Being Renewed Day by Day

Witness Lee

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY

by Witness Lee

ISBN: 978-0-87083-478-3

CONTENTS

1. Being Renewed Day by Day
2. The Renewing Capacity of the Divine Life in Resurrection

PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee to the church in Anaheim, California, on May 14 and June 11, 1989.

CHAPTER ONE

BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:16, 10-11; Titus 3:5b; Eph. 4:23; 5:26; Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:27-31; Matt. 18:21-22, 35; Eph. 4:32; 5:2; Matt. 5:23-24

In this chapter we want to see the renewing process that we need to pass through in our Christian life for God's purpose. Second Corinthians 4:16 says that our inner man is being renewed day by day. Brother Nee once told us that the book of 2 Corinthians may be considered as an autobiography of the apostle Paul. The life described in this Epistle is a life full of sufferings, but when we spend more time to get into the depths of this Epistle, we can see that it is actually talking about renewing. All the sufferings God has assigned to us have one unique purpose—to renew us. Regardless of whether we are good or bad, we are the old creation, but God in His economy desires to work out something new from His old creation. God spent a brief time to create the old creation. He spoke the things of the old creation into being in five days, He created man on the sixth day, and rested on the seventh day. This old creation is not God's goal. Instead, the old creation is the material and sphere by which God gains something new.

RENEWED THROUGH FOUR DISPENSATIONS

According to the entire Bible, God uses four dispensations in His old creation to work out something new. The first dispensation is the dispensation before law, or the dispensation of the fathers from Adam to Moses' giving of the law. The second dispensation is the dispensation of law from Moses' giving of the law to the first coming of the Lord Jesus. The third dispensation is the dispensation of grace from the first coming of the Lord Jesus to His second coming. The fourth dispensation is the dispensation of the kingdom. After the Lord's second coming, He will set up God's government on this earth to practice God's kingdom in its manifestation for one thousand years. In these four dispensations, which are all in the old creation, God works to produce the new creation. After the fourth dispensation, the new heaven and the new earth are brought in with the New Jerusalem as the center. The New Jerusalem is the composition of all of God's redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified people. All of God's

redeemed people in God's glorification will be the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem composed of God's living, glorified people is absolutely new. Nothing old will be there.

Today we are in the process of being renewed to become the New Jerusalem. Thank God that today we are in the third dispensation, the dispensation of grace. In this dispensation some wonderful things have happened. The first wonder that happened in this dispensation is that the Triune God Himself became a man. He did not only come to man but also came to man in His incarnation. He came to man by becoming a man. This is marvelous! The incarnation of the Triune God is many, many times greater than the creation of the heavens and the earth. One of the greatest wonders in this universe was God's incarnation, His becoming a man. The very God, the complete God, entered into the womb of a human virgin and stayed there for nine months. Then He was born as a God-man. The little babe in the manger at Bethlehem whose name was Jesus was not only a man. He was both man and God, so He was a God-man.

The second wonder in the dispensation of grace is that the very God who created the heavens and the earth lived on the earth as a man, not just for a short period of time but for thirty-three and a half years. Instead of living in a famous place, He lived in a despised city of a despised region, Nazareth of Galilee. He was not born into a rich family but into a poor family, and He did the work of a carpenter. We may say that this carpenter was Jesus, but we need to realize that Jesus was God. What a wonder that God lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years!

The third wonder is His going to the cross to die an all-inclusive death. Through His death He solved all the problems in the universe, terminating the entire old creation. In that all-inclusive death He released His divine life.

The fourth wonder in the dispensation of grace is Christ's resurrection and ascension. He rose up not only by Himself but also with all of God's chosen ones, including you and me. As a man, He ascended to the third heaven. From the earth to the moon is a short distance, but from the earth to the third heaven is a distance beyond the imagination of the human mind. In His ascension He poured Himself out as the all-inclusive Spirit. That Spirit was the consummation of the Triune God. He poured out Himself as such a Spirit upon God's chosen people to make them all His Body. Today we believers are

parts of the Body of the wonderful Christ. All of these items have transpired as wonders, but our apprehension of these items is not so thorough. Because of our lack of vision, we suffer without seeing or apprehending God's purpose in our suffering.

BEING RENEWED THROUGH SUFFERINGS

When I was a young Christian, I thought that God would bless us by giving us many good things since we had become His children. Some preachers promise people that if they believe in Jesus Christ, they will not only be saved but also receive many blessings. They may say that these blessings are outward happiness, peace, and joy. Many people believed in Jesus Christ for this reason. What human being does not want earthly blessings so that he can have happiness, peace, and joy? Many Christians, however, can testify that when they believed in the Lord Jesus, they did not have any outward peace in their environment. Some may have been promised that they would receive peace and joy after believing in the Lord Jesus. Instead, they may have lost their job, or they may have been in a car accident. The Christian life does not seem to be a life of outward blessings but of sufferings.

I have been a Christian for sixty-four years, since 1925. In the long period of my Christian life, I have suffered more than I have enjoyed outward peace and joy. Most of us can testify that in our Christian life there has been more suffering than outward peace and joy. When a couple gets married, this is a joyful time, but many can testify that in their marriage life they suffer more than they enjoy outward peace and joy. After getting married, many people later have the thought that they married the wrong person. The reason for this is that we suffer in our marriages. To have children is also a joyful matter. Our little children are precious to us, but those of us who have had children and who have watched our children grow into adulthood can testify that our children have brought us more suffering than joy. We may think that the apostle Paul was blessed because he did not have a wife or children. Paul did not have children according to the flesh, but he had many spiritual children. He had more children than all of us. Second Corinthians reveals that Paul's sufferings came mainly from his spiritual children.

When Brother Nee told us that 2 Corinthians could be considered as the autobiography of Paul, I thought I understood, but actually I did not understand. Gradually, I began to understand what Brother Nee told us. In

God's design all of us who are His chosen people have to go through sufferings. There is no exception to this because He wants us to be a new creation. He wants us to be transferred from the realm of the old creation into the realm of the new creation. This transfer is a process of suffering. You may think that you made a mistake in your choice of a partner in marriage, but regardless of how much wisdom you exercised in choosing a spouse, eventually your choice was a "mistake." After hearing this fellowship, some who are not married may feel that it is better not to marry, but not to marry will bring us more sufferings. Then what shall we do? We have to be inwardly happy in our sufferings. The apostle Paul says that he rejoiced in his sufferings (Col. 1:24) because he realized that all sufferings are the process to make us new.

The context of 2 Corinthians 4:16, which says that our inner man is being renewed day by day, shows us that this renewing takes place through sufferings. Paul calls the sufferings that he passed through "the putting to death of Jesus." In 4:10-11 Paul says, "Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." According to the Greek, *the putting to death* is "the killing." The killing of Jesus means that Jesus kills us, puts us to death, all the time. Putting to death here equals the cross. The putting to death of Jesus is the working of death, the working of the cross.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that if they were going to follow Him they must take up their cross (Matt. 16:24). If we are going to follow the Lord, we must take up our cross and follow Him. Without taking up our cross, we cannot follow the Lord. Our young people may be looking forward to a promising, flourishing future, but Jesus never promised such a future. He told Peter to take up his cross and follow Him. Later He told Peter, "Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go. Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me" (John 21:18-19). What the Lord wanted here was to prepare Peter to follow Him to death. The sufferings we pass through are a process to transfer us from the realm of the old creation to the new creation.

Paul, who was a pattern of a victorious, overcoming Christian, suffered much more than we do (Acts 9:16). He tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:11 that he was always being delivered unto death. He was under the killing of the cross every day. He was dying every day so that he could be renewed every day. This is why Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:16 that we do not lose heart, we are not discouraged, and we are not disappointed. This is because "our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory" (v. 17). The suffering that we pass through to be renewed does not compare with the glory of our being new. Actually, the Christian life is not a suffering life. The Christian life is a life of being renewed day by day. Still, this renewing is by suffering. God does not like to see His children suffering, but we have to go through the process of suffering.

We always dream about having a glorious church life. The chorus of a hymn in our hymnal begins this way—"Glorious church life" (*Hymns*, #1221). On the one hand, the church is glorious, but on the other hand, no church is glorious outwardly. None of the churches that Paul established were glorious outwardly. They all had problems. When I was a young Christian, I heard someone give a message saying that the best church was the church at Philippi. When I studied the book of Philippians, however, I saw that two sisters were dissenting from one another (4:2). There were also murmurings and reasonings among the Philippians. This is why Paul charged them to do all things without murmurings and reasonings (2:14). If we read Paul's Epistles closely, we can see that the churches he established were not glorious according to our expectation.

When I came into the Lord's recovery, I came with an expectation that everything would be glorious. I was called by the Lord to give up my job and serve Him full time. I was brought by the Lord into the center of the work in Shanghai, and I began to see that every day suffering after suffering came to the leading one in the work, Brother Watchman Nee. He was a big "umbrella" that received all the persecution and attacks. Some saints who knew Brother Nee said that he never had one day of peace. He suffered his entire life.

The situation in the church life at times may seem very poor, but we should not lose heart, because we are going through a process of renewing. When we pass through certain sicknesses, our physical body develops resistances to those sicknesses to make us stronger. We even learn how to take care of ourselves in a better way when we pass through physical illnesses. Many years

ago I developed a stomach ulcer. I also contracted tuberculosis. That disease brought me very close to death. Through that disease, however, I became strong. After a person is sick for a certain time and he is healed, he becomes strong. Therefore, we should not lose heart. After the church has gone through much suffering, we should be assured that the church will be stronger.

In the work on mainland China when I was there, Brother Nee was the "umbrella," so he became the target of the enemy's attacks. Since the work began from the island of Taiwan and has spread to all the continents in these past thirty years, I have spontaneously become the umbrella. Since I have been the umbrella, all the arrows of the enemy have come to me. I must testify, however, that despite all of these attacks I am stronger than ever. I work much more today than I did twenty years ago. I read through nearly every book that we put out. After being edited, the publications come to me so that I can read them. Just to read them takes much time, but often I have to labor more to make the writings satisfactory. In addition to this, I also hold many conferences and meetings, and this involves much travel. Some who are close to me are concerned about my working so much since I am over eighty years of age, but we all have to realize that we are destined to suffer so that we may be renewed.

Paul tells the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 3:3, "That no one would be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed for this." Footnote 2 on this verse in the Recovery Version says, "God has destined, appointed, that we should pass through afflictions. Hence, afflictions are God's allotted portion to us, and He has set us, located us, in a situation of afflictions." We have been appointed to sufferings. Madame Guyon said that she kissed the crosses that came to her, but I would not say that. I thank God for sufferings, but I would not say that I welcome them. However, I do not fight against the sufferings. The reason I am calm in the midst of sufferings is that I realize that the real blessing is not outward peace and joy but the actual renewing in our Christian life.

BEING REVIVED EVERY MORNING TO BE RENEWED DAY BY DAY

In Matthew 13:43 the overcomers are likened to the sun shining forth in the kingdom of their Father. The sun rises afresh every morning. If we are to be

the overcomers, the sun, we must also rise up every morning to be revived by the Lord. Proverbs 4:18 says, “The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.” We should follow the sun to be revived and to have a new start every morning. Our path is like the dawning light that shines more and more until the full day. I like Paul’s expression in 2 Corinthians 4:16—“day by day.” The Christian life does not only have one day. We are being renewed day by day. This means that day after day we have to be revived by the Lord. Yesterday morning we may have had a revival, but this morning we need another one, and tomorrow we need another one. Every year we need three hundred sixty-five revivals to be renewed day by day.

BEING RENEWED BY THE CROSS, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY OUR MINGLED SPIRIT, AND BY THE HOLY WORD

God has the best provisions to help us to receive the renewing. The first provision is the cross, the putting to death of Jesus. According to 2 Corinthians 4, Paul was always under the killing of the cross, the Lord’s death. The cross is the greatest help to accomplish the renewing for us.

The second provision is the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5 speaks of the “renewing of the Holy Spirit.” We have the Holy Spirit within us. His main work is first to regenerate us and then to renew us every day. We are receiving the new supply of the Spirit daily to renew us metabolically. Thank the Lord that we have such a renewing Spirit. The third provision God gave us is our mingled spirit, our human spirit mingled with the divine Spirit. In our human spirit, the Holy Spirit dwells, works, and renews us. Ephesians 4:23 says that we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. Our spirit is the place where we receive the renewing. Our mingled spirit spreads into our mind, thus becoming the spirit of our mind. It is in such a spirit that we are renewed for our transformation.

Many times when we are suffering, we are questioning, “Why am I suffering? What is the reason?” Many Christian teachers tell people that if they are careful to obey the Lord, they will have less suffering, but the experiences of many spiritual people throughout the history of the church have been just the opposite. While we are in the midst of suffering, we need to receive the

renewing. Otherwise, the suffering we pass through means nothing to us. Within us there is a refuge. This refuge is our spirit. We need to turn from our mind to our spirit. Then we are safeguarded, hidden, and concealed from any attacks. It is in our spirit that we will be renewed.

In addition to the cross, the Holy Spirit, and our spirit, we have the holy Word. The Head of the Body cleanses the church, His Body, by the washing of the water in the word (Eph. 5:26). Because I have studied the Bible for such a long time, I can recall chapters such as Matthew 1 and Romans 8. When I just think about the contents of these chapters, I get washed. When I think about Romans 8:4—to walk according to the spirit—I get washed. We all need to receive the washing of the water in the word daily.

We may feel that many of the things that we pass through are not fair, but we need to realize that the cross is not fair. When Pilate sentenced the Lord Jesus to death, was that fair? Was the Lord Jesus put on the cross fairly? What was fair that happened to the Lord Jesus? Everything that happened to the Lord Jesus was not fair. We should not say, "This is not fair." No suffering is fair. The Lord could respond to us in this way: "Yes, the suffering itself is not fair, but My calling you to suffer is fair. I am fully right in placing you into this unfair treatment so that you can receive the renewing." Some of us may still be under a certain amount of suffering. We have to learn how to turn to our spirit. That is our refuge, our hiding place, to receive the renewing. Because we are human, according to our thinking and our consideration, what we are passing through is not fair. We may not even be able to take the situation we are in, but when we come to the Word, regardless of what chapter or verse, the word will wash us. There is water in the word to wash us. *Washing* is a synonym of *renewing*. By these four items—the cross, the Holy Spirit, our mingled spirit, and the holy Word—we can receive the renewing.

COMING TO THE LORD'S TABLE IN NEWNESS

I would also like to say something about the Lord's table meeting. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we need renewing. When the Lord Jesus established the table, He said, "I shall by no means drink of this product of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father" (Matt. 26:29). The Lord established a principle here. He will never take an old table. The table He set up was new, and the table He

will take in the kingdom of His Father will be new. We have to come to the Lord's table in a new way, in the principle of newness. How can we come to the table in newness? We need to realize that anything negative is a cause and a factor of oldness. Negative things cause us to be old.

When we come to the Lord's table, we first have to make a thorough confession of all the negative things, and we have to deal with all the negative things. We have to confess and deal with any negative things between us and God and between us and men. Our relationship should be right and positive with God and with man (Acts 24:16). If it is not, we need a thorough confession and a thorough dealing. Another thing that makes us old is not forgiving others. Always forgive people (Matt. 18:21-22, 35; Eph. 4:32; 5:2), and always seek to be forgiven (Matt. 5:23-24). Because we are human beings, people offend us, and we offend people. As long as we are flocked together, we will offend each other. What husband and wife have never offended each other? Because God has placed two people together in marriage and because they are so close to each other, they will offend each other frequently. These offenses are the cause of oldness. What is the way to get rid of this oldness? The way is to forgive each other. We need to forgive others and seek to be forgiven. One of Brother Nee's "proverbs" for a healthy marriage life was that both the husband and the wife needed to learn how to say, "I'm sorry. Forgive me." If we do not learn how to say this to one another in our marriage life, we will get ourselves into trouble. We must learn to say to our spouse, "I'm sorry. Forgive me." We need to pray that the fellowship in this chapter will become our experience day by day so that we can enter more into the reality of being renewed day by day.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RENEWING CAPACITY OF THE DIVINE LIFE IN RESURRECTION

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 6:4-5; Phil. 2:12-15; 3:10

Prayer: Lord, we look unto You. Be with us and speak to us. Lord, have mercy upon us that we all may be open to You. Thank You for Your speaking. Lord, be with us to the uttermost. Speak a word to our hearts, to each one of us. Cover us with Your prevailing blood. Thank You again for Your presence. Amen.

LIVING AS THE NEW CREATION

In the previous chapter we shared concerning being renewed day by day. In that fellowship we pointed out that God has an eternal goal to produce a new creation out of the old creation. God desires to have a new creation. We saw that God spends a long time to take His people through a long process for the producing of a new creation. God spends four dispensations to do His work. These dispensations are the dispensation of the fathers, the dispensation of law, the dispensation of grace, and the dispensation of the kingdom. God uses these four dispensations to create a new creation out of His old creation.

The old creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation does (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4). Anything created by God that does not have God in it as its life, nature, appearance, and expression is old, but anything that has God within it as its life, nature, appearance, and expression is a new creation. Before we were regenerated, we were the old creation. After we were regenerated, we became a new creation. To be regenerated is to be made a new creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” In the sense of being in Christ, we are the new creation, but in actuality in our daily life, we are not that new because we do not have Christ as the only One who occupies us, who fills us up, and who is our life, nature, appearance, and expression. Even though we have been regenerated to be made a new creation, we are still the old creation most of the time according to our daily walk in actuality. Regardless of how long we have been

in the Lord, we still keep our old habits. Sometimes we live in the spirit to live Christ, but most of the time we still live in our old habit, our old nature. We have to admit that this is the old creation. We are regenerated, but still today there is a mixture in our daily living. Our living is partly the new creation and even more the old creation.

In our morning watch with the Lord, we may really enjoy, praise, and worship Him. At that time in our morning watch, we are the new creation. After our time with the Lord in the morning, we may come to the dining table and confront something that is not so pleasant to us. Then we may say something that is not proper and that our conscience condemns. We may call that a failure, a defeat, a mistake, an offense, or a sin. What happened at the dining table, however, was not merely a sin, an offense, a mistake, a failure, or a defeat. That was our old creation.

At the Lord's table we praise and worship the Lord, and it seems that we all are the new creation. While we are the new creation, though, we are even more the old creation because we are so much in our old habit. We were born into the old creation, and we have been living according to our old habit for years. When I talk about our habit, I do not mean only things that are bad. One person may be very slow according to his natural constitution, but another person may be very quick. It is easy for quick persons to make mistakes, whereas slow persons are slow in doing things and in producing things. Regardless of whether we are quick or slow, however, we are the old creation. What we are in our natural constitution according to our birth is the old creation. Some people are talkative according to their natural constitution, and others are quiet. Although some talkative ones may function in the meetings, we should not think that all the functioning is of the new creation. Some functioning may be according to a person's quick temperament in his natural constitution. Some will never speak because they have a quiet disposition. Both the talkative ones and the quiet ones are the old creation.

What shall the Lord do with us? He surely does not want the old creation. We have God doctrinally, but we may lack God as our life and nature in our daily life. We may be slow in our disposition, but many times God's nature is to do things immediately, especially in the meetings. We may be quiet in our nature, but God wants us to be a new creation to utter something in the meetings against our natural habit. God desires that we all be His new creation, having Him as our nature. He also wants us to express Him. God is

our portion, but can we say that He is our new habit? We all have to be brought out of our old habit into taking God as our new habit.

BEING RENEWED BY INCREASING WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD

The New Testament says that God chose us before the foundation of the world and marked us out (Eph. 1:4-5). He desires to make His chosen ones the new creation. His way to do this is first to put Himself into us, to regenerate us. We are reborn, regenerated, to become God's children. This is wonderful, but the New Testament reveals that regeneration alone is not adequate. After regenerating us, God has to renew us, sanctify us, transform us, conform us to His image, and glorify us. Transformation needs sanctification and also renewing. Transformation is a metabolic change. When we are transformed, a new element is added to us metabolically to replace the old element. The new element is God Himself. God is "new" (as a noun). There is no oldness with God.

After we have been regenerated, we have God, but we do not have much of God. This is why Colossians 2:19 says that we need to grow with the growth of God, or increase with the increase of God. This means that we grow by the increase of God within us. If we have little increase of God, we grow little. If we have much increase of God, we grow much. When we have God in us to the fullest, we will have the full growth. God has to be increased within us. When God is increasing within us, His new element is being added into us. When the divine element comes into us, it renews us regardless of whether we are slow or quick in our natural disposition. As we are contacting God, God infuses Himself as the divine element into our being. This new element is added into our existing element. When this new element is added into us, something is worked out within us.

God desires to add Himself into our being, but He does not increase in us when we do not contact Him. We may go through a period of time in which we do not contact God or pray to Him. Instead, we are doing everything by ourselves and in ourselves. During this time, God is not added into our being, and we are not increasing with the increase of God. This is why we encourage all the saints to have morning watch. Our morning watch with the Lord is not just for us to exercise our mind to read the letter of the Bible, but it is for us to exercise our spirit. This is why we have to say "O Lord Jesus." Our calling on

the Lord is our spiritual breathing. We have to contact God by praying to Him and calling on Him. Then He adds Himself into us. When we contact Him, He is adding more and more of the divine element into our being. As the new element of God is being added into our being, this new element metabolically renews us. I may be a quick person naturally, but because God's element comes into my being, this element renews my natural habit. I may be slow in my natural disposition, but God renews me with His element to discharge my old element.

BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY WITH THE DIVINE ELEMENT THROUGH SUFFERINGS

We may be good saints in the church who have been kept and preserved by the Lord, but have we been renewed with the divine element? Is there some renewing going on with us, or are we remaining the same day by day and year after year? It would be tragic if we would pass through many sufferings and still remain the same. In order to consummate His renewing work in us and with us, God becomes our life and nature within. In addition to this, God as the sovereign Lord controls the entire universe in order to renew us. God uses the environment in order to work His life and nature into us. Without the environment, we could never be renewed. We would remain the same.

According to our view and consideration, we always base our judgment of things upon whether something is good or bad. We deal with things too much according to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not according to the tree of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the tree of good and bad. The tree of life does not have anything to do with good or bad. Only life, which is God Himself, constitutes the tree of life. Our view and consideration are most of the time based upon whether something is good or bad and right or wrong, but God does not consider things in this realm.

We may say that God punishes us by chastising and correcting us because we are so wrong. In a sense this is correct. There are verses from the Bible that support this understanding, but if we know the Bible in its principle, we can see that God desires to renew us. God cares for whether we are still in the old creation or whether we are being renewed. We may be the most right persons and still be the most old persons. We may be strong in our habit and strong in what we are. God's intention is not merely to chastise or correct us but to use the outward environment to trouble us, to remind us, and to wake

us up to realize that we have God as our nature, yet we do not live Him according to His nature. We possess Him for our enjoyment, but we do not live Him as our nature.

Do we discipline our children according to God's nature? We may discipline them according to our disposition, our being, and our habit. God, therefore, uses the environment to put us into "prison." Then we are reminded to pray, and the eventual outcome of our prayer is not merely that we get corrected but that we get renewed. Then when we are going to discipline our children, we will consider whether we are disciplining them in ourselves or with God and through God. Formerly, we disciplined our children with ourselves, by ourselves, and in ourselves. We did not have God in us as our life and nature while we were disciplining our children. Now God is in our disciplining of our children, and our disciplining them becomes a human-divine disciplining. The father is doing the disciplining, yet his disciplining is the divine disciplining because it is full of God. God is in it. God uses the outward environment in which we suffer to renew us.

Confucius also said that we need to be renewed day by day, but his concept of renewing was merely to have a change. In other words, a person who loses his temper needs to renew himself by limiting his temper. The Bible does not teach us in this way. It teaches us to be renewed according to nothing of ourselves. We are renewed by the addition of God into our being, by having more of the divine element added into our being. I have been living the Christian life for over sixty years, and I can testify concerning what the real Christian life is. The real Christian life is to have God added into us morning and evening and day by day.

We may discipline our children without God, only according to our likes or dislikes. When we hear this fellowship, we may think that God does not want us to discipline our children. This is also wrong. We are not saying that God does not want us to discipline our children. What we need to see is that God wants us to discipline our children with Him. This is a difficult lesson for all of us to learn.

Very few of today's Christian teachings would point out that the Christian life is not a matter of what we do or do not do. The problem today is that people do everything without God. What God cares for is that His chosen ones would learn to cooperate with Him by allowing Him to be added into them

day by day. God is daily being added to us for the purpose of metabolically transforming us. The new element of God is coming into us to replace the old element. This new element is God Himself, and the old element is us. We need to be replaced with God as the new element.

Our being replaced with the divine element does not mean that we should be abandoned. It is correct to say that our old man should be replaced, but we should not say that our old man should be abandoned. Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live." When we read the first part of this verse, we may think that Christ lives in us and that we have been abandoned. Paul says that he no longer lives, but he goes on to talk about the life which he now lives. I have been crucified, and it is no longer I but Christ, but I still live. The old "I" is replaced by a divine person to create a new "I." Our God is daily waiting for a chance to add Himself into all of us. If we would give Him the opportunity and the opening, He will add Himself into our being as the new element, not merely to correct us but to replace us, to renew us.

This renewing process is gradual. It takes a long time. From regeneration to glorification is a long process. In this long process God has to sanctify us, to separate us from the world. He has to transform us by renewing us metabolically. This renewing transforms us from one form to bring us into another form. Our old form is a form without God, but the new form is with God in us as our life, as our nature, as our appearance, and as our expression. This renewing brings in the conformation to the Lord's image. Then in doing everything we are like God, and we do things according to God at the right time. What we need is to be renewed day by day.

Sometimes God may allow the church to pass through a "storm." God may allow this "storm" to occur because He wants us to be renewed. The tragic thing is that while we are suffering in the "storm," we would remain the same with no renewing. I hope that we will consider this matter. We have to pray, "Lord, I don't want to remain the same. I do not want to remain the same this year as I was last year. I want to be renewed day by day." God's intention is for us to be renewed day by day. In order to be renewed, we need the new addition of God into us daily. Daily we need to contact God, open ourselves up to Him, and let Him come into us to be a new addition into us day by day.

THE RENEWING CAPACITY OF THE DIVINE LIFE

IN RESURRECTION

We should not think that God is inactive. When God is added into us, He does not just remain there, doing nothing. Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." God is not within us in a silent and inactive way. God is operating within us. The Greek word for *operates* in Philippians 2:13 is equivalent to the English word *energizes*. God is operating in us, energizing in us.

The divine element is very active. It is energizing, it works, and it is organic. Anything that is organic has an energizing capacity within it. Within the divine life that we are enjoying today, there is a renewing capacity. This capacity is not merely the measure of the divine life. When I use the word *capacity*, I mean the ability of the divine life in its nature. In God's divine nature there is the ability that is energizing all day. Once the divine life with the divine nature gets into us, it energizes within us. We all have the divine element energizing in us, and in this divine element there is the renewing capacity.

We may use soap as an illustration because it has the capacity to wash away dirt. There is the ability to wash away dirt in the nature of the soap. Likewise, in the divine life that we have received and that we are enjoying, there is a renewing capacity according to its nature. Thank the Lord for the renewing capacity of the divine life. We need to enjoy the renewing capacity of the divine life in resurrection day by day.

This is why we have to learn to die to ourselves. How do we die to ourselves? Every morning we should contact the Lord. First, we have to confess our sins. Second, we have to reject ourselves. In rejecting ourselves, we pass through the death of Christ, and the death of Christ kills us. In 2 Corinthians 4 Paul talks about "the putting to death of Jesus" (v. 10). This means that Jesus, in a positive sense, is always killing us. In many medicines today there is a healing element and a killing element that kills the bad germs and bacteria within us. In Jesus there is the killing element. He is our medication to heal us, enliven us, and kill all the negative things within us. In this dose there is the killing power. Morning after morning we need to come to the Lord and take Him as our antibiotic. Jesus is our daily antibiotic. When we take Him as our medication, we enjoy the killing of Jesus, or the putting to death of Jesus. This killing is the process of renewing. Furthermore, this killing brings in

resurrection. Jesus does not only comprise killing but also resurrecting. In the resurrection of Christ the divine life has the renewing capacity. When we reject ourselves in the morning to receive God into us, we have the sense during the day that a killing process is going on within us. Also, there is a capacity in the divine life that is renewing us in all our actions.

Philippians 2:13 tells us that God is operating in us, and then verse 14 tells us to do all things without murmurings and reasonings. If we receive the addition of God in the morning, this addition has the killing power. It will kill our murmurings and reasonings. In the previous chapter I told you that when I was young, I heard someone say that the church in Philippi was the best church, but Philippians 2:14 shows us that even the church in Philippi had murmurings and reasonings. Murmurings are of our emotions, mostly by the sisters; reasonings are of our mind, mostly by the brothers. In the church the sisters are used to murmuring because they are emotional, and the brothers are used to reasoning because they are logical. It is mostly the brothers who consider according to their reasonings who is wrong and who is right. Psalm 133 tells us how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity, but if the church life is full of murmurings and reasonings, how can we live together in peace? Murmurings and reasonings are according to the old creation.

In my early days of ministry I advised people to take care of their behavior, but this only worked with them temporarily. In a training in 1953 and 1954 I stressed thirty aspects of character. All the trainees received this fellowship and practiced it. After a short time, however, many of these aspects of character disappeared from them. Many of the trainees, including the co-workers, went back to their old character. Our character is the old creation that needs to be renewed to become the new creation.

God's intention is altogether to make us new. This is not an overnight matter. It takes a long time in our life, and it requires us to contact God, to receive God, and to get God added into us all the day. It requires us to pray, confessing our sins and rejecting ourselves to take the cross of Christ. To take the cross of Christ is a killing, and this killing is death. This death brings in resurrection, and in this resurrection the divine life in us will carry out its renewing capacity. Then we will be changed metabolically. This process of renewing takes a period of years. Brother Nee once said that this renewing requires twenty years.

The renewing process should be continuous. Moment by moment we have to receive God so that He can be added into us, and we have to reject ourselves to receive the death of Christ so that we can cooperate with the Lord within us. Then we will enjoy not only the renewing capacity but also the renewing result, which is a metabolic change in our behavior, in our character, in our disposition, and even in our habit. The most difficult thing to renew is our habit. When we experience God in Christ daily, we will see that God's intention is to renew us bit by bit, especially to renew our habit. This is the real experience of being renewed day by day. For this purpose God raises up all kinds of environments to consume our outer man so that our inner man can be renewed day by day.

God desires us to be the new creation. When all of the Lord's children pass through the process of renewing to become the New Jerusalem, they will be in a state of being fully renewed. The holy city is called the *New* Jerusalem because it has no old element of God's old creation. As we pass through afflictions, there needs to be a continual renewing taking place in us day by day so that God can accomplish His heart's desire.