEPENDENT

ON FEELINGS BUT ON GOD'S WORD

Faith has nothing to do with natural understanding. Many village women have more faith than college professors. It is not a question of whether or not one has knowledge but whether or not one has living faith. Faith does not come as a result of an artificial believing, nor is it based on one's feelings. Our feelings are not trustworthy; only God's Word is trustworthy. Based on his feelings, a little boy thought that his father would buy him a ball. He invited many of his friends to come to his house and play in anticipation. When his father came, there was no ball because he had never promised to buy his son a ball. Later, the father promised that he would bring him a ball. After the father made such a promise, the child only needed to trust in his father's word. In the same way, we should not go by our feelings or judge God by how we feel. We should trust rather in the Word of God. What counts is what God has said. As soon as we believe, the things will become ours.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN FAITH AND TEMPTATION

How can we tell the difference between faith that comes from God and temptation that comes from Satan? The key lies in the source of the spoken word—whether it is from Satan or from God. When Satan tempted the Lord, he also quoted the Scripture. He wanted the Lord to jump down from the top of the temple, but the Lord would not do it because the word was a temptation from Satan. If God said, "You can jump down," you could jump down even if you had a much higher temple. This is faith. If God has not told you to jump, however, you should not jump no matter how low a temple is. If you do, you are tempting the Lord.

PAYING ATTENTION TO

THE INNER LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

How do we know if this or that verse is the Lord's word to us? Every saved person has the Holy Spirit residing within him, and everyone can know God's leading. According to the promise of the New Testament, "I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them; and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me. And they shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me

from the little one to the great one among them" (Heb. 8:10-11). There was a man who once wrote a book to oppose the trichotomy of the spirit, soul, and body. He thought that there was no need for such a distinction. Later, others asked my opinion concerning this subject. I said, "Even if the Bible did not say that man was of three parts, the Holy Spirit, who is in us, would tell us there is the distinction between the spirit, soul, and body." If the New Testament is the same as the Old Testament, why does the Bible need the New Testament? The Old Testament was inscribed outside of man, whereas the New Testament is a book inscribed in the heart, which touches on our inward condition. Actually, the One who inscribes into us is the Holy Spirit.

Today everyone can go and demand of God, saying, "I am Your sheep, and the sheep hears Your voice. Speak to me, and let me know Your will." There was a story about two men fighting over a sheep. They brought the matter to the magistrate, who asked the two men to call the sheep by name. When the real master called, the sheep responded. Today we have the Holy Spirit residing in us. He is our Lord; we have to hearken to His inner voice. I cannot make everyone clear concerning God's will, but the Holy Spirit is in us. He is much closer than I am; He is right within us. He can lead us. We only need to hear His voice.

The problem with the church today is that it only knows to search the Scripture and does not inquire of the Spirit within. If we only have the teaching of the Bible and do not have the inner leading of the Spirit, the Bible will be merely dead letters to us. The book *The Assembly Life* has been published, but a big question still remains whether or not we have the leading from the Spirit. If we try to practice *The Assembly Life* as if we were practicing the Ten Commandments and ignore the leading of the Spirit within, our meetings will be nothing but death. Once I saw a sister who blindly followed others to cover her head; she was not following the leading of the Spirit. When I saw this, I told her to take off her head covering. When a brother saw me, he asked why I told the sister to take the head covering off. I told the brother to ask the sister one question: Is she an Old Testament believer or a New Testament believer? An Old Testament believer obeys in an outward way; he only keeps the outward law. But a New Testament believer has the Spirit within him. Our life is one that walks according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. If we disobey the voice of the Spirit within, we are disobeying God. If the Spirit within has not ordered us to do something, and we

do it, we are wrong in the eyes of God no matter how well we have done the work.

Suppose a brother wants to be baptized. If he does it only because the Bible says so, he is wrong. We must obey the Bible according to the Spirit. Every outward regulation and every human institution is a law. We must do everything according to the leading of the Spirit. What we need to do is to follow the inner leading. If we tell anyone to do something because the Bible says so, we are practicing the law. Unless the Spirit first works in a man, everything he does outwardly is of the law. Everything that does not originate from the leading of the Spirit is in the principle of the law. The Old Testament law was outside man, whereas the New Testament Spirit is inside man. May the Lord be merciful to us. We do not see much work of the Holy Spirit today because we do not honor Him and do not know Him. If we honor Him, know Him, and magnify Him, He can do great things among us. If we have the assurance from the Spirit to do a certain thing, we can be undeterred even if the whole world shakes its head. May we all follow the inner leading and not do anything without the inner leading. Obeying the inner leading in this way is true obedience. Only those who obey in this way will hear God's speaking, and only they will have the faith that substantiates all the spiritual things.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE WAY OF A CHRISTIAN

Date: November 16, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

Every Christian has a work that is divinely assigned by the Lord, and every Christian should live according to such an assignment. Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them." When the Lord ascended to heaven, He assigned works to each of His servants. On the one hand, we do not necessarily have the same gift; therefore, there is the need for humility. On the other hand, everyone has some gift; therefore, there is the need for mutual encouragement. If a man does not fulfill the portion that the Lord has assigned to him, no one else can replace his portion. Yet it is equally bad for someone to overstep another person's portion. Every Christian on this earth has a special journey that the Lord has assigned to him. He has to take the journey himself. No one else can replace him, nor can he replace anyone else.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CONSECRATION

Date: November 17, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:1; 6:13; 2 Cor. 5:14-15

INTRODUCTION

God saves us for the purpose of living for the Lord. God has not saved us merely for the purpose of separating us from the world. He has saved us for the purpose of separating us from ourselves. In the end, we will be sanctified, that is, fully separated unto the Lord (cf. John 17:14-19). A Christian who has not overcome is not a happy Christian. He lives in defeat constantly and has conflict in his heart continually. This conflict and defeat occur because he has not consecrated himself in an absolute way to the Lord.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE AND AFTER OVERCOMING

The consecration that is spoken of in the Bible is an absolute consecration. If our consecration is not absolute, at the most we can be second-class Christians. There are two things that a Christian should do before he can overcome. The first is to let go, and the second is to believe. There are also two things that he should do after he overcomes. The first is to make confession for his sins, and the second is to consecrate.

We have already spoken of letting go, believing, and confessing. Today we will consider the matter of consecration. We possess many things which we are not willing to consecrate, such as our money, family, time, and career. We are unable to consecrate because we have not yet overcome. We can consecrate only when we stand on the ground of victory. Those who have not experienced victory cannot consecrate themselves. When we take the Lord as our victory, it is very easy for us to consecrate ourselves. If we have not taken the Lord as our victory and then say that we cannot consecrate ourselves, I will say, "Amen, that is right. You can never consecrate yourself by yourself." Romans 6:13 says that consecration comes after the experience of dying and resurrecting with the Lord. We can consecrate ourselves to God only after we are "alive from the dead." Many people think that they are living a consecrated life. Actually, they have not even touched the entrance to such a life. Unless we first experience the victory of Christ, we cannot consecrate ourselves.

CONSECRATION BASED ON GOD'S SAVING GRACE

Romans 12:1 says, "I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God." The word "compassions" is plural in number; it refers to the multifarious grace mentioned in Romans 1 through 8. According to the sequence of teaching in the book of Romans, chapter twelve should immediately follow chapter eight. Hence, the compassions mentioned in chapter twelve refer to the things covered in chapters one through eight. The Son of God has died for our sins. He has died for us and saved us from the punishment of sin. He is now living for us and delivering us from the power of sin. God has shown all of these compassions toward us. Paul was not commanding us but exhorting us to present our bodies. In the first eight chapters, we are told that we were sinners and that the Son of God shed His blood to redeem us from sin. Chapters three and four speak of the blood, chapter five speaks of forgiveness, and chapters six through eight speak of the cross crucifying our old man and releasing us from sin. The Lord died for us once, and He is now living for us. Once we believe in the Lord's death and resurrection, we become the Lord's. Many people are willing to be delivered from hell, but unfortunately they are not willing to be separated from the world. They are willing to be delivered from sin, but they are not willing to be sanctified and separated absolutely to the Lord.

God has saved us, and we have believed in this saving fact. There was once a Christian girl from Abyssinia, Africa, who was sold as a slave. At the beginning of the auction, three men were bidding fiercely for her. All three were evil, and the girl knew that she would suffer greatly no matter whose hand she fell into. She was weeping and full of sorrow. Finally, a fourth man came and made the highest bid. As soon as he bought her, he sent for a blacksmith to break her chains, and said to the girl, "You are free." Then he turned around and walked away. At first the girl did not understand. Later she came to her senses and shouted, "He has bought me! He has bought me. From this day forward until the day I die, I will follow him." This story is happening to us today. The Lord's love has constrained us, and we must tell Him that we will follow Him from now on.

A brother was once riding on a train and was invited to participate in a card game. He told those who invited him, "Sorry friends, I have not brought my hands along with me today." The others looked at him in surprise. He went on, "My two hands are the Lord's. The hands that once sinned and played card games are now crucified with the Lord." He saw that since he had consecrated himself to the Lord, his hands were the Lord's and no longer his own.

Once while waiting for a bus ride, I saw a book of a questionable nature in a shop, and I was tempted to look at it, but the Lord forbade me and I dared not open the book. My eyes have been consecrated to the Lord; they are no longer mine.

Today we need such a realization. We need to know that the Lord has purchased us and that we belong to Him. This feeling is indeed sweet and wonderful. Some may criticize us for being too narrow or stubborn, but while their mouths criticize us, their hearts admire us. Such Christians are the happiest people. Nothing can give us greater joy than consecrating ourselves absolutely to the Lord, for we are consecrating ourselves to the Lord who loves us most dearly.

FOUR THINGS THAT MUST BE CONSECRATED

Consecrating People

The first thing to do after overcoming is to consecrate. What is consecration? It is putting yourself and all that you have on the altar. Specifically, we should consecrate four things to the Lord. The first is people, that is, all the people who are related to us. If a man loves many people, the Lord will have no place in his heart. If you have consecrated yourself to the Lord, no one in this world will occupy your heart any longer, and no person can seize your heart away from Him. God saves you in order to gain full control of you. However, many tears are holding you back, many human affections are enticing you to turn, and many broken hearts are calling you to return. You have to say to the Lord, "Whom do I have in heaven but You?/And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth" (Psa. 73:25). Such a consecration is not for the future, but for today; it is something that we can do today. Today we can cut off all human affections and human relationships and give the Lord the preeminent place.

Consecrating Careers

The second thing we should consecrate is our career. We do not need to consecrate ourselves to be preachers. Many preachers today are not consecrated. Rather, we need to consecrate ourselves to do God's will, to seek after His will, and to find out what His will is for us. A brother, as a high school student, was always the first in his class. He was determined to be the first in his final examination and would not settle for less. He devoted all his time and energy to his study, and his love for the Lord was diminished. Later, he had a breakthrough in the matter of overcoming and realized that it was wrong for him to have such an ambition. He prayed to the Lord, "If it is Your will, I am willing to

even come last in the class." This student was a genuine brother in the Lord. In the end he overcame. He experienced the overcoming life in his academic pursuit. Brothers, if you have any aspirations in your business or career that you cannot let go and if there is anything that you insist on having, you have to consecrate yourself. You have to consecrate your career, aspirations, and ambitions totally to the Lord so that you can do God's will.

Consecrating Things

The third item we have to consecrate is things. It is easier for a rich man to forsake the Lord than for a poor man to forsake the Lord because the heart of a rich man is with his money. Nothing in this world belongs to us; everything belongs to the Lord. Therefore, we have to consecrate everything to the Lord and put everything we have on the altar (1 Chron. 29:12-16). Many people squander their money. This is not pleasing to God, of course, but some save up their money in a way that does not please the Lord either. For example, a sister would not spend even a dollar in fifty years. Squandering has no place before the Lord, just as thrift has no place before the Lord either. All of our saving and spending will be judged by the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ. Whatever the Lord wants us to spend our money on, we should spend it accordingly. Offering in the New Testament is different from that in the Old Testament. The principle in the Old Testament is tithing, offering one-tenth. But the principle in the New Testament is offering up ten-tenths; it is offering up all that we have into the hand of the Lord. God will not allow us to go hungry. We may worry about how we are going to support our living, but God wants us to first offer up everything to Him and then draw our needs from Him. The first day we take home our wages, we should say to the Lord, "All of this money is Yours. I offer it all up to You." After we have received our wages, we should first offer them up to the Lord and then use them according to His dispensing. When we receive our wages, it is wrong to first spend the money on what we need and then give the rest to God. Brother Witness Lee lives in a big family. He and his two brothers hand over all the money they earn each month to their mother, and then she dispenses it according to each one's need. This should be how it is between God and us. We should not offer to God what is left from our own spending. Rather, we should offer up everything to God and then allow Him to supply us with what we need.

There is no need to dispose of all the possessions we own from the past. If God wants us to offer up everything, we should offer up everything. We may sell all our possessions and deposit everything in the bank, wait for God's future leading,

and then offer it all up for the Lord's use. If we offer in this way, the bank which keeps our money will be blessed. It will not be foreclosed because God will guard His own deposit. In this world, five percent interest is considered to be high, but the Bible says that when we offer to the Lord, we will receive a hundredfold in this world (Matt. 19:29)! This is ten thousand percent interest! What a bargain! Brothers and sisters, God will not shortchange us. In the past we have passed up many God-given opportunities. In the matter of material offering, I have much experience. I have experienced many blessings that were brought in through offerings. A sister once offered the entire one hundred twenty dollars that she earned in a month to the Lord. When treasures are in our hand, they are either squandered or kept. But if we offer up everything to the Lord, we will not dare to spend loosely. After we consecrate our money to the Lord, everything will become the Lord's, and He will keep it or use it as He sees fit.

Consecrating Ourselves

Fourth, we have to consecrate ourselves. Not only should we consecrate people, careers, and things, but we also have to consecrate ourselves. Some think that after one has overcome he does not need to practice obedience anymore. Actually, our overcoming only makes us more able to obey the Lord. Formerly we did not have the strength to obey the Lord. Now that the Lord has accomplished everything for us, we can spontaneously hand over our will and everything to the Lord and allow the Lord to strengthen us with the overcoming life for obedience. This is something that we have to do in a definite way. There must be a definite date to our consecration, in the same way that there is a definite date to a girl's marriage. A girl cannot say, "I think I was married on a certain date." In the same way, we cannot say, "I think I consecrated myself on a certain date." This is something that we need to do before the Lord in a definite way. We should be very clear about this date and never forget it. I consecrated myself to the Lord on February 13, 1922. We can announce our date to others. We can tell those who brought us to the Lord or those who have given us spiritual help. We can even put out an announcement and declare to men as well as to Satan: "I am married to the Lord." Paul said that he had betrothed the Corinthian believers as chaste virgins to the Lord (2 Cor. 11:2).

Deuteronomy 26:16-19 says that if we obey the Lord's word, the Lord will make us keep all His commandments and make us a holy people to Jehovah our God.

Obedience to the Lord's word is our duty as Christians, while making us a holy people to Jehovah is God's duty. If we take care of our part, God will do His part.

OVERCOMING TO LIVE A CONSECRATED LIFE

If consecration is so intimately linked to overcoming, what then is the overcoming life? Is it merely a victory over all the evil things? No! If it were, there would be many people in this world who would not need the overcoming life. They have many natural virtues. They do not lose their temper and do not do many evil things. Are these people victorious? No! Victory does not mean just overcoming evil deeds. Victory means that we no longer live for ourselves but that we live for the Lord while we live on earth every day. We must have the realization that the Lord has purchased us, that we belong to Him, and that we have been married to Him. Those who live in this atmosphere will breathe the heavenly air of holiness. Victory is not a practice of negating things. It is not just a passive deliverance from sin. Victory is an active consecration to the Lord and a fellowship with Him while living on this earth. Unless one reaches this stage, he is not overcoming. A Christian first overcomes and then consecrates. If we have broken through in the matter of overcoming, all we have to do today is to consecrate ourselves.

GOD'S HEART BEING GOOD

Romans 6:16 says, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves for obedience, his slaves you are whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?" We consecrate to the Lord to be His slaves. When many people hear about consecration and being slaves unto God, they are afraid. They think that after they consecrate themselves, God will give them a hard time. However, only those who do not know God think in this way.

A certain mother did not understand the meaning of obedience and consecration. Someone explained this to her by way of an illustration: "Suppose you have a son who was very stubborn and disobedient. Later, he repented and told you that from then on he would obey you, that he would take your word, and that he would do whatever you wanted him to do. As a mother would you think of difficult things for him to do throughout the whole night so that you could give him a hard time the next day?" The mother said, "Of course not. I would just turn around and love him more." In fact, she would think of how she could make him new clothes or buy him candy. This is a mother's heart. This is also our God's heart.

When we consecrate ourselves to God, He will order everything and make it work together for us. Is He not satisfied and pleased with our obedience? Why should He be scheming to deal with us or to give us a hard time? God's heart

towards us is nothing but goodness and kindness. It is true that He does not do everything according to our way, but we have to believe that His heart towards us is good and kind. Although a Christian may suffer tribulations in this world, he can still rejoice in his heart. We can have joy in the midst of our tears because we know that everything that comes upon us has been measured by the Lord's hand. We have to believe that the Father's intention is always good. The more we consecrate ourselves, the more the Lord will love us. Before we consecrate to the Lord, we are just one among many Christians. But after we consecrate ourselves to the Lord, we become totally different persons. We are special in His eyes, and He can have the full freedom to work on us according to His good will. May every one of us place everything on the altar—the people who are related to us, our careers, our possessions, and even ourselves—sanctifying all these things to the Lord. May we understand that the goal of His salvation is for us to no longer live unto ourselves but to the Lord who died and has been raised for us (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE GUARDING OF THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Date: November 17, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 1:12; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5; Psa. 17:8; Jude 24-25

THE LORD HAVING BEGUN

A GOOD WORK AND COMPLETING IT

The work of overcoming is initiated by the Lord (Phil. 1:6). In fact, both the initiation, continuation, and consummation of the overcoming life are from the Lord Himself; we have nothing to do with them. The Lord's name is Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8). Alpha refers to the beginning, whereas Omega refers to the end. He is the only One from beginning to end. He is the beginning of everything and the end to everything. He is the initiation of the overcoming life, as well as the consummation of the overcoming life. Hence, the overcoming life is abiding. Someone asked once, "What is victory?" I responded, "Victory is just Christ." Let me ask: Does Christ remain the same? Of course He does. He is the One who remains the same from the beginning to the end. Everything will pass away, but the Lord will remain forever. This afternoon we have to declare that our experience is just Christ Himself. He has done everything. All our experiences are centered upon Christ. We experience victory through faith in Christ. Yet from

beginning to end, even our faith is just Christ Himself. It has nothing to do with ourselves. All we have to do is praise and rejoice. As long as He is the One who begins the work, He will complete it.

GOD BEING ABLE TO GUARD US FROM STUMBLING

Jude 24 says that God is the One who is able to guard us from stumbling. How does He guard us? Jude does not say that God guards us by raising us up again after we stumble. Neither does it say that God will guard us from falling. It says that He will guard us from stumbling. There is a difference between falling and stumbling. Falling is tumbling over. If a Christian can walk in a straight path for three years without falling, he should be considered as a top-class Christian. But this verse speaks of not even stumbling. The Lord will guard us from stumbling not for just three or five years, but forever. Of course, we cannot trust in ourselves or look at ourselves. If we do, we will fall tomorrow. Our eyes have to be set on the Lord and on Him alone, and we have to trust that He will guard us from stumbling.

THE LORD GUARDING US AS THE APPLE OF HIS EYE

How does the Lord guard us? The most sensitive part of a man's body is the pupil of the eye. How do eyelids protect the pupil of the eye? Whenever objects fly into our eye, there is no need to instruct the eyelids to close; they close automatically. When dust is blown into the eye, the eyelids close immediately to prevent the dust from entering into the eye. First Corinthians 15:52 mentions the twinkling of the eye. This is how God protects us. His protection comes instantly in the twinkling of the eye, just as our eyelids protect the pupil of our eyes. Before the Lord was crucified on the cross, Peter cried, "Lord, save me!" (Matt. 14:30). After the Lord's crucifixion, he did not cry for the Lord's help anymore because after His death and resurrection, He lived within Peter. As soon as temptation came, the Lord was there to protect him.

In Psalm 17:8 the psalmist prayed, "Guard me like the apple of Your eye;/In the shadow of Your wings hide me." We can all pray this same prayer. The Lord is both willing and able to guard us like guarding the apple of His eye. Many people incorrectly think that even though victory is a matter of the Lord's grace, the guarding of this victory is our own work. Please remember that just as victory is related to the Lord and not ourselves, the guarding of this victory is related to the Lord and not ourselves.

THE CONDITIONS FOR THE LORD'S GUARDING

Committing

What are the necessary conditions for us to be guarded by the Lord? There are two conditions. First, we must commit ourselves into the Lord's hand. Second Timothy 1:12 says, "He is able to guard my deposit unto that day." The Lord will guard us, but we have to commit ourselves into His hand. The degree to which we commit will be the extent to which He will guard. If we do not commit ourselves into His hand, He cannot guard us in any way. Many people read the Bible and find that the Lord has preserving grace. Yet they also find that they cannot appropriate this promise. This is because they have not committed themselves to the Lord. Many people have known Jude 24 and 25 and Philippians 1:6 for many years, but they cannot believe that these words are real. They are satisfied if they can rise up after they have fallen. They have not committed themselves into the Lord's hand to allow the Lord to guard them from stumbling. They cannot experience the Lord's guarding this way. In order to experience the Lord's guarding, we must say to the Lord, "I commit myself to Your guarding. I believe in Your guarding power." A sister once asked me to rent a deposit box in the bank, and the bank charged six dollars. But our Lord's guarding is free as long as we are willing to commit ourselves to Him.

Believing

Second, we have to believe in the Lord's guarding power. First Peter 1:5 says that we are being guarded by the power of God "through faith." In order for us to experience the Lord's guarding, committing ourselves to Him is not enough. We also have to believe in God's guarding power. Suppose I asked Brother Luk to take a sum of money to another person. I have to believe that Brother Luk has the power to guard the money I committed to him. If I truly believe in him and commit the money to him, I will not need to go repeatedly to him and ask if my money is still in his hand. After we have committed ourselves to the Lord, we do not have to repeatedly ask Him what He is going to do. Will the God of the heavens and earth not guard us well? God's word upholds all things. Is He not able to uphold us? God does not guard us as if He were guarding a piece of worthless paper. No! He guards us like the pupil of His eye (Deut. 32:10). In the same way that a finger is joined to the body, He has joined us to Himself and constituted us members of Christ by His life. We have to believe that He is well able to guard us. Our eyes should be set on the Lord and not on our experience. The only things that are trustworthy are the Lord's power, His Word, and His love. Our experience is not trustworthy at all. "For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit unto that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TEMPTATIONS, FAILURES, AND PROGRESS IN THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Date: November 18, 1935, 9 a.m.

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: John 1:16

There are two things a believer should do before he can overcome: let go and believe. There are also two things he should do after overcoming: confess and consecrate. Victory is a gate as well as a path. The first two enable one to pass through the gate, whereas the last two sustain one in the path. How should a believer conduct himself day by day after he has passed the gate of victory? What should he do? How can the overcoming life be guarded, and how can he go on in the overcoming way? We have to consider these questions one by one.

THE LIFE ONE SHOULD LIVE AFTER PASSING

THE GATE OF VICTORY

After we pass the gate of victory, our daily life should be no different than the first day we overcame. Every morning we should commit ourselves to the Lord and allow Him to guard, protect, and uphold us. At the same time, we should fill ourselves with thanksgiving and praise. We have to say to the Lord, "God, in Your eyes I am still weak and I still cannot do anything. I have not changed. But I thank You Lord because You are still my life today. You are still my holiness today, and You are still my victory today. I believe that You will live out Your life in me the entire day. God, I thank and praise You because everything is based on Your grace; Your Son has accomplished everything for me." No matter what our feelings may be, we have to believe that the Lord is living in us, and we have to stand on this fact. We should be very clear that the Lord is within us and that it is no longer we who are living, but the Lord who is living within us.

After we have passed the gate of victory, we have to maintain a proper posture. Every day we have to tell the Lord that there is no goodness in ourselves, that we are still as evil as we were before, and that we are full of sin. By ourselves, we are not able to do anything; only the Lord is able. Whenever we think we can do something, the Lord will not do anything for us, and we will immediately fall. We will overcome only when we do not overcome by ourselves. One line of a hymn says, "Whene'er my heart is lifted up, How very near I am to fall" (Hymns, #578). This is indeed true. Brothers, we have to realize that we are still the same; we

have not changed at all. Our only stand before the Lord should be to declare that we cannot do anything. Simply put, after passing through the gateway of victory, our daily life involves (1) committing ourselves into the Lord's hand, (2) acknowledging that we cannot make it, (3) believing that the Lord is living in us, and (4) thanking and praising Him.

THE WAY TO OVERCOME THE TEMPTATIONS

An overcoming life is a life that overcomes temptations. After we have received the overcoming life, it is still possible for us to encounter temptations. The Lord also encountered temptations, but He overcame them. Similarly, we cannot avoid temptations, but we can overcome them. We encounter two types of temptations daily. The first kind are temptations that come suddenly; they do not give us a chance to think about them. Before we can think about or pray about them, we have already sinned. These temptations are not restricted to any time; they come haphazardly. The second kind are temptations that come slowly. We can consider them, and they come as incremental suggestions and proposals. One kind does not afford a person time to think, whereas the other kind gives a person time to think them over. We may think that temptations which give us a chance to think them over are easy to overcome, and that temptations which do not afford an opportunity to think over are difficult to overcome. Actually, we can overcome both kinds of temptations. There are two ways to deal with these two kinds of temptations.

The Way to Deal with Sudden Temptations

There is no time to prepare for sudden and instantaneous temptations. Therefore, we cannot deal with them on the spur of the moment. Long before this kind of temptation comes, we have to set up our defense. In warfare between two nations, one cannot prepare for battle only after the enemy has started to attack. One has to set up a defensive line well ahead of time and ask for the Lord's deliverance ahead of time. Every morning, we have to pray to the Lord and ask Him to deliver us from sudden temptations. We have to ask Him to deliver us from temptations that do not afford us a chance to think about them. Often a person sins because he has not been put on alert ahead of time. Of course, the Lord sometimes allows temptations to come upon us suddenly. When such temptations come, what should we do? We have to remember that faith is a shield (Eph. 6:16). It is not a pair of pliers. Many people use faith as if it were a pair of pliers; they try to pull out the darts that have already been lodged into the

body. But faith does not function like pliers. Faith is a shield. It is something placed between ourselves and Satan. When darts come, they hit the shield and bounce back. We do not put a shield behind us. If the shield is at our backs, it will be difficult to protect us from the darts.

Every morning you have to lift up this faith before God. Then you will withstand temptations without even being conscious of it. Very few Christians know what the shield of faith is. We need the shield of faith even before temptations come. If the first thing you do in the morning is to believe, you are holding up the shield of faith, and the darts from Satan will be knocked down. If you lift up your faith in this way to withstand the enemy day by day, you will find one day—that glorious day—that many darts were knocked away from you.

Romans 1—3 is on man's sin, while Romans 4—5:15 is on God's salvation. Romans 5:12 tells us that we sin because we share the life of Adam. This is why we sin without any effort of our own. There is no need for us to exert any effort to lose our temper. The minute we are provoked, we lose our temper. There is no need for us to make up our mind to sin, because we share the same sinful life as Adam. Romans 5:15 says, "But it is not that as the offense was, so also the gracious gift is; for if by the offense of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the free gift in grace of the one man Jesus Christ have abounded to the many." In the past, our old man was joined to Adam, but today the Lord has made us one with Christ. In the past, we sinned without any consciousness of it, but today we can be patient, humble, and loving without being conscious of it. This proves the reality of our union with the Lord. Just as we sinned spontaneously and effortlessly when we were in Adam, we can overcome spontaneously and effortlessly when we are in Christ and joined to Him. In this way the life of Christ is lived out of us. We will marvel at the transcendency and power of the Lord's life. If we believe, the life of Christ will be manifested in us day by day.

Dealing with Gradual Incremental Temptations

The second kind of temptations are gradual and incremental. Satan gives us suggestions gradually and a little at a time. These temptations are incremental in nature. There is no need to ask the Lord for strength to overcome this kind of temptation. The best way to deal with it is to stand on the ground of a sinner as soon as they come. We should take the stand of a patient who is looking for a doctor and who commits his whole being to the doctor. We should speak to the Lord like a patient: "My mind and thoughts are inclined toward sin. I am prone to

lose my temper. I cannot resist anything. I am hopeless. I ask You to resist for me." We have to take the stand that we have died with the Lord. Satan may come with different kinds of temptations, but the principle is the same. He does not need to make us sin directly. The goal of his temptations is to instigate us to act by ourselves. Our position is in Christ; this is the only safe spot. If we remain in this position and allow the Lord to do everything, Satan will not be able to do anything to us. But once we move, even in things like praying, asking the Lord to strengthen us to resist the temptation, or making up our minds not to sin, we will find Satan prevailing over us and defeating us because we have moved out of the safety zone.

THE ATTITUDE OF AN OVERCOMING LIFE

The section above covers the steps one should take to live a life beyond the gate of victory. Now we have to know the attitude one should take toward maintaining an overcoming life. Many people have done the things we mentioned above, but they are constantly afraid that the Lord will not come to them, and they worry that they will fail if He does not come. In order to live an overcoming life, we have to pay attention to our attitude. We must remove all fear by faith and allow the Lord to take over everything. When the Lord was with the disciples by the sea, He told the disciples to go to the other side (Mark 4:35). He did not tell them to go to the bottom of the sea, but to the other side of the sea. Yet the disciples did not believe His word. When the storm arose, they were beside themselves with fear and were sore afraid. They did not have faith, and they begged the Lord to do something. Many times, the louder we pray, the less faith there is in our prayer. Sometimes the more earnestly that we pray, the more it shows that we do not have faith. Faith is trusting in the Lord's word. The Lord said that the disciples were to cross to the other side, not to go to the bottom of the sea. If they had faith, they could have all gone to sleep. Having faith means sleeping with the Lord. If one does not have faith, he cannot sleep with the Lord. If a man has faith, even if he does not sleep, he can still go to the stern of the boat and speak to the waves. He can even mock the waves, saying, "You are not strong enough. You are not fierce enough." A person who has faith has peace; he has peace within and without. Satan cannot prevail over such a person. Hence, victory is believing in God's word and His power. The attitude of an overcoming life is being fully at peace through faith.

WHAT TO DO IF ONE FAILS

After a believer has overcome, he should not sin anymore in regard to God's work, provisions, and commandments. However, those who have passed the gate of victory may discover to their surprise that they can sin again. While it is clear to them that they sinned in the past, they wonder why they are still sinning after they have supposedly passed the gate of victory. Some may ask, "If a saved person who has overcome still sins, what difference does this victory make in him?" There is a big difference. There are three differences between an overcoming person and a person who has not yet overcome when it comes to sinning. First, before one overcomes, sin is a compulsory and imperative thing. One has no choice but to sin. There is a power within him which forces him to sin. After one overcomes, the situation is entirely different. Sin is accidental, and it is committed through oversight or carelessness. Second, before one overcomes, he commits the same kind of sins over and over again. He has some so-called private sins which are characteristically his own. He commits the same sin over and over again. Every person has only three to five kinds of recurring sins. These few sins entangle him constantly. But after a person has overcome, the situation becomes very different. He still sins, but only occasionally. Frequent sins do not bother him anymore; they only catch up with him accidentally. Third, before one overcomes, resuming a clear fellowship with the Lord after he sins is hard and takes time. But after he overcomes, he can recover his fellowship with the Lord quickly if he sins again. This is because he has faith, and he believes that the Lord's blood can cleanse him from all his sins (1 John 1:9). Those who have passed the gate of victory should confess their sins to the Lord immediately after they accidentally commit a sin, and they should believe that the Lord can cleanse them with His precious blood. After this, they should immediately praise and thank the Lord, and apply His overcoming life continually. If we accidentally sin, we should not delay our confession for three or five days. If we do, we will commit more sins.

THE GROWTH OF THE OVERCOMING LIFE

Some may ask, "Since a person has overcome, how can he sin again?" We have to know what faith is. The overcoming life is a life of faith. The Lord wants us to set our eyes on Him all the time. No matter what the outward circumstances are, we should believe in Him. The Lord wants to deliver us out of a life of feelings into a life of faith. He wants us to go on step by step by faith and in grace. Now we need to see how we grow in the overcoming life.

Victory is a gate as well as a path. It is a crisis point first, and then a journey. If we continue on the path, there will be no limit to our future. Some have asked, "Since the Lord is my life, and since He is living in me already, how can I grow any more? Are you saying that this life is not perfect? And are you saying that there is the need for His life to grow?" It is true that the Lord does not change; He neither advances nor retreats. But we have a free will, and we have our own intellect and emotions. Our victory is overcoming the sins that we know of. It is not overcoming all the sins that we do not know of. This is like our consecration; we only consecrate the things we know of. There are many things which we do not know of, which we can only consecrate gradually. Even consecration does not have any absolute standard. For example, I may know that I am powerless in the matter of endurance. When I consecrate myself, the Lord's endurance will be expressed through me. As far as endurance itself is concerned, we cannot have any more growth because the Lord's endurance is perfect. However, growth means that in addition to endurance we can experience meekness. Growth simply means an expansion of sphere and a deepening of measure. There is no growth as far as meekness or endurance are concerned because meekness and endurance are just Christ. But as far as our experience of these things is concerned, it is possible to have a continual expansion and deepening in sphere and measure. This is the meaning of the growth of the overcoming life.

We have said that the Lord is our sanctification. But there is a verse that says that we are sanctified by the truth (John 17:17). This means that we may have a sin today which we are quite proud of and which does not bother our conscience at all. Later, we may find from the truth of the Bible that this is wrong. In this way, we know one more sin, and we can confess such a sin. After the truth exposes our sin through God's enlightening and after we know that it is a sin, we have to deal with it. The way to deal with it is the same as before. We have to tell the Lord, "I have found another sin. Thank You that I now know one more sin and can experience more grace and know more of the overcoming life." The New Testament says that we should grow in grace (2 Pet. 3:18). What does it mean to grow in grace? Grace is God doing things for man. When man does things for God, this is the law, whereas when God does things for man, this is grace. Growing in grace is allowing God to do more things for us. When truth shines on us, our shortcomings are exposed. Then grace comes to supply us. Truth is God exposing our needs, whereas grace is God supplying us with strength. The more

light we receive, the more needs we discover, and the more we receive and grow in grace.

GRACE AND TRUTH

How do we receive grace? There are three ways to receive grace. The first is through the Bible. The more we read the Bible, the more the Bible will increase our measure, and the more we will know ourselves. The more we know ourselves, the more we will sense our needs, and the more grace will increase. Second, we can receive grace directly from God. When we listen to a message, pray, or fellowship with God, we receive grace directly from Him through His enlightening. Third, we can receive grace through the help of other brothers and sisters. If a brother has dealt with a sin, and that same sin is entangling me, I can receive help from that brother to achieve victory. In this way I receive more grace. The grace which we receive is limited by the truth we have received. The amount of grace a man receives speaks of the amount of truth he has received. The more a man knows what sin is, the more grace he will receive.

For example, we may find from reading the Bible that we should be anxious for nothing. Once we have this truth, we realize that anxiety is a sin. A sister read Philippians 4:6, which says to be anxious for nothing, and concluded that this was impossible. Then she thought that this was God's Word which could not be wrong. If the Bible was not wrong, she must have been wrong. She brought up the matter with another sister who had nine children, two of whom had died. The second sister replied, "How can a mother not be anxious? Rather, it seems that it is a sin for a mother not to be anxious. My anxiety has sent two children to heaven already, and I am left with seven to be anxious over." The first sister felt more confused after she heard this. Later, she was enlightened to see that anxiety is indeed a sin, and she prayed that the Lord would make her overcome such a sin. Eventually, she did overcome. This is the meaning of truth and grace. Truth tells us what sin is, and grace enables us to overcome such sin. Before we have the truth, we may not think too much of a certain thing. But after we receive the truth and are enlightened, we will know what sin is. In the past, the island of Kulangsu was ceded to the British. Later, more land was reclaimed from the sea, and the British territory subsequently increased. In the same principle, the more truth there is, the more grace there is. Truth shows us what sin is, and when we apply grace, we experience full victory over such sin.

A sister had a watch, which her mother had given to her on her twentieth birthday. On the watch was a golden cross. She kept the watch for eighteen years. One day she read 1 Timothy 2:9 which says that women should not adorn themselves with gold. She had thought that it was all right to have a little ornamentation on the watch. But that day God pointed His finger at the watch and showed her that she had to deal with it. She began to preach to God and argued that such a small thing did not matter, but eventually the Lord prevailed, and she dealt with that little matter. Today we should be bold to search out our sins and deal with them. In the past we might have dealt with gross sins, outward sins, obvious sins, and filthy sins. Today we have to deal with the small, fine, inward, and hidden sins that bring dishonor to God. These dealings will bring us more grace to experience more victories in our daily life.

RECEIVING THE TRUTH, ENJOYING GRACE, AND EXPERIENCING VICTORY

Whether or not you make any progress in your daily life depends on whether you have seen the truth. You must first find the kind of sins you have and then find how the Lord accomplishes an overcoming work within you. A Western woman missionary was working for the China Inland Mission. She was at odds with Miss Fischbacher and often publicly defamed her. When Miss Fischbacher would report one thing, the sister would deny it. When Miss Fischbacher would deny something, the sister would insist that such a thing happened. Once Miss Fischbacher wrote home to report on her work in China. This sister tried to find to whom she was writing, and she wrote to the same person in an attempt to negate the things that Miss Fischbacher had said. It seemed as if she was going out of her way to prove to others that Miss Fischbacher was being dishonest. After this went on for a while, Miss Fischbacher could not help but harbor some bitterness against her. Later, she read 1 Peter 1:22, which says that we should love one another from a pure heart fervently. It is so easy for man to preach to God. She told the Lord, "It is impossible for me to love this sister. It is even more impossible for me to love her fervently." She prayed for two weeks without any success. She fasted for one whole day and was determined not to leave her room until she overcame this bitterness. However, she still could not get through. Later, she conceded that the most she could do was not to hate the sister. It was impossible to love her. She fasted for another day, but still to no avail.

Finally, she realized that she could not make it by herself, and she said to the Lord, "I should love this sister, but I cannot. This is a sin. I will not let You go

unless You make me love her." The next day she prayed continuously for three hours. At about nine o'clock in the morning, the Lord's love filled her. The bitterness was gone, and love came unexpectedly. She felt that she could even die for this sister. She went on and prayed for her the entire night. When she saw the sister the next day, her feeling was entirely different. After another day the other sister also was turned. The overcoming life has God's Word as its standard. God has said many things. If we cannot obey what He has said, we have sinned. We live in this world for only a very brief time, but we encounter too many things during this life. It is in the midst of such a life that we express the victory of Christ. There were three sisters in Shansi who were missionaries together. Two of them were unmarried by their own choice, and the third was engaged to a man. However, she was the most unhappy of them all. Often she felt lonely. Even though her fiancé wrote her all the time, she still felt lonely when she was by herself in her room. One day she was weeping again. The other two sisters came in to console her, saying, "Why are you lonely? You have a fiancé who writes to you! We are the ones who should feel lonely!" Later, they went back to their rooms and were struck by loneliness as well, and they began to cry. While they were feeling sorry in this way, they thought of the Lord's Word: "In Your presence is fullness of joy;/At Your right hand there are pleasures forever" (Psa. 16:11). They realized that the feeling of loneliness is actually a sin. The Lord said that in His presence there is fullness of joy, yet they said that they were lonely. This had to be a sin. They knelt down and prayed to deal with this sin, and the loneliness went away. Nine years have passed, and they have yet to feel lonely again.

Victory is for God to expose our sins continuously and for us to grow through such knowledge. We should not be afraid of others exposing our mistakes. This will afford us a chance to overcome. The more we know the truth, the more we will experience the victory of Christ. I hope that by next year, some will stand up to testify how the truth has come to them and how grace has also followed. This is something very precious. We should all receive the truth gladly so that grace can come to us more and more. In all the meetings, we need to stand up more and more to testify how a certain truth has produced an effect on us. We should not worry whether others will say that we are proud if it is the Lord's doing. We are merely describing the Lord's work in us and how He has won a victory in us. By doing this, those who are in similar trouble or who have not experienced the proper dealing as we have will be able to share the grace we have received.

An overcoming living is wonderful because the overcoming life is wonderful. The Lord can do everything within us. There is nothing that He cannot do. We do not have to be afraid of anything. We can just come to Him continually. We should allow Him to enlighten us with the truth and receive Him as our very victory. If we walk this way, there will be nothing that we cannot do. After a year we will realize that we have overcome some more, and we will be more able to follow the Lord's leading and go on in the way that is set before us.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A WORD OF EXPLANATION CONCERNING THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Date: November 18, 1935, 3 p.m.

Place: Chuenchow

It is not too easy to speak about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit here. We may need ten days to cover the subject and still not be finished with it. I can only speak a little because of the time. This does not mean that the Bible only speaks this much about this matter, but I can only make a few miscellaneous remarks here and there. I cannot go into in-depth research now. We will continue to pray while we study and ask the Lord to grant us more light along the way.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE OUTPOURING OF EVIL SPIRITS

Concerning the outward manifestation of the outpouring of the Spirit, many people marvel at extraordinary phenomena. During the past eight or nine years, I have studied this matter and discovered that there are, indeed, strange phenomena recorded in the Bible. But extraordinary manifestations are not necessarily a proof of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The scriptural proof of this is in 1 Corinthians 12:1-3. Verse 1 mentions spiritual gifts. The word gifts is italicized to indicate that this word does not exist in the original text. Paul was not speaking about spiritual gifts, but about pneumatekos, or spiritual inspiration. Men like Govett, Pember, and Panton all agree that it should be translated as being related to spiritual inspiration. This refers to extraordinary acts performed by a person who is possessed by the Spirit. The words led away in verse 2 refer to a sorcery-like spiritual experience. In the original language, it refers to some extraordinary and uncommon leading and seduction; it is supernatural. Paul wanted the Corinthians to be informed concerning the matter of spiritual inspirations. Today we will consider the difference between the outpouring of the

Holy Spirit and the outpouring of evil spirits. Paul did discuss the outward manifestations of these two things. He understood them, but he did not talk about them. Paul did not talk about them, yet we have to pay attention to them. It is difficult to differentiate the two by their outward manifestations. Although they outwardly appear to be the same, there is a big difference inwardly.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OUTPOURINGS

BEING THE WORDS SPOKEN

The main difference between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and that of evil spirits is in the words that are spoken rather than in the gestures of the body or the attitude of a person. First Corinthians 12:3 says, "No one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is accursed; and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit." Whether or not a person has received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit can be discerned by the words he speaks. The meaning of the last part of verse 3 is that one can only say that Jesus is Lord when he is in the Holy Spirit. This is something that cannot be feigned. If a man is not in the Holy Spirit he cannot say that Jesus is Lord. Those who cannot say this have received the outpouring of the evil spirits. We can use this method to test and examine those who say that they have received a spirit. Those who can say that Jesus is Lord have received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Those who cannot say that Jesus is Lord have received the outpouring of evil spirits. When you ask someone this question, they may walk away. This is suspicious. But if a man can say, "Lord, I am not worthy; this is Your grace," he is still in the Holy Spirit.

We must not be alarmed by extraordinary phenomena. If an inspiration is common and ordinary, it is no longer a spiritual inspiration. Those who have the inspiration of the Spirit are those who have the Spirit in them. As such, they are surely different from ordinary men.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRINCIPLE

OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

AND THE WORK OF EVIL SPIRITS

We can also tell the difference between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and that of evil spirits from the principle by which the two spirits work. There are two conditions for evil spirits to be poured out upon man or to possess man. First, the will must be passive. Those who are passive are easily possessed by evil spirits. Hence, a Christian should not be passive. Second, the mind must be blank. Many people are lazy in their mind; they do not like to exercise their mind. Such

people are also easily deceived by evil spirits. There is a big difference in principle between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and possession by evil spirits. The main distinction lies in the condition of the mind and the will. Those who have received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have two characteristics: their minds are clear, and their will is not passive. These people act according to their own volition, and they are not driven by outside forces. The Holy Spirit expects us to exercise our will to cooperate with Him in an active way. This is absolutely different from evil spirits, who demand that man remains passive in his will in order for them to work on him. In this way we can distinguish between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the outpouring of evil spirits.

THE CONDITION FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Having No Hidden Sins or Sins Which One Refuses to Deal With

In order to have the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have to fulfill a few conditions. First, we must not have any hidden sins before the Lord, nor any sins which we refuse to deal with. If a man has hidden sins, he may be deceived by evil spirits when he prays for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When he gives ground in his heart for the evil spirits to come in, they will surely come in and possess him.

Not Being Passive in the Will

Second, we have to actively ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon us. Possession by evil spirits does not require our active participation. All we have to do is passively wait and they will come. Some pray, "If this is the Holy Spirit, I will take it, and if it is evil spirits, I will not take them." These kinds of prayers are still too passive. The way we cooperate with the Holy Spirit is as follows: When the Holy Spirit comes, He will ask, perhaps with a small voice, how much we are willing to allow Him to occupy us. The degree to which we allow Him to come in will be the degree to which He occupies us. The decision is with us. Anything that acts contrary to this pattern is passivity and not the work of the Holy Spirit; it is the work of evil spirits. The Holy Spirit will only come upon us when we say that we want Him. The Holy Spirit does not act alone; we have to take the initiative, and then the Holy Spirit will respond. If the Holy Spirit prompts us to laugh, it is because we have first made up our mind to laugh. The Holy Spirit then supplies us the energy to laugh. This is the cooperation that I am speaking of. When we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have to pray for the covering of the

precious blood of the Lord at the same time. If we take care of what we have to do, the Holy Spirit will take care of what He has to do.

One brother was clinching himself very tightly. He prayed, "O Holy Spirit, if You want to come, please come." He prayed this way for a few hours, but the Holy Spirit still did not come to him. His prayer did not match the condition for the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit did not come upon him. The Holy Spirit can only work when there is the cooperation of our will. This is like riding a horse. The reins of the horse are in the hands of the rider. When the reins are released, the horse can run as it wills, but no matter how fast it runs, the reins are still in the rider's hands. The same principle applies in the experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, we have to let go so that the Spirit will have the full freedom. On the other hand, our will has to fulfill its function. Otherwise, we will lose control.

THE REASON FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We also have to know the reason for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter said in Acts 2:33, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear." Then in verse 36 he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified." The word "therefore" in verse 36 refers to verse 33, which speaks of God exalting the Lord. "Therefore," that is, for the purpose of proving that Jesus is exalted, the Holy Spirit was poured out, as was seen and heard at Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was for the purpose of proving to the house of Israel that Jesus of Nazareth was exalted, and that He had won the victory. If the Lord was not exalted, there would not have been the possibility of the outpouring of the Spirit. Receiving the outpouring of the Spirit is not for the purpose of proving our faith or our victory. It is for the purpose of proving that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

Thank and praise Him. If the exaltation of the Lord is a fact, the outpouring of the Spirit must also be a fact. On the contrary, if the Lord was not exalted, it would have been impossible for the Holy Spirit to have been poured out. The Lord was crucified and shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins. All those who believe in Him can receive the forgiveness of sins. In the same principle, one should not say that even though the Lord was exalted to be both Lord and Christ, he has not received the outpouring of the Spirit. This is impossible. We must be bold to say

that the Lord has been exalted to the throne. May the Lord fill us. We need a full faith to believe in the Lord and His accomplished works.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Date: November 18, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In order to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have to fulfill certain conditions. First, we must not have any known or unsettled sins in our heart. Second, we have to be hungry in our spirit (Isa. 44:3). Third, we have to pray earnestly (Acts 1:14; 2:4; 4:31; 8:14-17).

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR BY THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

Those who have received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have come into contact with the spiritual world. When a man who has never received the outpouring of the Spirit opens a door to the spiritual world, which had previously been unfamiliar to him, he will touch something beyond the physical realm. Some people have faith, but they are not willing to open their doors. When a man rejects and refuses to open his door, he will not receive anything from the spiritual world. The pursuit of the outpouring of the Spirit is like opening the doors and breaking down the walls. On the positive side, once the doors are open, there will be spiritual fellowship. On the negative side, there are dangers to opening to the spiritual world. This is like opening up a door to friends. On the one hand, a man's friends can come and go at will, but on the other hand, robbers can also come and go at will. We should not say that since the robbers can come and go, it would be better not to open the door at all. No, on the one hand, we have to open the door, but on the other hand, we have to be watchful all the time.

Testing the Spirit

How can we be watchful and prevent the evil one from coming into us? First, after we receive the outpouring of the Spirit, we have to put the experience to a

test. We cannot be careless in this matter. First Corinthians 12:3 and 1 John 4:3 tell us the way to apply the test. These verses are safeguards. We have to ask those who have received the outpouring of the "Spirit" whether Christ has come in the flesh. We can also ask them if Jesus is Lord. We should watch to see if the spirit that is upon them responds by retreating. If it retreats, it means that it is an evil spirit. But if the person can say, "Jesus is Lord," he has the Holy Spirit. We should not be satisfied with nine times out of ten. We have to apply this test every single time. My responsibility concerning this matter is finished. Now it is up to us to walk properly before the Lord.

According to the Principle of 1 Corinthians 14

The initial manifestation of the outpouring of the Spirit is often extraordinary. It will appear as if God is removing all restraints. He does this so that we can receive more from the Lord. The initial experience of outpouring is like passing through a gate. After we have passed the gate, we will have to calm down and live a normal life at home. There is no need to jump up and down or shout, and there is no need to seek for supernatural feelings or experience. From that point on, we do not need to apply the principle of Acts 2, but the principle of 1 Corinthians 14. The principle of 1 Corinthians 14 tells us that the outpouring of the Spirit in the meetings is for the edification of others instead of ourselves. This principle also tells us that the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets (v. 32). We have to keep this principle. We have to learn to be in control of our spirit. First Corinthians 14 says that if there are tongues, only two or at most three should speak it, and they should take turns speaking it (v. 27). In Acts 2 all one hundred twenty people spoke because that was the first time the Spirit came down. Then the principle changed to that in 1 Corinthians 14.

Taking Control of the Spirit That Is upon Us

The Spirit that is poured out upon us is not personified. For example, 1 Corinthians 12:13 mentions being baptized into one Spirit. This Spirit is compared to water and therefore is not personified. This Spirit is subject to us (1 Cor. 14:32). However, the Spirit that dwells within us is personified, and we have to come under His subjection. The Spirit that is upon us submits to us, and we can direct Him to stay or go away. We also determine whether we want much or a little of Him. However, the Spirit that dwells within us is personified, and we have to submit ourselves to Him. In the eyes of God, the Spirit that is upon us is like an element. If we are not careful, Satan can come in and counterfeit it.

Pentecostal people err in that they are taken over by the spirit that is upon them. This is why there is confusion among them. We cannot follow their way. We have to obey the Spirit who is within us, but we have to take control of the Spirit that is upon us. Whether at home or in the meetings, we have to learn to take control of the Spirit that is upon us in seeking for the outpouring.

THE APPLICATION OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are two things we should know about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. First, if we have never passed the gate of victory, such an outpouring will not be of much help in our daily life. If a man has received the outpouring of the Spirit but has never passed the gate of victory, his experience of the Spirit will diminish after a few days. He will be like a punctured bicycle tire, and he will not be able to go very far. He will have to seek for the Spirit once again. Whenever he becomes cold, he has to seek the outpouring once more. This is the initial condition of outpouring in a man who has never passed the gate of victory.

After one has received the outpouring of the Spirit, he should immediately apply the power that accompanies the outpouring to help other Christians or to preach the gospel. Prior to this, he might have been powerless to preach the gospel or to help other believers. But after he has received the outpouring, he should immediately apply this power to the preaching of the gospel and the edification of the believers. If he does not apply this power, he will, in essence, be burying his one talent in the ground. As soon as a person has received the power of the Spirit, he has to preach the gospel and be an overcomer in the gospel. The failure of some of the Pentecostal people lies in the fact that they have made the outpouring of the Spirit into a kind of entertainment. After some receive the outpouring, they speak in tongues or laugh ecstatically. However, they then go home and do not apply any of the power they have received. This is like a man with a healthy body doing nothing but playing ball for eight hours a day. Such a life is not normal. The outpouring of the Spirit is not for our entertainment, but for us to live and work for the Lord.

Moreover, as soon as one receives the outpouring of the Spirit, he should immediately pray for the gifts. Suppose a person has never had the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. When it happens, he should immediately ask God for the gifts also. He should ask God for whatever grace he desires to have. After a man has received the outpouring, he can even be a little greedy in what he asks from the Lord. Of course, one cannot make the outpouring a matter of

boast, and he should not brag to others about it. Rather, he should allow God's grace and power to be manifested through him and His glory to shine through him.

TESTIFYING OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

You should pay attention to a few things when testifying about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. First, if you have the experience of the outpouring and someone asks about it, you should not tell him the details of your experience. In testifying to others of your experience of the outpouring, you have to follow a few principles:

First, you should not discuss the details of your experience. In the New Testament, the book of Acts records many manifestations of the outpouring of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and being empowered for the gospel. But we are not told the details of these experiences. Those who received the outpouring only testified in a general way. They never said anything about the details. Pentecostals often go into great length about the details of their experience of the outpouring, and this often leads to confusion.

Second, you should not overemphasize the experiences. Many of those seeking for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are inquisitive. Someone else's experience of the outpouring will not help them at all. In telling others about your experience, it is easy for them to take your experience as the standard. In actuality, however, the manifestations of the outpouring are different in different people. This is why you must not overemphasize your own experiences.

There is another point worth noting: Pentecostal people receive the outpouring of the Spirit by "seeking," whereas we receive it by "believing." We believe that Jesus of Nazareth has been exalted by God to be both Lord and Christ. He has sat down on the throne, and He has poured out His Spirit. We believe and accept these facts. The outpouring of the Spirit is for the purpose of bearing witness to the exaltation of Jesus. It is not for the purpose of proving that God has heard our prayers or that He has accepted our plea. The outpouring of the Spirit is strictly linked to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus; it is not linked to our prayers or our good works. We have to uplift the Lord rather than ourselves. We have to give glory to Him rather than to ourselves. We have to boast in the Lord, rather than in ourselves.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
THE MANIFESTATIONS AND EVIDENCES
OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Date: November 19, 1935, morning

Place: Chuenchow

THE EXPERIENCE AT PENTECOST NOT BEING
A LITERAL FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY IN JOEL

The experience at Pentecost recorded in Acts was not a literal fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of Joel; it was only an event that was similar to Joel's prophecy. There were no prophecies, visions, or dreams at Pentecost. There were only the sound from heaven as of a rushing violent wind and tongues as of fire (2:1-3). The only manifestation in the disciples was speaking in tongues. Yet there is no mention of speaking in tongues in the prophecy in Joel. This proves that Pentecost was not a fulfillment of the words of Joel; it only pointed to similar incidents.

One powerful Pentecostal speaker claims that a man must speak in tongues as a proof that he has received the outpouring of the Spirit. But we know from Peter's word that the experience of Pentecost was only that which was spoken through the prophet Joel. Peter said, "This is what is spoken..." He did not say, "This is a fulfillment of what was spoken..." There is a big difference between these two. A fulfillment is a literal realization, whereas "this is what is" merely refers to similar instances. Many people think that the outpouring of the Spirit was a fulfillment of Joel's word. Actually Joel did not mention speaking in tongues. Many people today exercise their jaws in a certain way in an attempt to speak in tongues. They also try to have dreams. However, this is not what Peter meant. He said that when the Spirit came, the people saw something that was similar to what Joel prophesied. Therefore, we do not need to imitate the manifestations of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF
THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Recently while I was in Shen-yang, Shanghai, Chefoo, and Chuenchow, I observed many different manifestations of the outpouring of the Spirit. In Chefoo some laughed continuously, while others cried. Some felt power or other things coming upon them. We have to realize that all these manifestations are under the category of what Peter described as "this is what is." They are not the fulfillment of Joel's words. Some felt they had received electrical jolts; others seemed to be

enveloped by something. Some jumped around, while others remained seated. There were all kinds of different sensations. These sensations happen naturally when the Spirit is poured out. Peter said, "This is what is." When some receive the outpouring, they may cry or weep. If I have not received the outpouring, and I seek for the outpouring, I may not experience the same manifestations as others. This is the meaning of "this is what is." Everyone has his own path to follow. We cannot say that others are wrong just because they have experienced something different than what we have experienced. If a man has received the Spirit, and he can say, "Jesus is Lord," it does not matter what his outward manifestations are. These manifestations are God's business, not our business. Peter said, "This is what is," and we should also say, "This is what is." We should not imitate others or force others to have manifestations that are the same as ours.

PURSUING THE OUTPOURING, YET NOT NEGLECTING TO TEST

While we are seeking for the outpouring of the Spirit, we should test whether or not the Spirit that is upon us is of God (1 John 4:1). We have to continually cooperate with the Holy Spirit and not allow our mind to become idle. We should not imitate others, and our will should never be passive. We should not try to take too much control; neither should we be out of control. Evil spirits can counterfeit the Holy Spirit and give men supernatural feelings and experiences. We have to test whether what we have received is of the Holy Spirit or of evil spirits. In order to distinguish between the work of the Holy Spirit and that of the evil spirits, we must first know the difference between the principle of the work of the Holy Spirit and that of evil spirits. The Holy Spirit wants man to cooperate with Him in an active way, while evil spirits only want man to yield to their works in a passive way. Hence, in pursuing after the outpouring of the Spirit, we must not allow our minds to become idle or our wills to become passive. Evil spirits are very pleased with a passive attitude. Even a desire to imitate the experiences of others will give evil spirits a chance to work on us. We must practice these things in a definite way and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in an active way. In all of these things, we have to exercise the utmost care or else we will be deceived because it is possible for any one of us to be cheated.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

AND THE BENEFIT OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Date: November 19, 1935, 3 p.m.

Place: Chuenchow

THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament show us that there are only three works of the Holy Spirit: (1) imparting life to man, (2) becoming life within man, and (3) becoming power upon man. These three things include all the works of the Holy Spirit. The first work of the Holy Spirit is to give life. The second is to live in man to be life to him, and the third is to come upon man to empower him. These three aspects encompass all the works of the Holy Spirit as described in the Bible. The Old Testament only has the first and third aspects; it does not have the second aspect. In the Old Testament, we do not find the Holy Spirit dwelling within man. The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the Holy Spirit dwelling within man. There were men in the Old Testament who touched life. For example, David touched life. In addition to the first aspect of the work of the Spirit, we also find the outpouring of the Spirit in the Old Testament. Of course, it was only experienced by a few people. For example, during the building of the tabernacle, the Spirit fell upon Aholiab and Bezaleel and gave them wisdom to devise cunning works and to build the tabernacle (Exo. 31:1-11). Moses also received the Spirit upon him, and he distributed the Spirit to seventy elders (Num. 11:17, 25). Many prophets also received the Spirit of God upon them. It was, however, uncommon for the Spirit of God to fall upon a prophet. Very few recognized prophets had an experience of the Spirit of God falling upon them. Many of the prophets also had disciples. Elisha had many disciples, but none of them received the Spirit upon them. Although the book of Judges speaks of people receiving the Spirit and doing extraordinary things, the number was small (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25).

In the Old Testament only Judges 6:34 appears to indicate that the Spirit dwelt within man. This is an exception. According to the original text, however, this verse does not say that the Spirit dwelt within man. It only indicates that the Spirit of Jehovah was clothed with Gideon, as though Gideon was a garment and the Holy Spirit was within this garment. Other than this instance, there is no place in the Old Testament which indicates the Spirit dwelling within man.

In the New Testament, when the Lord Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit also came upon man. We see this in Mary, Zachariah, John the Baptist, and the Lord Himself. At that time the Spirit had not dwelt within man and was not yet life to man. It was not until John 14:16-17 that the Holy Spirit did this new work. Please note the words "shall be" in the last part of verse 17; it does not say "has been." This was a brand new thing. The Spirit would abide in man and be with man forever. Unlike the Old Testament, which had only the first and third aspects of the Spirit's work, the Holy Spirit began a new work in John 14. He was no longer just coming upon man or giving life to man, but He was dwelling within man.

Before the Lord's ascension He gave His disciples two great promises. The first was given before His death, and the second was given before His ascension. The first promise was that the Holy Spirit would abide in man (John 14:17), and the second promise was that the Holy Spirit would come upon man (Acts 1:8). Thus we have the three aspects of the work of the Spirit. If you are a Chinese reader, you may not know how precious this matter is. If you are a Jew, the biblical expression "abiding in you" will be a strange concept. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, and Jeremiah did not have the Holy Spirit abiding in them. The Old Testament only says that the Spirit of Jehovah was upon a person. Only Genesis 6:3 uses the expression "within man." [Translator's Note: This is according to the Chinese Union Version.] However, in the original language, this verse says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." It does not say that the Holy Spirit was dwelling within those in Genesis 6:3. It merely says that the Spirit would no longer strive with man or grieve man. When the Old Testament speaks of the Spirit, it always uses the word upon, but the New Testament always uses the word in. This promise is too wonderful—the Holy Spirit would abide within man. The Word becoming flesh was a wonderful event that occurred in the Lord Himself, but the Spirit Himself living in the believers is an even more wonderful event.

When did the Spirit begin to abide in man? In John 14:17 the Lord said that the Spirit "shall be" in the disciples. This word was spoken prior to the Lord's crucifixion. In John 20:22, He breathed a holy breath into the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This happened after the Lord's resurrection. After His resurrection, the Holy Spirit came and the disciples received the Lord's breathing. The Holy Spirit was the Lord's breath of life. This is like God's breathing of the breath of life into the nostrils of Adam after he was created out of the dust of the earth. The result was that he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). This is happening

to us today. The Lord is breathing the Holy Spirit, the breath of life, into us. Without a breath from God, man is dead. Without a breath from the Lord to the church, the church is also dead. This is the second aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit. After we know the history of the work of the Spirit, we will understand our experience.

The promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the disciples was fulfilled on the day of the Lord's resurrection. Forty days after the Lord's resurrection, He promised the disciples again that they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit. This promise of the Lord was fulfilled at Pentecost. In comparison, which of these promises is better? In the Old Testament, the outpouring of the Spirit was the special privilege of a few, such as the priests, prophets, or judges. There might have been only one person in the whole nation of Israel who had this privilege. It might only have been the king or some special person who had this blessing. The rest had to listen to them. In the Old Testament history, we find this kind of man appearing only once every few decades or centuries. Such events were rare. But in the New Testament, everyone can and should have this experience. This promise is very unique; it is something that we can all receive. It is a special blessing from the Lord. What a joy that we can all have the Spirit upon us. Before His ascension, the Lord charged the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise (Luke 24:49). By that time the disciples already had the indwelling life. They heard the Lord's word and were praying and waiting. Ten days later at Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). Everyone who reads Acts 2 knows that this speaks of the Holy Spirit's outward work upon man. The Gospel of Luke also speaks of this outward aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit upon man. It does not refer to the inward working of the Spirit. From John, Luke, and Acts, we see that there are two lines to the work of the Holy Spirit. One line is within man, and the other is outside of man.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE INDWELLING AND THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit dwells within man to be his life, and He rests upon man to be his power. If we are not clear about the difference between these two aspects of His work, we do not know the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and that in the New Testament. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was promised by Christ in the New Testament before His death. This aspect of the Spirit's work is related to the Lord's death, and it was fulfilled at the time of

the Lord's resurrection. The Spirit's indwelling in man is for the purpose of becoming life to the believers and also for the purpose of producing the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's living, such as holiness, righteousness, endurance, and joy.

The outpouring of the Spirit upon man was promised by the Father in the Old Testament. This promise was confirmed by the Lord before His ascension. This aspect of the Spirit's work is related to the Lord's ascension, and it was fulfilled after the Lord ascended and was exalted. The Spirit's outpouring upon man is for the purpose of clothing the believers with the Lord's power for their testimony and also for the purpose of producing the gifts of the Spirit and empowering the believers to work for the Lord for the accomplishment of His will.

When we read the Old and the New Testaments, we must differentiate between the Spirit's work within man and His work outside of man. If we do this, we will find that there is no conflict in the Bible about the aspects of the work of the Spirit. If we do not do this, we will find many contradictions. For example, the Bible says that every regenerated person has the Holy Spirit abiding in him. It also says that believers may receive the outpouring of the Spirit. One indicates the fact of having, and the other indicates a possibility of having. Once a man believes in the Lord, the Holy Spirit will surely dwell within him. At the same time, he can also experience the outpouring of the Spirit. If we make a clear distinction between these matters, we will see wonderful things happen to us. Let me mention one example. One day the Samaritans believed in the Lord and were baptized. The Bible does not say that they received the indwelling as well as the outpouring of the Spirit. Instead Acts 8 records that although they were baptized, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. If we do not understand the difference between the indwelling and the outpouring of the Spirit, we will find it hard to explain the fact that the Samaritans had believed and were baptized, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. We will not know how to explain Romans 8, 1 John 4, and 1 Corinthians 6. All these passages speak of the Holy Spirit dwelling within man as soon as he believes. In actuality, the Samaritans were not lacking the indwelling Spirit. They were only lacking the Spirit outpoured upon man.

THE INWARD AND OUTWARD ASPECTS OF THE SPIRIT IN AND UPON MAN

The inward work of the Holy Spirit within man is for life and living. It enables man to bear the fruit of the Spirit. The outward work of the Holy Spirit outside of man

is for testimony and work. It brings man spiritual gifts. If a man is filled with the Spirit within and also has the Spirit upon him, he will be empowered for the Lord's work. If a man is not filled within, but only clothed without, he will not receive much benefit. In fact, it will damage him because he will become proud. If a man has not passed through the gate of victory, he may have the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit, but in a few months or a few years at most, others will see that he is short of something. We must experience both aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in and upon us.

THE HOLY SPIRIT TESTIFYING FOR CHRIST

The Holy Spirit does not testify of Himself; He testifies of Christ (John 15:26). After a person sees the redemption of the cross, others may teach him to go on to pray for the Spirit and to believe. Speaking of the Spirit in this way is for the purpose of leading him to Christ. In speaking about the work of the Holy Spirit in man, we do not mention the Holy Spirit in an isolated way. Rather, we mention the Spirit in reference to how He testifies for Christ. During the past few days we have been speaking on the overcoming life. We did not mention the Holy Spirit. Rather, we mentioned how the Lord has resurrected and has become our life. The work of the Holy Spirit is directly related to Christ. When a man sees the work of Christ, he receives the work of the Spirit. When a man sees the death of Christ, he receives the regeneration of the Spirit. When a man sees the resurrection of Christ, he receives the Spirit as life. When a man sees the ascended Christ, the Lord who is sitting on the throne, he receives the outpouring of the Spirit.

The outpouring of the Spirit is for testifying Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit is for testifying Christ as well. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit within enables us to overcome. On the other hand, this Spirit within testifies that the Lord is everything to us. When the Holy Spirit is in us, we bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), which fruit is just Christ Himself. God has not given us separate fruits of the Spirit with one called love, another called joy, and a third called endurance, etc. God has given us the complete Christ. The fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22 is singular in the original language; there is only one fruit. This is like a tangerine, which has nine sections, but the nine sections still make one fruit. If we have the fruit of the Spirit, we have everything. It is impossible for us to have love but not joy, or to have joy but not endurance. God is in the wholesale business; He is not in the retail business. He only gives us Christ. If we have love but do not have joy, it means that we have only our own fruit, not the fruit of the Spirit.

There are three chapters in the Bible that specifically speak of the Holy Spirit. They are 1 Corinthians 12 through 14. Chapters twelve and fourteen are on the outpouring of the Spirit; they are related to the outward aspects of the Spirit's work. Chapter thirteen is on love; it is related to the inward aspects of the Spirit's work. If we replace the phrase the fruit of the Spirit with the word love, we will see that 1 Corinthians 13 is actually speaking of the things of the Spirit. The first item of the fruit of the Spirit is love. Without love other items, such as joy, peace, and endurance, are nothing. Paul pursued love because once he had love, he had everything.

THE INWARD ASPECT BEING MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE OUTWARD ASPECT

There is no comparison between the inward aspect of the Spirit and the outward aspect of the Spirit. Furthermore, neither the outpouring nor the indwelling are as important as the overcoming life. The outpouring of the Spirit is much inferior to the indwelling of the Spirit and the overcoming life. God has been gracious to make me a minister of the overcoming life and not a minister of the outpouring of the Spirit. Of course, I also speak about the outpouring. It is wonderful having the outpouring of the Spirit in addition to the indwelling Spirit. But it is terrible if we have the outpouring of the Spirit, but are lacking in the experience of the indwelling Spirit. The best thing is to have both the outward and inward aspects of the Spirit. If we have the inward aspect, we can pursue the outward work of the Spirit, but if we do not have the inward aspect, it is all right if we temporarily put aside the pursuit of the outward manifestation of the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, after the priests anointed blood on the right ear, right thumb, and right toe of the one coming for cleansing, they applied ointment to the same places (Lev. 14:14-17). First there is the blood, and then there is the ointment. This means that the cross must first work on our ears, hands, and feet before we can walk and work by the Holy Spirit. The cross removes the self, whereas the Spirit lives on our behalf. The application of the blood on the ears, hands, and feet signifies that the blood has annulled us and removed us. Then the Holy Spirit comes in to replace our ears, hands, and feet. First there is the overcoming life, and then there is the outpouring of the Spirit. Receiving the anointing of the Lord's blood signifies that we have died with the Lord. At the same time, His life brings us the anointing. Today we want to see the ointment

upon our heads, but unless the blood has done its work first, the outpouring of the ointment will only make us proud.

The Corinthian believers had the outward manifestations of the Spirit, but they did not have the filling of the Spirit inwardly. They were fleshly believers. There are many people today who have received the outpouring of the Spirit, yet they are not filled with life within. There is no change in their lives. They live in a foolish way and are no different from men of the world. The outpouring is not related to the inward life. A man may be very gifted yet not have the overcoming life within. If a man is unholy in his life, no outward enduement of the Spirit will make him holy within. But if we have the proper life within and in addition have the outward enduement of the Spirit, we will be useful persons.

Of all the churches in the New Testament, none was worse than the church in Corinth. Yet Paul did not deny their experience of the outpouring of the Spirit just because they were inwardly and morally corrupt. Paul did not say that it was wrong to have the outpouring in the meetings. He only said that there was the need for order because outward gifts could cause confusion. Although they did not have good order, Paul did not say that they had evil spirits. He merely instructed them on how to set everything in order. We should adopt the same attitude. If any brother or sister acts abnormally, we should set things in order and test them. However, we should not consider it wrong just because it is abnormal. A man may walk into a room and find the furniture and garments in disorder. But he cannot say that the furniture is not furniture or that the garments are no longer garments. He can only say that the furniture and garments are in disorder. When things are in disorder, all that is needed is to make some arrangements. Paul only made some arrangements. He spoke of maintaining order in speaking in tongues, and he said that if there was no interpretation, one should not speak (1 Cor. 14:28). Those who prophesy should do so one by one. If too many prophesy, confusion comes in. Hence, he said that only two or three should prophesy. The same is true with speaking in tongues; only two or three should speak. If the number exceeds two or three, those who want to speak should not speak (v. 29). First Corinthians 14 is on order; it is on the outward arrangements that come after the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. In the future we have to pay more attention to 1 Corinthians 14. All those who consider themselves to be the church in their locality should pay attention to the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. We have to learn love on the one hand

and pursue spiritual gifts on the other hand. If we do this, we will live a balanced life.

THE BENEFITS OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

What are the benefits of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? If the inward aspect of the Spirit is more important than the outward aspect of the Spirit, why do we need the outpouring of the Spirit? Those who live a life of holiness and who know the Spirit as a person will have the strength to share this holiness with others once they receive the outpouring of the Spirit. Many people realize that they have many treasures hidden within, but they cannot open these treasures to others. Although others may admire or look up to them, they cannot get any help from them. They lack the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us now consider the practical benefits in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Power of Fellowship

The first thing we obtain after we experience the outpouring is the power of fellowship. It enables us to convey the things in us to others. A man may have received something from God and may have accumulated something within yet not have the power to share it with others. Once they receive the outpouring of the Spirit, they will be able to share with others what is inside them. They will have the outward power to convey these inward things to others. Those who have the Spirit within are like a power plant. The plant may be full of light, but the whole city may be in darkness. There must be power lines to join the power plant to the city in order for the power to be conveyed to the whole city. If there is no power in the plant, nothing will happen. However, if there is power but no power lines, nothing will happen either. The power-conveying lines are a picture of the function of the outpouring. Many people have power lines, yet they have to light candles at night. They do not have anything inside them, yet they try to convey something to others. This will not work. We must have both the outward and the inward aspects of the Spirit. If we have passed the gate of victory, we will have something within us. Then we can proceed to seek the outpouring so that we can be empowered to share what we have with others.

Boldness

Some have an excellent inward disposition, but they are very timid. They have to make up their mind a few times before they can stand up to speak or testify for the Lord. Some have believed in the Lord, but they are afraid of passing out

gospel tracts to others. There are still some here today who have not yet received the outpouring of the Spirit. I will not ask if you want the outpouring, and I will not ask if you are afraid of the outpouring. I will only ask if you can be like those who have received the outpouring. You may have something real within, yet you are afraid to share it. Others may not have anything, but they are not afraid. What you lack is their boldness. I do not encourage those who have received the outpouring to act loosely, but those who have received the outpouring for the first time must be strong to testify because they have received the boldness. The brothers and sisters who have received the outpouring can be divided into two categories. The first are those who are still afraid and shy. The second are those who are not afraid and are bold. Before I received the outpouring of the Spirit, I would follow a gospel friend for a mile or two and still not muster enough boldness to open up my mouth to testify to him. I had the courage to read the Bible or pray in a train, but it would take some effort to pass out gospel tracts in the same train. After I received the outpouring of the Spirit, I was no longer afraid of anything. I was not even concerned with how I dressed. I became bold. I was not just "thick-skinned"; I "lost my skin" altogether.

No Self-consciousness

Self-consciousness is the worst thing that a Christian can have. A self-conscious person pays attention to how well he dresses and how others respond to his words, etc. When he is invited to a meal, he cannot speak to others about the gospel in a released way. He cannot speak to a stranger without preparing himself carefully before he speaks. This is because he is always conscious of himself. He may be able to pray by himself in his room, but when he is in a public place, he cannot pray in the same way. In public he changes his tone, words, and expressions and becomes fearful of others' frowning. All of these reactions mean that there is too much self-consciousness. Such ones have a spirit, but their spirit is covered up by their soul, and they cannot be free. Once there was a meeting in a brother's living room. The Spirit came down, and everyone who was present was released. This kind of freedom is not licentiousness but a liberation in the spirit. Sometimes we are too restrained in the meetings. When there is too much restraint, no one will dare to speak. Mr. Evan Roberts saved many souls throughout his life. Many people have testified that he was the only one on earth that they met who did not have any self-consciousness. When he wanted to laugh he just laughed. When he wanted to look at someone, he just looked at him. Only those who are free from self-consciousness can work for God, and the

only way we can be delivered from our self-consciousness is through the outpouring of the Spirit. Only those who have received the outpouring are free from self-consciousness.

Changing the Atmosphere

A man who is filled with the Holy Spirit can change the atmosphere. When some people enter a room, they can turn a quiet room into a noisy one, a noisy room into a quiet one, or speechless ones into talkative ones. They are able to change the atmosphere wherever they go. Our failure lies in the fact that we cannot bring a spiritual atmosphere with us wherever we go. We follow what others do. We cannot influence them. Instead we are influenced by them. However, those who have received the outpouring of the Spirit can turn the atmosphere and make others turn with them. If every one of us has received the outpouring of the Spirit, we will all be able to change the atmosphere.

Power for the Work

Those who have received the outpouring of the Spirit can pursue the spiritual gifts. We will not get into the subject of the spiritual gifts now, but we will mention something about the power for the work. Those who have not received the outpouring do not have any power for the work. Those who have received the outpouring are empowered to work for the Lord. The difference is great. In order to have the power for the work, we must have the outpouring of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: Can the indwelling Holy Spirit be manifested in the same way that He is manifested when He comes upon a person?

Answer: When you believe in the Lord, the Holy Spirit comes into you and lives in you. This fact can be known only by you; no one else knows this. The indwelling work of the Holy Spirit is accomplished by God alone. Man cannot see this work. But when the Spirit comes upon a person, everyone can see it.

Question: Does Acts 8 speak of the Holy Spirit dwelling within man?

Answer: No, it only speaks of the Spirit coming upon man.

Question: Acts 19 records twelve Ephesian believers being baptized into the baptism of John without having heard of the coming of the Holy Spirit. When Paul came to them, he asked if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed, and they answered that they had not. They also had not experienced the coming of the Spirit. Would these ones have perished if they remained in that state?

Answer: Seminary students may answer, "Yes, they would have perished because they had never heard of or received the Holy Spirit. They would have been lost." But I say that they were saved and would not have perished. You may ask, "How can those who have not received the Spirit be saved?" They had faith already. Paul only pointed out to them that their baptism was wrong. It was John's baptism of repentance. They should believe in the One who came after John—Jesus. This is why they had not yet received the Spirit. Paul did not mention the matter of faith to them. In other words, faith was not their problem. The Ephesian believers in Acts were lacking only in the outpouring. They did not lack the indwelling Spirit of Romans 8. Furthermore, Acts calls these twelve disciples. At that time, every believer was a disciple and every disciple was a believer, that is, a saved one. They lacked only the experience of the Spirit's coming upon them. They did not lack the experience of the Spirit's indwelling. Suppose some of us believed many years ago. The minute we believed we had the Spirit dwelling within us. After some time, we found out about such things as speaking in tongues, prophesying, and the outpouring of the Spirit. However, tongue speaking and prophecies are not necessary evidences of the indwelling of the Spirit. One cannot say that just because a man does not have these so-called evidences of the outpouring of the Spirit, he is void of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes into a person as soon as he believes and receives the Lord.

Question by brothers from Pin-Yang: Why is it so important to distinguish between the inward work and the outward work of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: It is hard for someone to identify those who have the inward Spirit but who do not have the outward Spirit. However, it is easy to identify those who have the outward Spirit but who do not have the inward Spirit. Suppose a brother shakes hands with me, and then asks me, "How many people have you saved? I have saved so many people in such-and-such places. I can save souls. You do not have to tell me anything." These words are self-boasting claims. They come from those who have only received the outpouring of the Spirit but who have little of the Spirit within. We have to pay more attention to the inner aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit than to the outward aspect of His work.

APPENDIX:

THE DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN REGENERATION AND FILLING

- (1) Regeneration is related to salvation; filling is related to victory.
- (2) Regeneration is a question of life; filling is a question of living.

- (3) Justification comes with regeneration; sanctification comes with filling.
- (4) Regeneration is the addition of a new life which is different from the old Adamic life; filling is the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the cultivation of the new life which man has already received.
- (5) Regeneration is a work accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the Lord's substitutionary death on the cross; filling is the result of the Holy Spirit's saturating a person to the extent that the full significance of the cross is realized in him.
- (6) Regeneration marks the beginning of life; filling marks the maturity of life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE TONE OF AN OVERCOMING LIVING

Date: November 19, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:37; Psalms 20:5

We need to see another thing tonight—the tone of an overcoming living. Before we come to this matter, we have to review what we have seen. We first saw that the human method to attain victory is suppression, struggles, and prayers, etc. Actually none of these methods work. Second, we saw that Christ is our victory. Victory is just Christ Himself. The overcoming life that God has given us is just Christ Himself. Third, the most important characteristic of the overcoming life is that it is an exchange rather than a change. Fourth, we saw that there are two things we have to do—let go and believe. Fifth, we saw that there are also two things we have to do after overcoming—terminate all sins and fully consecrate. Sixth, we saw that the Lord is the One who guards us in living an overcoming life; the Lord continually overcomes for us. We have to commit ourselves into the Lord's hand daily. We have to trust in Him and hand ourselves over to Him day by day and moment by moment, allowing His victory to be manifested in us. If anyone has not done this yet, I hope that you will do it today.

Now let us consider the tone of an overcomer's daily life. When we sing a hymn, we have the words and the tune. Many people sing with the right words but with the wrong tune. Please remember that the overcoming life also has its tune. After a man has passed the gate of victory, he cannot overcome every day if he does not carry a tone of victory with him. If the tone is wrong, everything else is wrong. The Fukienese and the Amoyese all speak with different tones. But there is only one tone for the overcoming life. The kind of victory in the Bible is one which

makes us more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). It is not one which barely allows us to overcome. The word barely is my own word; the Bible never uses such a word. However, the fact is that many Christians only barely overcome. Their victory is not one that makes them more than conquerors. Such victory is not genuine victory.

SHOUTING IN VICTORY

Salvation and victory are the same word in Hebrew. Shouting and rejoicing are also the same word in Hebrew. Hence, Psalm 20:5 says, "May we shout victoriously in Your salvation," which can be translated as "May we rejoice in Your victory." What is the difference between victory and shouting for victory? Suppose two groups of students are engaged in a ball game and one team wins. This is victory; the team has won. Shouting for victory is for the cheering ones to shout loudly for the winning team. The students who actually play the game are the ones who won. The other classmates have not won, yet they can shout in victory. In the same way, victory is Christ; this has nothing to do with us. We are not responsible for His victory, but we are responsible for one thing—to shout in victory. The Lord has won the victory, and we are shouting in victory. This is the tone of an overcoming living. Every one of us should have this kind of overcoming tone in our daily life. If we have an overcoming tone, we have the overcoming living. Without an overcoming tone, our daily life is still one of failure. Being more than conquerors is being victorious continuously and having a tone of victory all the time.

The victory of many people is a reluctant one. It is a bare victory and a silent one. For example, when others revile, you may not react; instead, you keep your mouth shut. You may think that by keeping quiet in this way you are being victorious. It is true that this is victory, but it is a victory that is barely attained. It is not one which makes you more than conqueror, nor is it a shout of victory. The shout of victory which comes after a victory is one which rejoices, thanks, and praises continuously. It is not a reluctant effort, nor is it an act of repression or endurance. Shouting for victory is praising under any circumstance and for any reason. This is more than conquering. Most people think that keeping silent when they are being reviled is overcoming. But this is not real victory. Real victory is thanking and praising the Lord under all kinds of difficulties and hardships. This is not just victory, but the shout of victory. We have to remember that the cup that God has given us is a cup that runs over (Psa. 23:5). It is not a cup that only has a few drops of water. For our cup to run over is for us to shout for victory. If

others ask me to go a mile, and I go a mile, this is not victory. More than conquering is for others to ask me to go a mile, and instead, I go two miles. If others ask for my tunic, and I give them my tunic, this is not victory. But if others ask for the tunic, and I yield the cloak as well, this is real victory. When others revile me, I do not merely try to suppress myself or try to be patient. Instead, I say to God, "I thank You," and I say it without any reluctance or misgiving. This is the victory that makes us more than conquerors. We should say to the Lord, "All the hardships that have come upon me are Your gracious dealings with me. I thank You that I am able to suffer for You." This is the tone of victory. The Lord gives you the victory in order that you will thank and praise Him. Many people have seemingly overcome, but they do not have the tone of victory. For example, a man may be in difficulties and say to the Lord, "I am suffering." This means that he has lost the tone of victory. Those who cannot thank and praise in their sufferings are barely making it; they are not more than conquerors.

REJOICING ALWAYS

A few passages in the Bible speak of rejoicing. Matthew 5:11-12 says, "Blessed are you when they reproach and persecute you, and while speaking lies, say every evil thing against you because of Me. Rejoice and exult, for your reward is great in the heavens; for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." "Rejoice and exult" means "to greatly and jubilantly rejoice." James 1:2 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, whenever you fall into various trials." What is our tone in the midst of trials? James said that we have to count them all joy. This is real victory. A fish has to be in the water before it can survive. In the same way, the overcoming life can only survive in an environment of thanksgiving and praise. If it is placed in an atmosphere of sorrow, it will die. Whenever our heart is stripped of thanksgiving and praises, it loses its victory. Philippians 4:4 says that we have to rejoice always. Rejoicing in the New Testament is unceasing rather than occasional. There should never be a time out for our rejoicing. Whenever we lose our joy, we lose our victory. Hence, we must rejoice in the Lord all the time. First Peter 4:13 says that believers should rejoice under all kinds of circumstances and be filled with thanksgivings and praises. Many believers do not have a smile on their faces. This is an expression of joylessness. On one occasion Paul and Silas were beaten and chained together by their hands and feet. Yet they were still able to sing. As they sang, their mouths might have faced downward, but their hearts were surely faced upward. This thanksgiving and

praise shook the earth and rattled open the prison gate. Their spirits had gone out, yet their bodies were still there (Acts 16:22-28). This is the victory that the Lord is after. He wants to hear our song in the middle of the night because He knows that the sunrise is only hours away.

GIVING THANKS IN EVERYTHING

In what should we give thanks? Colossians 3:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 say that we should give thanks in everything. We should have a habit of giving thanks. This means that whatever may happen—great things, small things, good things, or bad things—we have to give thanks. One brother was a railway worker. Once while he was working, a train came by and through an oversight one of his legs was cut off by the train. When he woke up at the hospital, he was asked how he felt. He answered, "Thank and praise the Lord." When he was asked, "How can you thank and praise the Lord at a time like this?", he answered, "I do not consider how many legs I have lost. I consider how many legs I have left." This is the tone of victory. The tone of victory is one in which we thank and praise in the midst of trials. Our hearts should yield to the Lord. We should accept whatever He gives us joyfully, and we should rest in His will. It is not enough for us to merely endure the trials. The kind of endurance described in the Bible is not a passive endurance. Colossians 1:11 says that we are empowered unto all endurance with joy. The kind of endurance that is sustained through the gritting of teeth is of little use to anyone. An overcoming endurance is one which endures with joy, and only those who fully embrace God's will can endure and suffer with joy.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE BEING

THE WAY TO VICTORY

Thanksgiving and praise are the tone of victory. They are also the way to victory. Second Chronicles 20:21-22 tells of the Israelites overcoming their enemies in battle through praises. Jehoshaphat the king of Judah appointed the Levites to give praise in holy array (v. 21, ASV) and to go before the army, giving thanks to Jehovah. They were in holy array; they were not in armor or carrying any weapons. Others might have marveled at them. On the one hand, they had to fight, and on the other hand, the victory was not theirs. They fought from the basis of victory. First they won, and then they fought—this is true victory. Fighting and then winning is not victory, but defeat. We first believe that we have overcome and then go forth to fight. We do not fight in order to overcome. There is a big difference between these two. The Bible says that we fight because we

have overcome. If we see this, we will know how to apply this fact in the future. Suppose temptations come our way. If we see that the Lord is our victory and that He has overcome already, and if we go forth into battle on the basis of this, we are shouting for victory. But if we fight in order to win, we are defeated already. True victory is knowing that we have overcome and then going to battle on the basis of that knowledge.

Such a battle of victory overcomes the enemy through thanksgiving and praises. Once we give thanks and praises, the enemy flees away. When we believe in God's Word, we can break forth into praises. Psalm 106:12 says that after God drowned the whole army of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the Israelites believed in His words and sang His praise. Whenever we have the faith, we can overcome and sing God's praise. We have to learn to thank and praise Him unceasingly. We should not bury our thanksgiving and praises. If we thank and praise Him unceasingly, we will continuously live an overcoming life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LAW

Date: November 20, 1935, morning

Place: Chuenchow

As believers, we live by the Holy Spirit, not by the law. Many people do not know what the law is. As a result, they do not know the Holy Spirit either. They do not know what it means to live by the law and what it means to live by the Spirit. The failure in our work is due to the fact that we work by the law and not by the Spirit. If we trust in the law, we will not have the power or the fruit because the law is something that the Lord has judged.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

The law is not just the Ten Commandments or the few hundred ordinances of the Old Testament. These are the Old Testament laws, but there are also New Testament laws. The Israelites in the Old Testament had their laws, and the church in the New Testament also has its laws. What is the principle of the law? When God has a will, and this will is written down on tablets of stone or on paper, including anything from one item to a thousand items of ordinances, we have the law. By walking according to these hundreds and thousands of items of the law, a man becomes clear what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. He also becomes clear concerning the way he should take. This is the law. It is lifeless. Once a man begins to walk according to this dead law, he can put God

aside and ignore Him. This is like saying that a student can ignore the principal of his school as long as he abides by the school rules. This is the law. Good and evil, right and wrong, are known through the written code. The path that one has to follow comes entirely from his knowledge and not from the inner leading of God. When this happens we have the law.

Many people can tell the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, without ever fellowshiping with God. This knowledge, however, is useless. Those who live this way are still living under the law. If you measure everything according to this rule, you will find that many things are still under the law. Man is naturally inclined to the law because he can easily tell from the law what is right and what is wrong. Most people are afraid of living by the Spirit. They would rather live according to some prescribed rules. Keeping the law is both legal and dead, but it is also something convenient. One can know how many laws he has kept and which ones he has come short of. The law turns man away from God. With the law, man does not need to contact God; he can put Him aside. After you have passed the gate of victory, you should no longer live under the law, but live by the Spirit (Rom. 7:6).

LIVING UNDER THE LAW

Let us consider the meaning of walking according to the law. I did not know what it meant to live according to the law until a few years ago, that is, until 1928. I had been a preacher for many years, but I did not know what it meant to keep the law. It is true that I could explain the law to others according to my theological knowledge. But in my practical experience I never understood this matter. There was a time when I was gravely ill. The Lord healed me. After I was healed, I rested and recuperated by the seaside. There I met Brother Simon Meek and stayed with him for a while. His health was not good either, and he wanted me to give him some advice. I asked, "What do you want me to help you with?" He answered, "Please tell me if it is scriptural to ask for healing." I said, "God does heal people. But Timothy had to use some wine, and Epaphroditus was not healed. Paul's eyes were not good and could not read small handwriting." I went on to tell him the experience of many people who were healed. Brother Simon Meek said, "Your answer is no answer at all." At that time, I realized what the law is. If the Bible tells us what to do step by step, all we have to do is to act accordingly in a simple way. This is keeping the law. However, God wants direct fellowship with us. He wants us to receive His revelation and then act according

to His revelation. If we do not fellowship with Him, the Spirit will have no outlet for His work.

Man likes to have clear instructions from the Bible concerning everything he does. For example, in the matter of divine healing, he wants a clear yes or no from the Bible. However the Bible shows us that some sicknesses were healed and some sicknesses were not healed. The Bible does not have any rule regarding this matter. God has no intention for the church to hold on to some dead letters and forsake Him. He wants to see men seeking, praying, and waiting quietly on Him. He does not want us to have any trust in something apart from Him.

The law speaks of God's past will; it is not God's present will. However, man always wants to know God's present will according to His past will. God wants man to fellowship with Him and understand His present desire through the Holy Spirit. He does not want us to merely keep the law. This is why we need to have fresh fellowship with God every day. Only then we can know His will.

The second aspect of the law is that it dictates how we should live. God does not want to decide how the church should live from day to day. He wants the church to fellowship with Him moment by moment so that the church can know His desire. If I prescribe everything that one of my employees should do and the way he should live, he can abide by my prescriptions for a day, a week, or even a month without fellowshiping with me or asking me anything. This is the principle of the law. The law is doing God's will without communicating with Him.

When I was in Shanghai, I had a servant who also was a brother. One day I considered how the Lord wants us to exercise our spirit and not follow the law when working for Him. I wanted to see if it would work if I were to deal with my servant by the Spirit and not by the law. It is convenient to lay down laws in our daily life. If I laid down some laws, it would be easy for my servant to work for me. Of course I have to abide by the same laws as well. I began to talk with my servant and told him that he should check with me in everything and not make any proposals of his own. Neither would I give him any prescribed rules. While I was talking with a friend, the servant came in a few times and asked each time, "What do you want to eat? What do you want to drink?" I said, "Just wait a while." Later, the servant confessed that it was easier to work according to some laws than to ask for instructions in everything. From this we see that it is easy to keep the law, but it is not easy to work according to the leading of the Spirit. Easy or hard, however, this is God's desire, and we cannot take the easy way. We have

to take the God-ordained way, which is not being under the law but under the Spirit.

LIVING IN SPIRIT

A living that is according to the Spirit does not follow any fixed rule. All dead rules are set aside, and one seeks after God's will directly. After my servant finished cleaning the floor, he did not know what to do next. When twelve o'clock came, he did not know if I wanted to eat. This is the way one lives when he is in the Spirit. He moves when he has the revelation of the Spirit and waits on the Lord otherwise. How do we know if a person is saved and ready for baptism? We can quiz him about the truth concerning salvation and baptism, and he may answer everything correctly. If we then say that he is eligible for baptism, we are acting according to the law. Suppose there is an old lady from the countryside who cannot read or say any of the biblical terms. She cannot answer any question concerning regeneration, repentance, or forgiveness. Yet she has the peace in her heart. Should we baptize her? The issue is not whether the candidate for baptism will pass our test and answer our questions. The issue is whether or not she is regenerated. Many village folks do not know any terminology, yet they have peace and joy inwardly. Such ones may not understand anything in their mind, but they are genuinely saved.

At our Lord's table meeting in Shanghai, we often have visitors joining us unannounced. How long should we ask them to wait before we invite them to break bread with us? Should they wait a week or a month? Actually, if we know that a person is saved, we can invite him to break bread with us immediately. There is no need to wait.

The co-workers must never lay down any laws. We have to allow the Holy Spirit to operate and work within each person separately. Everything in the Bible is living, but it is living only when it is in the Spirit. If we make a thing an ordinance, it immediately becomes dead. The truth of the Bible must be realized in the Spirit; only then will it be living. In conducting conferences, we sometimes receive a message from the Lord and speak it. This may result in the salvation of many people. However, the next time we conduct another conference, we may think that we should do the same since so many were saved last time. We may then proceed to deliver the same message, and to our surprise no one is saved. We think that if a message saves people one time, it will save people all the time. But the result is not what we expect. A message saves people when it is delivered in

the Spirit. The same message repeated according to the law will not save anyone. Here lies the difference between walking according to the Spirit and walking according to the law.

Everything that is not done according to the living guidance of the Spirit is a kind of law. We often take yesterday's leading as today's guidance. But applying yesterday's guidance to today is to walk according to the law. We should not think that just because the Spirit was leading us a certain way in the past that He will lead us the same way today. Imitating the leading of yesterday is being in the law. It is even possible to walk according to the law in obeying the biblical truth. If we want to be baptized just because the Bible says so rather than as a result of the leading of the Spirit within, we are following the law. We must walk according to the Scripture, but our leading is only proper when this walk is confirmed by the inner guidance. If anyone says that something is right because the Bible has never said that it is wrong, he is completely in the realm of the law. Many people write to me to ask if this or that is right. I write back and ask whether they have the Holy Spirit within. If they do, they should learn to follow the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am not a fortune-teller or a diviner; I cannot know God's will for you. You have to learn to know the inner guidance of the Spirit yourself.

In learning to follow the guidance of the Spirit, we have to ask what the Spirit is saying before we ask what the Bible is saying. The first thing we should ask is what the inner registration is telling us. However, most people today first ask what the Bible says and do not ask what the Spirit within says. This is not normal. A New Testament believer has the Holy Spirit residing within. This is a precious thing. We have to learn to know the inner leading of the Holy Spirit within us. There is a difference between the principles and commandments in the Bible. A believer must not only obey the commandments in the Bible, but also walk according to the principles that are behind the commandments. Consider the matter of the head covering. If you cover your head merely because 1 Corinthians 11 says so, you have not covered your head in reality. Unless a man obeys the Bible according to the leading of the Spirit, his obedience is the same as his disobedience. The main thing is what the Lord is saying within a person. If the Lord is leading you to obey a certain truth in the Bible, and you act accordingly, this is true obedience to God.

In the Old Testament there was the dispensation of the law, but today we are in the New Testament dispensation. Yet there are still too many "Jews" in the church today. They keep the law and make the Bible a book of laws. Many

people ask others what they think of this or that. This means that they do not know how to ask the Spirit within them. This is not normal.

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

BEING CONFIRMED BY THE BIBLE

Every sheep knows its shepherd's voice. Many people think that if they do not know the letter of the Bible, they will not know how to live. Does this mean that they will sin every day? In actuality, if we follow the leading of the Spirit, we will experience just the opposite. It is much better to follow the leading of the Spirit than to follow the Bible alone. We can forget, but the Holy Spirit will not forget. We may ask, "If the work of the Holy Spirit is so crucial, does this mean that we do not need the Bible anymore?" Theoretically, the leading of the Holy Spirit within is good enough, but in following this inner leading, it is possible for us to make mistakes. Therefore, we still need the Bible. In other words, we are not following the leading of the Bible; we are following the leading of the Spirit within. However, we are checking this daily inner leading with the Bible. Only when we obey both the inner leading and the outward leading are we truly obeying God. We cannot obey only the teaching of the Bible. We must follow the leading of the Spirit within and then compare it with the Bible. If the leading cannot be confirmed by the Bible, it is not a leading from the Spirit but a work of the emotion. The real issue is the inward registration.

In Chefoo two people asked me if they should leave the denominations. I answered, "I do not know." They said, "Does this mean that you are opposed to us leaving the denominations?" Then I asked them, "How does the life in you feel when you are in the denominations? Do you feel that the life within is blossoming when you stay in the denominations? If you feel that way, you should stay in the denominations. If not, you should leave." It is absolutely not a question of right or wrong but a question of life.

There was a famous Western missionary in Chefoo who came three times to discuss the question of sects with me. The first two times I avoided her and did not talk with her about the subject. The last time she came she insisted on talking about it. I felt that there was the leading of the Spirit, and I talked with her for five minutes. After our talk we sat down for tea. I told her that I was in a big circle, but that she was in a small circle within the big circle. After our talk, I escorted her out. Two days later, she came to me early in the morning and said, "Last night I sent out three letters of resignation." I told her, "You should not be influenced by me. Such a matter can only be decided by God alone. Only God can call you out

of a denomination." She said, "I inquired of God last night and saw that the small circle within the big circle is man's choice and that man's choice is a sin. I felt that it is God's will that I should leave my denomination. That is why I got up last night and wrote the letters of resignation." I shook her hand. From that point on, she began to go on positively in the way of the Lord and was not bothered by any negative element.

As workers for the Lord we should be careful not to lead others merely according to the Bible. We should allow the Holy Spirit to personally guide them from within. We do not need to make all the saints identical according to some outward standards or to maintain some outward order. If we do this, the Holy Spirit will not have the ground or the freedom to work. We must not be a Moses, dispensing letters and the law to others. Our law is just the Holy Spirit. He is our absolute guidance. We have to learn to follow the guidance of the Spirit within. If a man keeps the law, he can go on without God. But if a man lives by the Spirit, he will not be able to leave God for a moment. Once he leaves God, he will die.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

TALKS

(1)

Date: November 20, 1935, 3 p.m.

Place: Chuenchow

THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED

THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

After you have received the outpouring of the Spirit, you must take control of your spirit every day. God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace. You must obey God and at the same time not allow your spirit to go unchecked. You have to be responsible for this matter and never allow your spirit to go unchecked. The outpouring of the Spirit is not for your entertainment. If you do not need it, do not ask for it. There was a brother in Chefoo who received the outpouring of the Spirit. Later, while he was sitting down at a meal, he was about to experience another outpouring. Since he did not need it, however, he rejected it. At another time, he halted the outpouring again while he was riding in a car because there was not the need for it. He is a powerful brother and has saved men whom others cannot save. In principle what he did was right. We should only receive the outpouring of the Spirit when we need it and should not consider it an entertainment or a spiritual enjoyment when we do not need it.

I believe our first experience of the outpouring is often genuine. However, subsequent experiences of the outpouring are sometimes doubtful. The Bible says that if we being evil still know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). If we stand upon this verse and ask the Father, He will surely give us the Holy Spirit. Many people have improper motives before the Lord. They ask for the outpouring of the Spirit out of curiosity or to prove that they are good and spiritual. This leads to the deception of evil spirits. We must be careful and not seek for the outpouring of the Spirit out of curiosity. We should seek because there is the need for it.

We also have to test the spirit that is upon us. Whenever we experience the outpouring of the Spirit, we have to apply this test. We have to do this every time because we are no match for the evil one in the spiritual realm.

THE OUTPOURING NOT AS CRUCIAL AS PRAYER AND FAITH

In working for the Lord, the outpouring of the Spirit cannot take priority over prayer and faith. We still need prayer and faith in God's work. The outpouring is to empower us, but we cannot use this empowering as a shortcut. We cannot replace prayer and faith with the outpouring of the Spirit. During this conference many people have become very wild. Some think that the wilder they become, the more spiritual they will be. As a result, they bring in many problems. The release of the Spirit begins from our spirit and goes through our soul into our body. It is dangerous for those who have not been dealt with by the cross to receive the outpouring of the Spirit. The first thing one receives after experiencing the outpouring of the Spirit is the power of the Spirit. After this the power of the body and the power of the soul are released as well. This is like underground water which is clean but which becomes contaminated as it passes through different soil layers. Similarly, when there is no dealing of the cross, the spirit becomes impure when it is released through the soul and the body.

How do we know if the power manifested in us is indeed that coming from the outpouring of the Spirit? We can test this by the cross. The soul-life and physical life must first be subdued by the cross. When the Spirit pours out, spiritual power is released. However, those who have not been dealt with in their soul-life and physical life will discover that all the energy of their spirit, soul, and body will be released at the same time when they experience the outpouring. Consequently, when some people experience a strong outpouring of the Spirit, they find their

soulful and physical energy mixed up in the manifestations. One sure test is to ask, "What does a person do when he is freed and no longer under any bondage?" Those whose body has not been dealt with by the cross will jump around uncontrollably when they experience the outpouring of the Spirit. The same can happen to the soul—those whose souls have not been dealt with will find the latent power of their souls released. I should warn the co-working brothers and sisters that we should be particularly alert for the release of the soul power. Those who are lacking in physical strength will allow their soul power to easily be released. When the Spirit is poured out in a meeting, those who have been dealt with by the cross can discern the ones who are merely releasing their soul power. You can cheat a thousand novices, but you cannot cheat one person who has been dealt with by the cross because he knows the real condition.

The Bible mentions two kinds of power. One is the resurrection power (Phil. 3:10), which is within man. The other is the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), which is outside of man; this is the power that accompanies the outpouring of the Spirit. If one has the power of the Holy Spirit but not the power of resurrection, soulful and physical strength are released along with the Spirit's power. Those who are experienced can readily discern the two streams. This is not what we want to see. We want only one stream—a spirit that is pure and without mixture. We must also know what the resurrection life is. The resurrection life is a "resuscitated" power. Resuscitated power means a power that has passed through death. All of us have our strong natural merits such as our soulful power, our emotion, our ability to make others cry, etc. All of these need to pass through death. Only those who have been dealt with by the cross can render a pure spiritual supply to others in the meetings. The help they give to others is pure, and does not carry any mixture of the soul or the flesh.

There was a servant of God in China who was a very dear brother. He was very powerful and had saved many people. One day I saw him pouring oil on the heads of thirty to forty people and then hit their faces and kick their bodies. They were eventually healed of their sicknesses. You cannot say that he had an evil spirit. This brother had the power of the outpoured Spirit, but he did not have the inward power of resurrection. As a result, his actions did not match the pattern of the cross. The outpouring of the Spirit gives us power and blessing, and the cross purifies this power. The cross stands in the way of the old creation. With the cross the old creation is halted. Those workers who have passed through the dealing of the cross have the power of resurrection within and the power of the

Spirit without. Therefore, even though we are on the subject of the outpouring of the Spirit, we cannot separate this from the truth of the cross which we previously preached. The truth of the cross is very necessary. It will lead us to the way of purity.

After we return home from this conference, we must first help others to have the overcoming experience and then bring them into the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit. The order cannot be reversed. Without the power of resurrection within, it is very dangerous to have the power of the Spirit without. Before a man receives the outpouring of the Spirit, we have to tell him that he needs to take control of himself and not be wild. We must help others become sober and not be loose. We should only teach others to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. If a man will not cooperate with the Spirit, we would rather teach him more important truths.

Today I have to confess my mistakes. When we experienced the outpouring of the Spirit, our meeting was too wild. Actually, I did not initiate that meeting; the saints initiated it. I have repeated many times that we must test the spirit every time we receive the outpouring. We cannot be loose in this matter.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OUTPOURING AND THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Let us consider again the difference between the outpouring and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit is for every believer, whereas the infilling of the Spirit is for a special group of people—those who are emptied. In studying the Bible we have to realize that every term can be paired with a corresponding term. For example, resurrection goes with death, and filling goes with emptiness. We must consider all the corresponding terms before we can understand a word accurately. Those who have been filled with the Spirit are those who are emptied because filling and emptiness correspond to each other. Before the day of Pentecost, the one hundred and twenty disciples were gathered together. They were all clothed with the Spirit and filled with the Spirit. They could be together for ten days and pray together in one accord because they had all been dealt with by the resurrected Lord. The three thousand people at Pentecost also received the outpouring of the Spirit, but the Bible does not say that they were filled with the Spirit. The one hundred and twenty received both the infilling and the outpouring, whereas the three thousand received only the

outpouring. Later, the five thousand also received the outpouring of the Spirit without receiving the infilling of the Spirit.

How do we know that the three thousand and the five thousand only received the outpouring of the Spirit? If the whole church had been filled by the Spirit, there would not have been any dispute in the daily dispensing of the food. But when the widows were overlooked in their portions, there were murmurings and disputes (Acts 6:1). This proves that the disciples were not filled with the Holy Spirit. Then the apostles appointed seven deacons to take charge of the table. These seven were filled with the Spirit (v. 3). If the whole church had been filled with the Spirit, there would not have been the need for a selection. However, because not everyone was filled with the Spirit, seven had to be selected. This proves that many people had the outpouring of the Spirit, but not the infilling of the Spirit.

The outpouring of the Spirit comes upon us as a result of our faith in the ascended Lord. It has little to do with our measure of life. The infilling of the Holy Spirit comes as a result of our obedience to the resurrected Lord within, and this demands that our life be sanctified within.

If you want to have the infilling of the Spirit, you must come to the meetings empty, hungry, and dissatisfied. If you do this, you will be filled and satisfied when you go home. You must be empty and hungry all the time before you can be filled with the Spirit all the time. You should not be satisfied with what you have received from this conference. You must allow the cross to deal with you daily. This will bring in the daily filling of the Spirit. Whenever you are not victorious, you do not have the filling of the Holy Spirit. If you have the infilling of the Holy Spirit today, it is because you have experienced the dealing of the cross and are living an overcoming life.

Once I was invited to a brother's house for a meal. At the end of the meal I said, "This is enough." But the brother kept adding more rice and food to my bowl. This went on twenty or more times. I thought, "When is he going to stop?" This is the way we experience grace. God's bountiful supply is still waiting for us. The grace we enjoy is an abounding grace, which adds grace upon grace. We may have experienced victory and may have received the outpouring of the Spirit. We may even have experienced the infilling of the Spirit many times, but we should not be satisfied with these experiences. The Holy Spirit can fill us up again, and the degree of filling will be greater when we are filled the second, the third, and the fourth time. The deeper the cross works in us, the more we will receive the

infilling of the Spirit. The deeper the cross cuts through us, the deeper we will be filled with the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit sometimes brings heartbreaks and sufferings, and sometimes it brings hardships. However, all these are the digging work of the cross. They are for the purpose of increasing our measure and making us bigger and richer. Under these circumstances, we should not be afraid to shed tears or grieve. If we go through these breakings, the Lord will use us. But if we murmur in our heart and argue with God, the overcoming life will cease immediately. When it ceases, even the outpouring of the Spirit will be useless. Before the Lord, whenever we allow the cross to dig and cut through us, more of what we love and aspire for is removed. This removal is the work of the cross, and it is for the purpose of increasing our measure. The more our measure is increased, the more grace we will receive.

Some people think that they already have experienced the cutting of the cross and already have been filled by the Spirit. Actually their measure is just the measure of water in a seashell. This is not true suffering and not true filling. Our measure is being expanded whenever we encounter something that runs contrary to our will. We are allowing the cross to cut through us and allowing the Spirit to fill us up whenever we submit to God's will.

OUR TESTIMONY

We must be sanctified in the eyes of sinners and even in the eyes of Christians. If we have not passed through the cross and are not filled by the Holy Spirit, and if we can only show men such things as head covering and baptism by immersion, I will be the first to declare that I have nothing to do with such a sect. We must let others know about God's full counsel and God's center. We have to let others see that we have consecrated ourselves to God for the purpose of accomplishing His will. We are here to pursue the one high will, not miscellaneous things.

After we return home from this conference, we should not auction away our victory cheaply. After we have received the outpouring of the Spirit, we have to testify more concerning the Lord. We have to testify how He has delivered us from our sins and is living for us. If we do this, others will be hungry and thirsty to seek after the Lord. In order for our work to be effective, we must generate a genuine hunger in others. If the Lord leads us to speak, we must properly and clearly explain how the Lord has become our overcoming life, and we must help others to empty themselves and experience the infilling of the Spirit.

We must pay attention to one more thing: We should not advertise the outpouring of the Spirit as a thing of curiosity, and we should not make it a point of propaganda. We should only testify when the Lord leads us. What happened during the past few days was an exception. In the future, we should not do the same thing in other places because it will stumble others. If there are some people who need to experience the outpouring of the Spirit, we can take them home and gather three or five people to pray together and seek for the outpouring.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

BEING BESIDE OURSELVES TO GOD

Date: November 20, 1935, evening

Place: Chuenchow

BEING SOBER-MINDED FOR MEN AND

BEING BESIDE OURSELVES TO GOD

Both our Lord and Paul were accused of being insane when they were on earth (Mark 3:21; Acts 26:24). All those who follow the Lord faithfully are likely to receive a similar label. Let me ask one question: Even though you are sober-minded before men, are you beside yourself to God? If you have never been beside yourself to God, you are only a half Christian. A Christian should be like Paul, who was sober-minded before men, but beside himself to God (2 Cor. 5:13).

For a Christian to be beside himself does not mean that he is beside himself with insanity. Rather, he is beside himself in a proper way. This kind of being beside oneself does not make one silly in actions and words; it is being beside oneself to God. Such a one is clear in his actions and words. He is sober-minded before men, but beside himself to God. The Bible tells us that both the Lord and the believers were considered by others to be crazy. Others may have felt sorry for Paul. He was educated, capable, and could do many things. Yet he chose to follow a supposedly dead man from Nazareth, and he preached that this One had risen from the dead. However, God was pleased with Paul because Paul was a man who was beside himself to God. Only such people can genuinely work for the Lord. Today the Lord is seeking for a group of men who are beside themselves for God's work. If there is not such a group of men, the Lord's work will not see any result. The Lord is after a group of people who are sober-minded before men but who are beside themselves to God. He can only use such men,

and only such men can accomplish God's will and glorify His name. How many people in the church today are beside themselves to God? The more people there are who are beside themselves in the church, the brighter the future of the church will be. The church surely needs a group of people who are beside themselves.

BEING BESIDE OURSELVES

IN THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

What kind of people were beside themselves to God in the Bible? What were they like? The kind of men who were beside themselves were those who preached the Lord's resurrection from the dead. They were determined to die if need be. Whatever circumstance they faced, whether death, imprisonment, or beating, they were determined to speak about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Other men may have thought, "If others will not listen, why should we bother to speak? Should we not do something more proper and ordinary?" At that time, the Roman Empire was the greatest empire on earth, and it persecuted the so-called Galileans everywhere. However, the gospel had spread throughout Judea by 30 to 40 A.D., and it spread throughout the whole Roman Empire by 80 A.D. The Romans could not do anything about this group of Galileans. They were not wise. They were country folks, yet the gospel spread throughout the whole of the Roman Empire through these "foolish" ones. Hallelujah! This group of "foolish" ones, who were beside themselves, who did not love themselves, who did not care for themselves, and who were not in themselves, produced the church. The Lord often chooses men who are crazy in the eyes of men. Yet the Lord greatly uses them. In men's eyes, all the great servants of the Lord are crazy. When Paul was led before the rulers and the kings, he was not afraid. He began to speak to them. He had spoken already to the crowd outside. Now he spoke to the men inside. Thank the Lord. It was through such men that the church was started, and through them the church continues until today. But are there such men today? God does not want men who are afraid of many things. He wants men who are beside themselves to Him. Today God is calling for men who will be beside themselves.

At one time the Roman government was doing all that it could to persecute the Christians. However, the result of this persecution was the multiplication of the church. James was killed, but Christians continued to speak. The church in Jerusalem was persecuted, and the disciples fled for their lives, but they preached the Lord Jesus wherever they went (Acts 8:1-4). How different the

situation is today than in those days! Today we do not have any persecution from a Roman empire, yet neither do we have men who are beside themselves for the gospel. Today the church needs men who are beside themselves, like those in the book of Acts. It needs men who are not ashamed, who do not know what shame is, and who only know to risk their lives and their all to preach the Lord.

We see from the book of Acts that many disciples were beside themselves. Church history also shows us that many faithful followers of the Lord were beside themselves. They were used by the Lord to preach the gospel and save sinners. There has never been a shortage of such men throughout the ages. In North America there was a very brilliant preacher by the name of David Brainerd, who set out to preach the gospel to the Indians at an early age. He risked his life for the gospel. In five years, he traveled more than three thousand miles on horseback for the gospel. He died of exhaustion at the age of thirty, but he left behind countless fruit.

Henry Martyn wanted to go to India to preach the gospel. Before he left, a doctor examined him and said, "Your health is too poor. If you move to India, you may not adjust to the weather there, and you may not live long." He answered, "In your opinion, how many more years do I have?" The doctor said, "Seven years at the most." When Henry Martyn heard this, he was very happy, and he said, "I have seven more years to accomplish many good works!" In 1806 he set off for India. After preaching in Persia in 1811, he tried to return home via Asia Minor. He died instead in the city of Tokat, Turkey due to sickness in 1812.

One woman had six sons, five of whom had gone to India for the gospel and died there. When others asked what she would do with her sixth son, she answered that she would also consecrate him for the preaching of the gospel.

In China God has raised up some men who have risked their all to preach the gospel. We find such men in Foochow, in Chefoo, and in many other places.

BEING BESIDE OURSELVES IN OFFERING

The Bible also tells us about many people who were beside themselves in offering up their possessions and houses. Acts 4 mentions the disciples selling their all and laying the money they received at the apostles' feet (v. 34). Many people agree that we should be zealous, but they say that we should be careful, balanced, and not go to extremes. Yet throughout the past two thousand years, all those who have truly consecrated themselves to the Lord were men who risked everything to offer up themselves. The more a person loves the Lord, the

more he consecrates. One brother asked me, "How can you love the Lord so much, and why can't I love Him as much?" I said, "If you give your money to the Lord, you will love Him. The Lord said that where your treasure is, there is your heart also." If you want your heart to follow the Lord, your money must first go to the Lord. When your money goes into the offering box, and you say, "Amen," your heart will go with it as well.

In Shanghai two sisters who were nurses each earned less than a hundred dollars a month. They saved their wages in the bank. After they heard the Lord's word, they were moved in their heart, and one after the other offered up all their savings.

Today many people are planning too much for themselves. They are not willing to offer up their all. They make reservations for themselves. The result is that the gospel has lost its impact. During every great revival in history, we find men who were beside themselves in loving the Lord, who risked all to offer up themselves. I am not exhorting you to give everything to the Lord, but you must be a person who is fully consecrated to the Lord.

One elderly sister once came to Mr. George Müller and said, "My seventieth birthday is approaching. By that time I will have saved enough money to buy a coat. This has been my wish for many years. I have been saving since I was forty-two years old, and I have been looking forward to the day when I would have such a coat. I have waited twenty-eight years. Today I can finally buy it. However, the Lord is touching me to offer up these fifteen pounds." When Mr. Müller heard this, he felt that this would cost the elderly sister too much, and he wondered whether she would later regret it. He dared not accept that money. Yet the sister was quite resolute and determined to offer it up. Later, Mr. Müller testified that he had thought that it was difficult for poor people to love the Lord. But the Lord had died for all, and when one was touched by the Lord, even a savings of twenty-eight years meant nothing to her anymore.

A few years ago I was working in Southeast Asia for a period of four months. At the end of my visit, we had a meeting. After the meeting, two children came to me while we were drinking tea. One was eight years old, and the other was twelve years old. They told me that they wanted to offer something. One handed me six dollars, and the other handed me eight dollars. This was the amount they had earned for their work during summer vacation. They intended to use that money to buy themselves a pair of shoes, but on that day they decided to offer it up for the Lord. I did not know if they were clear about what they were doing, and

I asked their uncle if they were really offering this money. He told me that they were serious. It was hard for me to take that money. That money was the hard-earned money of the children. They had paid a great price to earn it. Since they were going to offer it to the Lord, I could not return it to them. I had to accept it, but I said to the Lord, "This is money from the children's sweat and blood. If I do not use it in the right way, I will be sinning before You."

Today we want all the young people to offer their time to the Lord. At the same time, we want them to offer themselves fully to the Lord. Some may have to give themselves to make money for the Lord. Such ones have to do their best to earn and offer. (Of course, we must earn our money through righteous means.) Some may have to offer themselves to serve the Lord full-time. We need both kinds of people. Does not the gospel need to be preached in many places? Is not the church taking the right path? If there were no need to preach the gospel, and if the church were on the wrong path, we could keep our money and save it for our own use. But if the gospel needs to be preached, and if the church is on the right path, we have to be beside ourselves for the Lord. We have to recalibrate the focus of our living. Formerly, we earned money for ourselves. Today everything has to be for the Lord. God's work in China should not be limited to the coastal regions or only to the Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces. There are vast regions in the interior of China which have never heard the gospel. We have to rise up and be beside ourselves. We have to be beside ourselves in the preaching of the gospel and in offering up our all.

BEING BESIDE OURSELVES IN SUFFERING

Not only do we have to be beside ourselves in preaching the gospel and in offering our all, we must also be beside ourselves in suffering. Stephen was stoned to death. Paul and Silas were imprisoned for the Lord. The book of Acts, however, shows us that the disciples were rejoicing, even though they were suffering. After their release, they were not ashamed but exuberant. They were truly beside themselves for the Lord. Nothing was too great, too difficult, or too hard for them when it was done for the Lord.

When Polycarp, the eighty-six-year-old bishop of Smyrna, was taken to prison, the executioners could not bear to see him be killed. They tried to be lenient with him and only asked him to say, "I do not know Jesus the Nazarene" so that they could release him. Yet he answered, "I cannot deny Him. I have served Him for eighty-six years. During these eighty-six years, He has never denied me. How

can I love my body and deny Him now?" They took him to the stake. As the lower part of his body was being burned, he was still able to speak, and he said, "Thank God that I have the opportunity to be burned here today. Thank God that I can testify for Him with my life." He was truly beside himself in suffering.

One sister was persecuted for the Lord's sake. In the midst of her suffering, those who were persecuting her told her that if she would bow to the image of Artemis, they would let her go. Yet she said, "Should I choose Christ, or should I choose Artemis? From the first day I have chosen Christ. If you ask me to choose again, I will still choose Him." In the end she was killed. Two other sisters who were still alive said, "Many of God's children are taken away and martyred. Why are we still here?" Later, they were dragged into the prison. They saw many people being taken to the arena and fed to the beasts, but none of them had any regret. The two sisters said, "Many people have testified with their blood already. Why can we only testify with our mouth?" One of the two sisters was married, and the other one was engaged. Their parents, husband, and fiancé came and begged them to change. They even brought the little child of the married sister to plead with her to deny the Lord. But the sisters said, "What can you give to us in exchange for Christ?" In the end they were also taken away to the lions. While they were walking to their death, they were singing, and they did not stop singing until their bodies were torn into pieces by the lions.

In his book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon spoke of an officer in the Roman army who sent word to Caesar that if they sent all the Christians in the Roman Empire to the lions, there would not be any citizens left. At that time the Christians in the Roman Empire did not testify with their mouth. They testified with their blood. As soon as one of them was martyred, more Christians would be produced. They were not afraid of death. Even though they were cruelly persecuted, they were still able to testify strongly for the Lord. When others saw them taking turns being killed, they thought these ones were crazy! However, this is the power of the gospel. Today the Lord is calling men to forsake themselves to be martyrs for the Lord. The Lord is now asking, "Where are the ones who are beside themselves?" Can you answer, "Here am I. I am absolutely for You"?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN
A REPORT ON THE VARIOUS REGIONS
OF WORK IN CHINA

Date: November 21, 1935, morning

Place: Chuenchow

The co-workers throughout China have asked me to give a report of our work in every part of the country. Since we are co-workers together in our work in China, we should be concerned for the work of the whole country. Later, if we find others standing on similar ground in other countries, we can enlarge our hearts to the work of the whole world and be concerned for them as well. Today, however, we should at least be burdened for the work in China as a whole. Our work today is limited to the coastal regions and Manchuria. During the past one or two years, there was some extension into the inland regions. Before the Lord we only have the assurance to speak about the following regions. Our division into regions is similar to the practice of the apostles. At that time, Jerusalem was a center, and Antioch was also a center. There was the Jewish region and the Gentile region. Peter was responsible for the work among the Jews, whereas Paul was responsible for the work among the Gentiles. Although there is a division of regions, there still remains one fellowship.

We propose the following divisions:

- (1) Peking and Tientsin region. There are meetings in both of these places, with the meeting in Peking being stronger. Brother Witness Lee and Sister Peace Wang are responsible for this region. The work in Manchuria is also taken up by Brother Witness and Sister Wang.
- (2) Chefoo, Tsingtao, and Tsinan belong to one region. The brothers in Shantung will be responsible for this region. Brother Hsu Chung-jie can also be used in this region.
- (3) South of Tsinan. This region has too few people, and we will drop it for now. Later, we may work in this region more aggressively.
- (4) From Pu-Kow to Nanking, including northern Kiangsu. Brother Chi Yung-tung and four or five other brothers are taking responsibility for this area. This is a good region, and there are considerable prospects for active progress.
- (5) South of Nanking, including Wusih, Chin-Chiang, and Soochow. Brother Philip Luan is responsible for this area. In Shanghai there is Brother Stephen Kaung, Sister Ruth Lee, and myself.

(6) The center of Chekiang province is in Hangchow. In the northern part of Chekiang we have Sister Miao, Brother David Hsu, and Brother Chang Kwang-rong taking responsibility for that region. In the southern part of Chekiang around P'ing-Yang and Tai-Shun the situation is also quite good.

(7) Southern Fukien is somewhat difficult. North and west Fukien is also difficult. You workers here are responsible for the work in southern Fukien. This is one region, stretching from Fu-Ching to the southern provincial border. There are some moves in Swatow, Chiu-Chow, Hong Kong, and Canton, but at present nothing much can be accomplished in these places. Some strong ones need to go to these places to strengthen the work there.

(8) The three provinces of Manchuria can be considered as one region. Presently, there are seven meetings, and there is a good prospect for more spreading of the work.

(9) Central China. There is not much work in this region. Chi-Kow, Wu-ch'ang, and Ch'ang-sha do not yet have the strength to spread out.

Today we hope to carry on the work in four directions. The first is the local work, which should be taken up by the local ones. The second is the literature work. Our publications should spread throughout the whole of China and lead the whole nation to the Lord. Today our publications match those of any other organization. Beginning next January, we will put out regular periodicals and print ten thousand copies of each issue. Other magazines are printing only a few thousand or a few hundred copies at a time. Third, we should spread our work into the inland regions. Every region should be like a government office or a missionary board and should send men to the inland regions, including such places as Sinkiang, Mongolia, and Tibet. Now one brother has gone to Szechuen. Fourth, we need to pay attention to the work of edifying the young people. This should be done locally. We cannot join the local churches together to make them one, but the workers must be joined together and work together. We should give the young people the necessary preparations and then send them out for the work.

In the future our work will be conducted along these four lines. Everyone has to be responsible before the Lord for his portion. Your responsibility here is southern Fukien. But your view and fellowship should be that of the whole country. You are here to further the gospel together with all the co-workers, and you are here to be the Lord's present-day testimony. What we should do today is preach the gospel, consecrate ourselves, and work as best as we can. Not only

should we work by ourselves, but we should bring others into the same work as well.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

GIFTS, MINISTRIES, AND OPERATIONS

Date: November 21, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

Scripture Reading: Acts 6:2-4

GIFTS, MINISTRIES, AND OPERATIONS

First Corinthians 12:4-6 says, "But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord; and there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all." Three things are mentioned here: gifts, ministries, and operations. Gifts are of the Spirit, operations are of God, and ministries are of the Lord. These three things are related to the Triune God. In the past many people have paid attention only to gifts and neglected ministries and operations. We have to understand the position of ministries and operations before we can understand the value of gifts and the operations of these gifts. Gifts produce the ministries, and ministries produce the operations.

A gift is the skill of a person. A ministry is the work of a person, and an operation or function is the result of a person's work. For example, in a construction company, there may be concrete workers, stone masons, and carpenters. The three kinds of craftsmen each have their own skill. Actually, there are different skills just among carpenters. Some are good at floor work, and others specialize in making windows or doors. These different skills are like the different gifts mentioned in the Bible. Every servant of God has a certain kind of skill derived from his gift. The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit. There are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit. Everyone has his own gift, but all these gifts must be under the control of the Spirit (v. 11).

The Holy Spirit has not distributed gifts to men for them to work on their own. He dispenses gifts according to a certain plan. We receive gifts from the Spirit for the purpose of participating in certain works according to the Lord's assignment. The works that we receive from the Lord become our ministries. This is like saying that the construction company is building houses in many places, and many people are assigned to various places. Some are experts in floor work, and the foreman will assign them to work on floors. Others are experts at making doors,

and the foreman will assign them to various places to make doors. They are still under the direction of the foreman. All the ones who are assigned have their own skills, which are their gifts. The works assigned to them are their ministries. A man's craft is his gift, while the work assigned to him is his ministry. The end result is not for anyone's personal gain but for the achievement of the common goal which the foreman set out to achieve.

What is the difference between the work of Paul and the work of Apollos? Paul planted and Apollos watered, and God caused the growth (1 Cor. 3:6). This is the operation. Paul and Apollos each had their own skill and ability, and the Lord assigned them work according to their abilities and skills. According to their different assignments, they ended up with different ministries. If you have a skill, then you have a gift. When you engage in the work assigned to you by the masterbuilder, you have a ministry. The end result of the works of all the ministries is the operations.

Today we must all ask the Lord what kind of gifts we have received from Him and what our ministry is. If we have received a gift and a ministry, we should ask the Lord to bring out our operation. In this universe, God has a great operation. How is He going to accomplish this great operation? He accomplishes it through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit distributes the gifts, and God directs everyone to use these gifts for the accomplishment of His goal. Our responsibility is to work faithfully in the ministries assigned by the Lord according to the gifts we have received. We do not have to worry about our functions, because we cannot do anything about them. That is God's business.

First Corinthians 12 puts gifts together with the Spirit, ministries together with the Lord, and operations together with God. This reveals that gifts are from the Holy Spirit, ministries are assigned by the Lord, and operations are realized through God. Paul could plant and Apollos could water, but God caused the growth. Paul had the planting ministry, and Apollos had the watering ministry. However, even with the planting and the watering, God still must give the growth. This is entirely different from the work of laying floor tiles or making windows and doors.

DIVISION OF GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

The Bible divides gifts into two categories. Based on these two categories, there are two kinds of ministries. The first category includes gifts that enable one to work for the Lord, and the second category includes gifts that enable one to bear local responsibilities. All gifts and ministries belong to one of these two

categories. Everyone has his own ministry from the Lord. Those who work for the Lord give themselves full time to do God's work, while those who take responsibility locally handle practical affairs. Even an ordinary brother or sister has a ministry. Acts 6 mentions the difference between these two kinds of ministries. There are two kinds of work in the church—one is spiritual and the other is physical. The former has to do with spiritual things such as the apostolic ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word. The latter has to do with business affairs such as Stephen's ministry of serving tables.

BEING CLEAR ABOUT ONE'S OWN MINISTRY

Here I have to say a strong word to the co-workers. You must all be clear about your own ministry. Before you find what your specific ministry is, you should first find which category of ministry you belong to. Do you belong to the ministry that sets itself apart for the Lord's work, or do you belong to the ministry that bears local responsibility? Should you give yourself to prayer and the preaching of the word? Or should you serve tables? Is your ministry spiritual or physical? These are big questions. Peter said that they would give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word; this is the spiritual ministry. Later, they appointed seven deacons to take care of the business side of the work.

We must be clear as to which category of ministry the Lord has called us before we can ask what specific ministry we have. This holds true for all the responsible brothers in all the localities. They have to be clear about the ministry that God has assigned to them. If you are not clear about this, you will have no way to know what your personal ministry is. How many among us are truly clear about the ministry that God has called us into? We must pray carefully before the Lord. We all have our own ministry. The category of our service and our personal function before the Lord depend upon His calling.

If you are clear that the Lord has called you to a ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word, you have to strive towards this goal. If you are not clear, you should remain in the other category of ministry. In the denominations, many preachers are not abiding in the ministry that God has assigned to them. If the Lord has not appointed you to a ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word, you must never put yourself into it by your own fleshly strength. The Lord will only supply His own appointed ministries. He will only bless those who abide in His assigned ministries. If you do not abide in the ministry that the Lord has assigned, He will not supply or bless you. This does not mean that only those who are in the ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word can pray or

preach the word. Stephen was not in the ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word, yet he did the work of the ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word wherever he went. The important thing is to be clear about your own ministry and to abide by this ministry.

If someone thinks that he has the ministry of prayer and the preaching of the word, and if he sets out to preach and work, the Bible does not forbid his activities. In Philippians 1 Paul said that he rejoiced as long as Christ was preached by whatever means (v. 18). Of course, we cannot call such ones our co-workers or lay hands on them. The local brothers who are responsible should forbid ones who have never received the laying on of hands to preach in their local meetings. Of course, to a certain extent, they should be allowed to work, but they should not be allowed to become too active.

If we cannot decide whether or not to lay hands on a certain person, we can delay the action and wait for the Lord's vindication of his work before we lay our hands on him. If God does not show any clear vindication, we should tell him in a frank way, "We are sorry, but the brothers cannot lay hands on you."

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

TALKS

(2)

Date: November 21, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

GIFT AND MINISTRY

The Ministries for the Ministries

Ephesians 4:11-12 speaks of four or five kinds of gifts. They are apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. The goal of these gifts is "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry." These five kinds of gifts are for the purpose of perfecting the saints to participate in their ministries. The ministries of the believers are miscellaneous in nature, whereas the five gifts are specific— they are for the purpose of helping the believers fulfill their ministries. These gifts are the ministries for the believers' ministries. They are like the bank of the banks, or the central bank. Every bank conducts its own business. In addition, the central bank helps to facilitate transactions between various banks. These five ministries are also like the teachers of a teachers' college. Their goal is to produce teachers. Hence, they can be called the teachers of the teachers.

The job of the various ministries is to perfect the saints unto the work of the ministry. Hence, they are the ministries of ministries. Those who help others in this way should have at least one of these five gifts, or they can have all five gifts. If a man does not have any of these five gifts, he cannot have a part in these ministries of ministries because he cannot perfect others into their ministries. Of course, an ordinary believer can do the work of these five gifts even when he does not have God's calling. The result of his work is the same in nature as the work of those who have the calling for such ministries.

Matthew 25 tells us that the Lord distributed talents to the slaves. Some had five talents, some had two talents, and some had one talent. Every slave had at least one talent. According to the distribution of these talents, we can conclude that some slaves signify those who have ordinary gifts while other slaves signify those who have particular gifts. Those who received one talent received ordinary gifts, whereas those who received two or five talents received special gifts. "Prophecy" and "teaching" in Romans 12:6 and 7 refer to the gifts of prophets and teachers in Ephesians 4:11. The gift of apostleship in Ephesians 4 does not just refer to those who have physically seen the Lord face to face.

The Joints of Supply

All the gifts in the church which do not belong to the five kinds spoken of in Ephesians 4 should submit themselves to these gifts. In this way, no one will be puffed up or become proud through his own gift. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Until we all arrive." This proves that the work of the preceding five ministries has been going on continuously. This work will go on until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith, at the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It will go on until we are all joined to the Head, Christ. This means we still have apostles today. The condition in Ephesians 4:13-15 proves that the five gifts are still available and still exist. Verse 16 speaks of "every joint of the rich supply." Man's physiological organs can be divided into two categories. The first category is the consuming organs which consume energy, such as hands and legs. The second category is the supplying organs, such as the mouth, the ears, and the eyes; they receive things from outside the body. The five gifts mentioned above are joints of supply. Before the Lord, we must seek to supply other members. When others are supplied, we also receive the benefit. But if we are not one of these gifts, we will have nothing with which to supply others. In that case, it is better that we receive the supply from the gifted ones.

Being Clear of One's Own Ministry

First Corinthians 12:28-30 speaks of nine kinds of gifts. The first three are apostles, prophets, and teachers. These three are the primary gifts. Then six secondary gifts are listed. The first three gifts are included in Ephesians 4; they are special gifts. The remaining six gifts are miraculous gifts. Throughout church history, many of the miraculous gifts have occasionally ceased in their operation. However, the five gifts in Ephesians 4 have never ceased in their operation. Through these five gifts, the church has been built up. These five gifts are particular gifts, whereas the rest are ordinary gifts.

Now we must ask: Who has these five gifts? We all have to settle this question before the Lord. If we are one of these gifts, we have to ask: What is my personal ministry? We have to ask because our ministry is intimately related to others. If we are not clear about our ministry, we will kick others' feet as we go along, and we will step on others' toes as we turn around. The ministry which God has assigned to every one of His workers has its own sphere. We can only work within the sphere that the Lord has assigned for our work. Whatever the sphere of our ministry may be, we have to work within that sphere. Of course, there are times when there are exceptions, when we can work beyond our own sphere.

Each person's ministry is related to the ministries of others. Some relationships require that we take the lead, while other relationships require that we submit. Once we are clear about our own sphere, we should work within our own sphere. Otherwise, we will come into conflict with others. Those who do not have a ministry should be careful and patient. They should wait on God and not act rashly. Disputes among co-workers are usually disputes concerning the ministries, rather than disputes concerning the gifts. Suppose a man is a concrete worker yet insists on doing the work of a carpenter. He may covet another person's portion, but he still cannot do what others can do. All ministries are assigned by the Lord, and all gifts are distributed by the Spirit. There should be a harmonious coordination between the workers and the churches. On the one hand, the workers should not give the churches a hard time. On the other hand, the churches should not frustrate the workers' work. The goal of the churches should be the increase of the work. Hence, the responsible brothers in the local churches should not hinder the work of the ministry or the work of the workers.

Directing the Ministries

The Bible separates the workers from the churches. The work of the workers is upon the apostles' shoulders, whereas the responsibilities of the churches are on the elders' shoulders. The apostles are for all the churches, while the elders are for one church. Peter was an apostle as well as an elder. He was an apostle to the churches, but at the same time, he was an elder in Jerusalem. On the one hand, he served in the local church as an elder. On the other hand, he worked among the churches as an apostle. Both the local ministries and the workers' ministries are ministries, which in the original language is *diaconia*, translated also as deacons. When a meeting is first raised up, there may not be suitable brothers who can act as responsible ones. Some among them may have to temporarily pick up various responsibilities. At a certain point when the number becomes bigger, men who are more suitable than the temporary ones may become manifest. The temporary ones should then step aside and yield their work to the brothers with more manifested gifts. A responsible brother of a church should not only be gifted, but should also have a good name, be filled with the Spirit, and be full of wisdom.

The New Testament shows us that different people have different ministries. Apollos had a ministry, and Silas had a ministry. Apollos, Silas, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Titus, Mark, and Luke all had their own ministries. Paul could direct some of them, but he could not direct others. In the matter of directing others, the directing one and the directed ones must mutually agree to such a relationship. We cannot act as the denominations, in which the power of the organization is above the ministers. Whatever the organization directs the ministers to do, they have to obey. But this is not God's way. God wants to see mutual submission among the gifted ones. True authority comes from a profound work of the cross. Those who are directing others must also be persons who can be directed by others. Paul was no exception. He sent for Timothy and Titus, but he also submitted to the brothers' sending. If a believer has a problem submitting to others, we must first ask if his fellowship with God has broken down. It matters little if we agree on certain ways. If we submit, we have to submit from our heart. God desires to see us submitting to one another.

Submission to Authority

Some have thought that being free from the denominations is the same as being free from authority. Actually, freedom from the denominations only frees us from man's authority. We are still under the Lord's authority. In our daily lives and

work, God has appointed many representative authorities for us to learn submission. If a man says that he cannot find any authority to submit to, something must be wrong with such a person. When a family gathers together we surely find all kinds of authorities. The parents are the authority to children, grandparents are the authority to parents, and older brothers and sisters are the authority to younger brothers and sisters. When we are at home, we have to submit to authority. When we are away from home, the policemen on the streets are our authority, and we have to submit to them. We cannot overturn their authority just because we do not feel like submitting to them.

If a responsible brother of an assembly wants to know if he should be a responsible one, the best way is for him to ask others whether they feel he should be a responsible one. The other brothers need not be political. If a responsible brother is doing a good job, he can go on. Otherwise, he should resign.

Prayer of Authority

When something arises in an assembly that is beyond human control, the church should exercise its authority to pray and ask the Lord to intervene. If a work in a locality is carried out according to the Lord's will, His throne will support and be behind such a work. This is like the British embassy in China. It is here to represent England, and the ambassador executes the move of the British throne. If anyone kills an ambassador, it is an insult to the whole of England. In the same way, if an assembly in a locality is a representative and testimony of the Lord, His authority will be behind this assembly. If necessary, the responsible ones should exercise the Lord's authority to stop all the frustrating elements.

We have to help people to know that the church is where God's authority lies today. It is the place where the Lord's throne is established. Anyone who comes to the church should know the authority of the church. The workers are the representatives of the Lord, and they have the authority of the Lord with them. First Thessalonians 5:12 and Hebrews 13:7 and 17 indicate that the workers should receive double honor and that others should submit to them. We must read these passages to the brothers again and again. We should let them know that there is authority in the church, and that we should obey and honor such authority.

Other Points

A brother, who was a stone mason, once stood up in a meeting and asked everyone to read John 17. He did this because he liked John 17. As soon as he

said this, George Müller stood up and said, "I can read this for everybody." When he said this, everyone stopped. Although everyone can speak in a meeting, not everyone who speaks can edify others.

The principle of prophesying is to speak that which touches one's inner being. Moreover, the words spoken must be for the building up of others. The principle of tongue-speaking is speaking when one is touched, yet not edifying others with such speaking. If a man is touched in his own heart, he is acting in the principle of speaking in tongues if his word does not touch others. The word in 1 Corinthians 14:2-19 is very important. It says that if a man is touched by anything, what he is touched by must also touch others. Only then can he speak in the meeting because only then will his word build up the church. If something does not build up others, one should not speak. This is the basic principle of speaking in the meetings.

CHAPTER THIRTY

TALKS

(3)

Date: November 22, 1935, afternoon

Place: Chuenchow

THE DEALINGS A WORKER HAS TO EXPERIENCE

The dealings a worker has to experience are different from the dealings that ordinary brothers in the church have to experience. The main thing that ordinary brothers have to deal with is sin. The workers, however, have to deal meticulously with everything that hinders their work.

Dealing with the Disposition

The first thing that a worker has to deal with is his own disposition. Different workers have a different character according to their natural disposition. Some are righteous by disposition. Others are strict or shy by disposition. Every person has his own special disposition. Some people are stubborn. They may be good in many aspects, but they have a very stubborn disposition. Even if the whole world would say yes, they would still say no. If a person has such a disposition, he surely will have problems from time to time in his coordination among the co-workers. It is difficult for such people to coordinate or work together with others. Hence, every worker should find his weakness before the Lord. If you do not know your weakness before the Lord, all you have to do is mark down your

failures. After a few times, you will know what your weakness is. After you know your weakness, you should deal with it in a specific way.

We are not saying that a worker cannot have any weakness at all. We are saying that he should not have any habitual weakness. We have to get rid of the peculiarities in our character. Some people have "soft" ears—they believe everything they hear. Others have "hard" ears—they do not take any word easily. These are all flaws in our character, and they must all be removed. The circumcision in Colossians 2 refers to the cutting away of these things. A man who is truly dealt with by the cross may not be completely void of peculiarities, but his peculiarities surface only occasionally.

Dealing with Attitudes

A worker must not only deal with his character, but must deal with his attitudes also. Not only are his ordinary and obvious conduct and attitude noticeable to others, but his body movements and the gestures of his hands and feet are under others' scrutiny. Others pay attention to the way he speaks, gestures, and walks, as well as to his voice, expression, and look. One co-worker always lambasts others in his sermons because he has the habit of lambasting others. Another co-worker likes to cast side-glances at others. Although his eyes are perfectly normal, he has developed a habit of casting side-glances at people, which he subconsciously exhibits in his public speakings and private talks. We the co-workers cannot give room to criticism in these areas. We should not become a conversation piece, and we should not draw attention away from our message to our peculiarities. Another co-worker always points his fingers at others. This is also an offensive characteristic. If a man has picked up some improprieties in his daily life, these improprieties will show up in his messages. These undesirable characteristics must first be dealt with in a clear way in our daily lives.

A handsome face may be something that one receives from God, but the expressions that are on the face are a direct product of the person's character which developed after birth. If a man is always happy, he will have a joyful expression on his face all the time. However, if a man always argues with others, he will always have an unhappy face. A man cannot make himself look beautiful or ugly, but the expressions on his face are very much related to his living and character. He can pick up certain expressions, and he can also get rid of these expressions. Of course, my purpose for saying these things is so that you will

pay attention to spiritual things. It is not for the purpose of paying more attention to grooming yourself or adjusting your facial expressions.

A brother in Shanghai had a fierce look when he first came to Shanghai. I tried to get to know him and found out that he had a bad temper. However, his complexion changed after a few years. He became a soft person, and his character changed. A man's facial expression is a reflection of the person himself. One's inward character is often manifested through his facial expressions. Several times Miss Barber seemed to be speaking like a fortune-teller about certain brothers. Eventually, we found out that what she said was exactly what had happened. For example, a brother once took shelter in a Buddhist temple for a night. When Miss Barber saw this brother, she said that darkness was written all over his face. He must have been exposed to the power of darkness. Later someone asked him, and he confessed to Miss Barber's words. Sometimes I can tell a person's condition from his appearance. (I am not saying that I can predict.) A person's facial expressions are very much related to his inward condition.

Dealing with the Soul

First Thessalonians 5:14 mentions the consolation of those who are "weak," which in Greek literally means "little-souled." Those who are little-souled are the ones who are psychologically weak. Some people have a strong soul, while others have a weak soul. The rest have an "average" soul. Just as the human body varies in size from one person to another, man's soul also varies in size. It is not easy for a man to be balanced. He tends to be either strong-souled or little-souled. Those who are strong-souled think that they have the strength to do many works. They are full of self-confidence. Those who are weak-souled have no self-respect. They are afraid of everything and are withdrawn. Both kinds of people are wrong and are of little use in the hand of the Lord. God can only use those who have a will, feelings, and are sensitive, but who have no self-consciousness.

In Shanghai there is a brother with a little soul and a big heart. In the prayer meetings, he prays long prayers and loves to say, "Holy, holy, holy," in his prayer. This kind of person will never change unless he experiences the outpouring of the Spirit. Those with a strong soul tend to despise those with a weak soul because weak-souled ones appear to be unresponsive and fragile. The strong-souled ones are the opposite. We should not criticize others. We

should only deal with our own weaknesses. Those who are little-souled lack power in their soul and cannot accomplish much. However, those with a strong soul work by the power of their soul rather than by the power of the spirit. For these reasons, neither kind can work for the Lord. If we do not deal with this matter properly, we will not be able to experience the resurrection life. There are several famous evangelists in China who are strong-souled men.

Those with a strong soul need the cross to break down their strongholds. Those with a weak soul need the outpouring of the Spirit to make up what they lack. Little-souled ones need to read 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. They should seek for the outpouring of the Spirit so that their lack can be filled up. In order to become a suitable vessel of the Lord, we have to deal with our soul. A preacher can be tall or short in physical stature and speak just the same. However, if his soul is too big or too small, he will have a problem. A worker must first deal with himself in this matter. He must also consider the factors mentioned above when he assigns responsibilities to local brothers. We tend to appoint people with a strong soul because they exhibit their talent more readily. Yet such people must be dealt with by the cross before they can engage themselves in spiritual works. Those with a small soul must receive strengthening from the Spirit. Otherwise, they will not work. The best kind of people are those who are balanced, but such people are hard to find. This is a great matter, and we have to handle it carefully.

There are two co-workers in Chekiang. Most people agree that they are little-souled ones. Someone asked me once how I felt about them. I agreed that they were little-souled. Others would be stirred up, but they would still be cold. Others would come up with some ideas, but they would find it hard to follow. Yet both of them have an excellent spiritual life. Once they came to me and said that they wanted to quit. I asked, "Who do you think are the ones who can have great achievements and accomplish great works in China?" They answered, "Those who are strong-souled." I then asked them to read 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 and charged them to seek after the outpouring of the Spirit. Little-souled ones should not be discouraged; they should pray earnestly to the Lord for the filling of the Spirit. On the one hand, we should not entrust matters to the little-souled ones too quickly. Rather, we should wait until they have received the outpouring of the Spirit. On the other hand, we should realize that strong-souled ones must go through the dealing of the cross.

You will know if you have a strong soul or a weak soul if you humble yourselves and ask others about it. You will know your lack. If we do not deal with this matter

properly, God's work will suffer much loss. This is truly a serious problem. I hope that the workers will have a thorough dealing with the Lord concerning this matter.

The cross deals with the negative things. It deals with what a man already has. The Spirit deals with the positive things. It deals with what a man does not have. Few people like the little-souled ones; everyone tends to love the strong-souled ones. Yet the latter soon tire people out. Little-souled ones are exactly the opposite. Others do not like them at the beginning, but they become likable after a while. Many people boast about the strong-souled ones and feel sorry for the little-souled ones, but if a little-souled one is perfected, he may become more useful than a strong-souled one.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A CO-WORKER

In order to be a co-worker of God, there are at least eight qualifications. One must (1) be saved, (2) be victorious, (3) have power, (4) be called, (5) have gifts, (6) have a ministry, (7) have dealt with all the negative things mentioned above, and (8) know the Body life and not be divisive. In order to work for the Lord, a man must be dealt with by the cross and be filled with the Spirit.

OTHER POINTS

Our testimony today is an extension and continuation of the apostles' testimony; it is not a new testimony. Hence, strictly speaking, we should not call anyone our brothers.

In the Body of Christ, the affair of one member is the affair of the whole Body. This is like eating, seeing, and hearing. When the mouth eats, the whole body eats; when the eyes see, the whole body sees; and when the ears hear, the whole body hears. During this conference, we have only covered the experience of Galatians 2:20 and 2 Corinthians 12:9. There are many more riches in His Word than what we have covered. For this reason, we should all have the proper ambition to keep on pursuing. We should not have any ambition for the things and people of the world, but we should have a healthy ambition for God. Unless a person is dealt with by the Lord daily and seeks after the Lord personally, he cannot deal with others or help others.

A PRAYER

Lord, forgive me for pointing out the attitudes, shortcomings, lack, and weaknesses of others. May I not be reproached that day at Your judgment seat by my reproach of others today. May my judgment today not become a judgment on me on that day. Lord, cover me with Your precious blood.

