
THE SEAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

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CHAPTER ONE

TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD— THAT WHICH IS ACCORDING TO THE FLESH AND THAT WHICH IS ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

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Scripture Reading: John 20:11-18; Luke 24:13-16, 25-32; John 21:1-14

From the Lord Jesus' resurrection until now, there are two kinds of knowledge of Him. One kind of knowledge is according to the flesh, and the other kind of knowledge is according to the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul said, "So then we, from now on, know no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer." In Galatians 1:15-16, he also said, "It pleased God...to reveal His Son in me." These verses show us the proper means by which we can know the Lord Jesus today. Let us see these two kinds of knowledge of the Lord Jesus by considering a few concrete examples from the Bible.

MARY THE MAGDALENE'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD

While Mary the Magdalene was weeping outside the Lord's grave, "two angels in white...said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him. When she said these things, she turned backward and beheld Jesus standing there, yet she did not know that it was Jesus" (John 20:12-14). It is strange that when she turned and saw Jesus, the One whom she had seen and followed for years, she could not recognize Him. The reason that she did not know the Lord at all, even though she knew Him so well before, was because the Son of God who had been in the flesh had been crucified on the cross and resurrected. The body which she desired to see was gone. All those who knew Him according to the flesh did not know Him any longer after His resurrection. He was no longer the Lord Jesus that she knew. He had become the Lord Jesus that she did not know. He was no longer a historical Jesus; He was living in the Spirit. He was no longer the Lord Jesus in the flesh but the

Lord Jesus in the Spirit. She could no longer know Him by the same means that she did when she knew Him in the flesh.

"Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? She, supposing that He was the gardener, said to Him, Sir, if you have carried Him away" (v. 15). Mary's senses were no longer very clear. Formerly, she knew Him by using her ears. Her ears had not changed, but they no longer worked when she tried to identify Him according to her ears. Formerly, her eyes could identify Him. Her eyes had not changed, but they could not identify the Lord Jesus anymore. She had not changed, but Jesus of Nazareth had changed. Mary was still the same Mary, but Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead. Her ears, eyes, and understanding had now become useless. According to the old ways it was possible to know the earthly Lord Jesus in the flesh. But it was no longer possible to know the resurrected, spiritual, and heavenly Lord Jesus, who now lived in the Spirit. Mary had not changed. The Lord Jesus had changed. Because the Lord had changed, there had to be a change on Mary's part before she could know the changed Jesus. She had to have a new revelation before she could have a fresh knowledge of the Lord.

"Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, Rabboni!" (v. 16). It is strange that as soon as the Lord mentioned her name, Mary recognized the Lord. This calling of her name by the Lord is a kind of revelation. What is a revelation? A revelation is not the Lord standing there and saying, "I am Jesus." A revelation is when a person suddenly and inexplicably comes to know the Lord. When the Lord Jesus called, "Mary," she did not come to know that her name was Mary. When the Lord called, "Mary," she realized that this was Rabboni. The Lord did not say anything to her; all He did was call her name, and she became clear within. She received inward knowledge. This is the meaning of a revelation.

Here we see an important principle. Revelation does not come through the ears, the eyes, or any other power of perception. Revelation is a mysterious thing; it is a knowledge beyond the power of comprehension of the ears and eyes. It is a mysterious kind of knowledge. This is revelation.

After Mary knew the Lord, she hurried to the disciples to tell them about it. Although the disciples heard it, they were still bewildered.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD

OF THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

After the Lord's resurrection, two of the disciples went to Emmaus. On the way they were talking to each other concerning all the things which had occurred, that is, about the things concerning the Lord Jesus which Mary had related. At that moment, the Lord Jesus Himself drew near to them. Yet their eyes were kept from recognizing Him; they did not know the resurrected Lord. They knew the Jesus who was in the flesh. But they did not know the Lord who had resurrected. Resurrection was a mysterious thing to them, and they could not believe in it.

The Lord conversed with them, taught them, and clearly explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, beginning from Moses and from all the prophets. Yet they still did not know Him. Although they understood the teachings of the Scriptures and were touched and even burning in their hearts, they still did not know the Lord Jesus. This shows us that doctrines and revelation are two different things. They understood the Scriptures, but they did not know the Lord. They knew the teachings about Christ, but they did not know Christ.

When it was near evening and they were coming close to Emmaus, they constrained Him to stay with them. As they reclined at table, Jesus took the loaf and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. This shows us clearly that there are two kinds of knowledge of the Lord. One kind of knowledge is from the Bible, while the other kind of knowledge comes when the Lord opens men's eyes. Some are very familiar with the Scriptures and can even speak to others about them, but they do not know the Lord Jesus. Others know not only the scriptural teachings, but their eyes have been opened by the Lord and they know the Lord Jesus also. These are two very different things. We must realize that Christianity does not have only the Bible but also personal revelations. It is true that without the Bible, there would be no Christianity in the world. But we have to remember that without revelation, we do not have a personal Christ.

One problem among God's children is that much of their knowledge is "transmitted" knowledge; it is transmitted from one's mouth to another's ear. One man understands with his mind and transmits it into another man's ear. Everything is transmitted, and hence everything is just a doctrine and teaching. We must remember that it is useless to have Bible knowledge

without knowing the Lord. The two disciples that were on the way to Emmaus knew the Scriptures already, and while the Lord was talking with them and explaining the Scriptures to them on the way, their hearts were burning. Yet they still did not know the Lord. The only true knowledge of the Lord is inward knowledge. Do you have such an inward knowledge of the Lord?

THE SEVEN DISCIPLES' KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD

One day, "Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee and the sons of Zebedee and two others of His disciples were there together. Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We also are coming with you" (John 21:2-3). It is strange that they were good fishermen, yet once they had followed the Lord, they could not catch anything when they went back to fish. They caught nothing during the whole night. Even more strange is the fact that as the morning broke, when Jesus stood on the shore, they did not recognize Him. The resurrected Lord Jesus cannot be recognized by human eyes. Peter, John, and James had been with the Lord all the time. Nathanael was one of the earliest ones who knew the Lord. As for Thomas, the Lord even purposely manifested Himself to him in order to remove his disbelief of His resurrection. Yet now, they all failed to know Him. They needed another experience and another power before they could know Him. "Then Jesus said to them, Little children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you? They answered Him, No. And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. They cast therefore, and they were no longer able to haul it in because of the abundance of fish" (vv. 5-6). Then what happened? John, the disciple who reclined on the Lord's breast, recognized that it was the Lord, and he said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment around himself and threw himself into the sea. A minute earlier they heard Him and saw Him, yet they did not know that it was the Lord. Now suddenly they knew; they knew in a mysterious way. This knowledge is Christianity. This knowledge is unshakeable; it is an inward seeing, an inward knowledge, and an inward strength. This knowledge gave Peter renewed strength.

"When they got out onto the land, they saw a fire of coals laid there, and fish lying on it and bread. Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish that you have just now caught" (vv. 9-10). None of the disciples dared to ask who He was, knowing that it was the Lord. Do you not feel that this word is quite ambiguous? If they knew that it was the Lord, they no longer needed to ask

Him. They were not without questions; they were just too afraid to ask. They dared not inquire of Him. This means that they did not know, yet they dared not ask because they were afraid. Yet it says that although no one dared to inquire of Him, they all knew that it was the Lord. They did not know it outwardly, but they knew it inwardly. Outwardly they were still wondering who this man was. Yet inwardly, they knew that it was the Lord. They may have said, "I do not know Him when I see His face. I do not know Him when I hear His voice. In my mind, I want to ask Him who He is. But in my heart I do not need to ask Him because I already know that He is the Lord." Have you ever had this experience—on the one hand, you do not know anything, but on the other hand, you are very clear? This is the experience of many Christians. We are not clear about many things and are bewildered about many things. But at the same time, we are very clear. This is the meaning of revelation. Revelation makes a person clear within; it is knowing something within. Blessed are those who walk according to revelation! Blessed are those who know the Lord according to revelation! Only they have power before the Lord, and only they know what the Lord can do.

Outward knowledge cannot replace inward revelation. We must have an inward knowledge of the Lord. Once we have inward knowledge, no one can shake us. May the Lord open our eyes to realize what we cannot realize otherwise. With our mind and our senses, we can only know Jesus in the flesh; this knowledge is not that useful to us and does not give us any strength. May the Lord truly reveal His Son in us so that we can be clear within, have inward knowledge and understanding, and have no doubt whatsoever within us.

CHAPTER TWO

TWO ASPECTS OF CHRIST'S WORK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Normal Christian Faith,

Christ And The New Life, Chaps. 2, 3

THE CRUCIFIXION OF SINNERS WITH CHRIST

The highest goal in the salvation of God is the dispensing of His life into man. This is God's ultimate desire. Only by partaking of the divine life can we have a divine living. It is impossible to have a God-like living with our human life. The manifestation of our life is nothing but sin. In this respect God dealt with our sins and iniquities in a way that would maintain His righteousness. We have seen that the Son of God was judged for this purpose. Those who are in Him have been forgiven of their sins.

CHRIST AS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

We have seen that by including us in Christ, God accomplished redemption. This identification with Christ is purely the work of God. The present question is: How can Christ be worked into us? In other words, how can He be related to us personally and subjectively?

Having Christ worked into us and having a vital life relationship between Him and us is the essence of the Christian life. In the Gospel of John, Christ repeated over and over again the phrase, "You in Me, and I in you." Being mutually within one another is the reality and essence of union. Only in this union can God accomplish what He has purposed for us.

THE FULLER UNION

God has already included us in Christ. Now we have to see how Christ can be wrought into us. Only when Christ is in us can our union be real and complete, and only then will everything He has be worked into us. This relationship with Christ is union in its ultimate and fullest sense.

One day I was watching a blacksmith at work. As he threw a big piece of iron into the fire, he kindled the flame and began to hammer on the red hot metal. An apprentice standing next to him was trying to get some fire. He rolled up a piece of paper, and instead of thrusting it into the fire, he touched the red hot iron with the end of the paper. In an instant, it caught on fire. I was exceedingly surprised at seeing the fire coming out from the iron. This piece of iron was now different from all other iron. You could say that it was iron, yet you could also consider it as a ball of fire. The fire was within the iron and the iron within the fire. It had the nature of iron and the appearance of fire. When you put a piece of paper on it, the paper burned up. God intends that our union with Christ be as intimate as that of the iron and fire. God has forgiven our sins and terminated our old man in Christ. But He did not stop there. He wants us to be completely one with Christ in the way that the iron was one with the fire. Every molecule of iron was mingled with the fire, and every trait of the fire was manifested in the iron. This is the degree that God wants to work Christ into us.

We still have to look at God's side of the work. For the moment, we will not say what we have to do on our part. We want to see how God has wrought us and Christ into one piece. What we saw hitherto was God's work of putting us in Christ and His work of redemption. In order for Christ to be wrought into us in a union that resembles that between the iron and fire, God had to take one very important step in Christ. This step is what we are about to explain in this chapter.

THE LIMITED JESUS

We all know that Jesus of Nazareth is God incarnated. In other words He is God clothed with humanity. If God had not clothed Himself with flesh, He could never have accomplished redemption. This is the reason He was incarnated. But the minute He put on the flesh, He was limited in two ways. He was limited in time and space. If He remained merely God, He would not be within the bounds of time and space. But the minute He put on humanity, He was trapped by these two factors. He became the same as we are.

How is the flesh bound by time and space? If you are in Tientsin, you cannot be in Peking at the same time. If you appear in China, you cannot appear simultaneously in England. As long as you have a body, you are confined by distance. You can only be in one place at one time. Human beings are bound by the body.

Moreover, you are also limited by time. You cannot exist at two different times simultaneously. I can only know you as you are. I cannot see what you will become tomorrow or next year. Often I would be talking to someone one minute. The next instant he was no longer available to me. That person to whom I talked was limited; he could only appear to me at one time but not at another. This is the bondage that time puts on our flesh. We can be together, but not forever. Time puts an ultimate end to all human relationships.

Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ who clothed Himself with human flesh, was also confined by the two conditions of time and space. All that God could do then was to reckon us as attached to Christ and accomplish redemption this way. There was as yet no way for us to be actually in Him, because we could not get into another body of flesh. In order for us to be in Christ or Christ in us, there was the need for Him to be something other than merely in the flesh. He had to come in another form before He could be one with us. Fire can become one with iron because it is something that has "proceeded forth." It is impossible to blend a piece of wood into iron. He had to appear in another fashion before He could come into us.

NO LONGER ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

Second Corinthians 5:16 says, "So then we, from now on, know no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer." Here the apostle revealed one of the most elementary doctrines in Christianity. The Christ that we preach is no longer the Christ in the flesh. He is very different from the One whom the twelve disciples knew in Galilee. Then Christ walked with them, ate with them, lived with them, and traveled together with them. They saw His face and touched His hands; they heard His voice and watched His miracles. Everything they knew about Him was after the flesh. But this amazing passage tells us that we know Him no longer after the flesh. The fleshly relationship is no longer valid.

Why is there the need for such a verse? There is a very strong reason for it. If Christ were still in His flesh, He would still be encumbered by time and space. We could only contact Him some of the time. He would be available at one place only. Everyone who was not at the same place and the same time as He could not touch Him.

Please give your full attention to this peak of our faith. If the Christ that we preach today were still in the flesh, imagine what would happen! If at this moment He was in Jerusalem, He would not be available here in Tientsin. If He came to Tientsin, the ones in Jerusalem would miss Him. Then He would become a prisoner of space like us.

What if He wanted to stay permanently in Jerusalem? How could we see Him? Perhaps once in a while we would have to pay the expense to travel to Jerusalem to visit Him. At least we would have to make this pilgrimage once a year to behold the incarnated God. In Jerusalem we might be able to stay very close to Him. But the minute we left Jerusalem, we would be separated again from Him. Hence, if Christ were still in the flesh, our faith would be a materialistic religion. Christianity would have a universal center on earth from which it would control and direct all the Christians.

When the twelve disciples were with Christ, He still had His flesh with Him. When He talked to three disciples, the other nine missed it. When He walked with eleven, one was left out. Even when they all dined together, some were closer to Him than others. Not everyone could recline on His bosom as John did. He was limited by time and space.

CHRIST MUST PUT OFF HIS FLESH

If you asked me whether I would like to see Christ walking today in the flesh in the manner that the twelve disciples knew, I would tell you a strong no. This would be absolutely useless to me! If Jesus of Nazareth were here today, He would be isolated. He could not come into me. Neither could I get into Him. He would still be with His flesh. His flesh could not be part of mine, nor my flesh part of His. Hence, there was a crucial need! Christ had to put off His flesh.

BY DEATH

Christ put off His flesh by death! Please remember that the death of Christ was not merely for our sins and old man. It was also a putting off of His own flesh. Henceforth, He is no longer in the flesh. By death He has put off His flesh and is now in the Spirit. I am not saying that the resurrected Christ does not have a body. I am saying that Christ has become the Spirit in resurrection. He still possesses a spirit, soul, and body, but everything is spiritual.

IN THE SPIRIT

What is the difference between being in the flesh and being in the spirit? To be in the flesh is like putting on a garment. When Christ was on earth, He had the garment of flesh on Him. At His death He put off this garment, and in resurrection He took on a new body with a different garment—the Spirit. The present Christ has been clothed with the Spirit in exactly the same sense as when He was clothed with the human flesh.

Hence, we can know Christ in one of two ways. We can know Christ in the flesh, or we can know Him in the Spirit. Some treasure the Christ in the flesh. But more precious than that is the Christ in the Spirit. Christ in the Spirit can now come into us and allow us to be in Him. Now He and we can have an insoluble union.

IN US

The Bible shows us time and again that God is triune. At one time God put on the flesh to become Christ. Now He has put on the Spirit. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all one entity. The Christ who was clothed with the flesh was limited in many respects. The Christ who is clothed with the Spirit is omnipresent. He can reside even in you. Everyone who desires Him may obtain Him, and everyone who believes in Him may receive Him. He is no longer confined by time and space. We can be one with Him wherever we are and whenever we will.

If Christ is not living in the Holy Spirit, our faith is dead and Christianity is a dead religion. If Christ is not in the Spirit, our beliefs are mere teachings and theories, and we possess nothing in reality because nothing can come into us from the Christ in the flesh.

THE WRITING HAND

I write a great deal, yet my handwriting is not very good. The reason is probably due to my failure in early years to learn the art properly. When I was young, my father hired an old tutor to teach me to write. During the time that he was with me, I always went against him; I never sat down properly to learn. As a result he was quite upset with me. One time he said, "Look at your brothers and sisters. They are all writing beautifully. You are the only one who does not write well. Here, let me hold your hand and write with you." His broad hand grabbed hold of mine and started to move across the pages. I was trying to be stubborn and uncooperative. When he stopped I purposely tried

to slide a bit further, and when he tried to write a straight line, my hand twisted around left and right. He never managed to get good handwriting out of me.

One day he made a poignant statement which I will never forget. He said, "I wish I could crawl into you to write for you. I do not see how else you can write well."

God's way of salvation is to get into us. This is the effective and ultimate solution. It is not an outward teaching. It is not His holding of our hands to move them back and forth. It is not a set of do's and don'ts. When He put off His flesh, He entered into the Spirit and can now get inside of us to be our life and live out of us. What that old tutor could never do is now being realized by God in Spirit.

THE COMFORTER

How is Christ in the Holy Spirit? We have to look into a passage in the Gospel of John in detail. John 14:16 says, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever."

The Comforter here is understood to be the Holy Spirit. The original word is *parakletos*. It is formed by two roots. The first part *para* means beside. The second part *kletos* carries the idea of help and succoring. Hence, this word means helping you at your side. Comforter gives the sense of one being near to you, helping you, watching over you, and sustaining you. Here the Lord is praying the Father to send a Comforter to help and sustain you.

THE SPIRIT OF REALITY

Verse 17 says, "Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you." This Comforter is the Spirit of reality. All spiritual realities are in the Holy Spirit. When we have the Holy Spirit, we have reality. Hence, the Comforter is also the Spirit of reality.

The Spirit of reality is only related to the believers. It has nothing to do with the world. Why does the world not receive Him? First, it is because they do not see Him. When people in the world do not see something, they naturally will not receive it. Second, they do not know Him. Something unknown is

usually hard to be accepted also. The Lord, however, says, "But you know Him." Christians know the Holy Spirit because "He abides with you."

Even today, the Holy Spirit is constantly with the believers. This is a fact. But notice the phrase after this: "And shall be in you." "Shall be" points to a future time. The Lord was saying, "This Holy Spirit is presently with you. But a day will come when He will get inside of you." Let us read on to see more concerning this point.

Verse 18 says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you." What is an orphan? It is a child left without the care of a father. A son has all of his living, food, books, etc., provided for by the father. The father prepares everything and does everything for him. A fatherless child, on the other hand, must prepare everything by himself. The Lord is saying that He will not leave us as orphans to manage all of our spiritual affairs alone. Instead, He will come to be our Father, to care for and look after us.

TWO PRONOUNS

Please note the pronouns in verses 17 and 18. Verse 17 says that "He" shall be in you, while verse 18 says that "I" am coming to you. What is the relationship between the He in verse 17 and the I in verse 18? Do they qualify as two persons or one? It is best for us to read the two verses again to find out who the "He" and the "I" are in verses 17 and 18.

If I were to tell you something like this, "A man just stopped a taxi by the city hall. He paid five dollars and had the driver bring him here. When I arrived, I ran in and saw all of you sitting here, and I began to preach." Please tell me what would be the relationship between that man and me? Of course, that man is I and I am that man. It is just a different way of mentioning the same person. Likewise the "I" in verse 18 is the same one as the "He" in verse 17. The meaning of this passage is clear; the Lord will ask the Father, and the Father will send a Comforter to your midst. This Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, is just the Christ that will dwell inside of you. In this way the disciples will no longer remain orphans.

I IN HIM

This is a most precious portion of the Bible. When Christ was on the earth, the Holy Spirit, who is the Comforter, lived inside of Him. After His death, resurrection, and ascension, He lives inside the Spirit. When Christ was with

the disciples on earth, the Holy Spirit was with the disciples already, for the Spirit was inside Christ. But what happened after those days? By His death and resurrection, Christ is now in the Spirit. Hence, He is coming to His disciples by the Spirit, through the Spirit, and in the Spirit. You may say that the Holy Spirit is now in the disciples. But actually it is Christ in the disciples. This is why in the first part of this portion it says, "He...shall be in you," but then the latter part changes to "I am coming to you." The "I" is in the "He."

THE HAND IN THE GLOVE

One time I was talking to a friend of mine in Kaifeng concerning Christ's being in the Holy Spirit. A foreign lady happened to come by. She greeted me and was about to take off her gloves to shake my hand. I rushed up to her and said, "There is no need to take off your gloves." I held up the hand with the glove and turned to my friend, asking, "Am I holding the glove or the hand? You may say that I am holding her glove, but I am actually holding her hand. The relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit is exactly the same. When you outwardly take hold of the Spirit, you are actually possessing Christ inwardly. Receiving the Holy Spirit is the same as receiving Christ." My friend nodded his head and said, "Now I see!"

This is similar to what we said earlier about the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. You may say that He is God and also say that He is a man. When you touch His divinity, you cannot avoid touching His humanity also. When His humanity is manifested, His divinity simultaneously comes forth. In the same way, Christ and the Spirit are one inseparable entity. You may interchange the two terms as synonyms. The Spirit is in Him, and He is in the Spirit.

IN THAT DAY

Let us read verses 19 and 20: "Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you also shall live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."

Here the Lord tells us about the purpose behind His putting off the flesh and coming as the Spirit. The goal of this is that the believers may know that "I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you," that a full and perfect union may be realized. This fact would come about only "in that day," the day that

Christ in the Spirit came into us. Only in that day would we know the oneness of having Christ in the Father, us in Christ, and Christ in us.

This union moreover transmits to us everything that God did in Christ and everything that God is through Christ. All of His becomes all of ours. God and man, man and God, become fully mingled into one.

ONE SPIRIT WITH CHRIST

Christ died and rose for us. But if He had not come to us in the Holy Spirit, salvation could not be accomplished. Christ could not be joined to us. He would be like the old tutor of mine, only wishing that somehow He could get inside of me.

But now Christ has taken on a spiritual form. He can come freely into us. We have the possibility of receiving Him because He is now in the Spirit. The Bible also says that "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). Christ is in the Spirit. All of us also have a spirit. When our spirit receives this Christ who is in the Spirit into us, the two become one spirit. This is the gem of our faith. Without this, our belief is a common religion with no relevance to our life. Without this, there cannot be an inward salvation.

A CLOSER CHRIST

Read again John 16:7: "But I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Here the Lord is telling us the truth of His death. As long as He was in His flesh, the Comforter could not come. When there was the Christ in the flesh, there could never be the Christ in the Spirit. This is why His death was expedient for us.

When I was in Shanghai, a friend said, "It is too bad that Christ ascended up to the heavens. If He were still on earth today, I would definitely go and seek after Him no matter how far He was from me. How I wish I could be like the disciples of His day, who had the privilege of walking, living, and eating together with the Master." As I was listening, I looked intently into his eyes and said, "I would never wish to be like Peter and John and those others!" He asked, "What do you mean?" "Do you know," I said, "that the Christ whom I know is far closer to me than the One that Peter knew on earth? Everyone who has received Christ should be able to say that our Christ is not merely the Christ in the flesh whom Peter touched; our Christ is the Christ in the Spirit.

Their Christ was One who could be separated from them. He could be with them one day and be gone the next. Our Christ, however, abides with us forever. Wherever we are, there He is also. I am not afraid even of going to hell, for if I go, God in me will go with me."

THE CHRIST IN THE SPIRIT

When did Peter begin to know Christ in such a clear way? Not during the three years that he followed the Lord back and forth. The One he knew then was only the Jesus of Nazareth. Only after resurrection and in the Spirit did he begin to know Christ in the way that we know Him. Unless Christ is in the Holy Spirit and unless He comes into us, we can never know Him in a real way.

A few years ago I passed through the country of Egypt. There were a number of missionaries in our group who tried to persuade me to take a tour to Palestine and stay there for two months. They said, "Go and visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the Mount of Golgotha. See all the places where Jesus trod His feet. It will strengthen your faith."

At that time I had both the time and the money to travel. But I told them, "I have no desire to go there. It will not strengthen my faith, nor will it help me to know Christ more. The Christ in whom I believe will never be affected by Jerusalem. Even if Jerusalem, Galilee, and Nazareth all vanish away, my knowledge of Him will still remain. I am one with Him, and my experience of Him can never be affected by any outward factors. I have absolutely no interest in the so-called manger, wood and nails of the cross, and other relics. These things can at most help me to know the Christ in the flesh. What I treasure more is the Christ in the Spirit. He is more real and my knowledge of Him is more solid than the physical presence of you and me."

THE CHRIST WHO IS LIVING IN US

A passage we read earlier says that we no longer know Christ according to the flesh. If what we believe in is merely an outward religion, then we will need a holy land, a mecca, or a Rome to be a center for us to go for worship and service. But what we believe in is a Christ inside of us. We know that He is both the God in heaven as well as the Lord in us.

Not only is He the very Creator, but He was also the Christ that put on the flesh. And now He is in us as the Holy Spirit. The Christ in the flesh is over! The Christ in the Spirit lives forever in us.

IN THE FLESH OR IN THE SPIRIT

Dear friends, let me ask you a question. The Christ that you know, is He in the flesh or is He in the Spirit? Putting it another way, is your Christ the One in the Gospels or the One in the Epistles? I am not saying that you should not believe in the Christ of the four Gospels. It is right to believe in Him. However, that is only the first half. The second half is to know and experience the Christ in the Spirit.

We have seen three aspects of what God is. First, He is the God in the heavens; second, He is the God who came to earth to become a man; and third, He is the God in the Holy Spirit. These three aspects constitute the three steps of our experience of God.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CWWN, The (Set 2) Vol. 46:

Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (6), Chap. 163

What is the fundamental difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament? In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit gave new birth to people. He also gave new birth to the people of the New Testament. Regarding the matter of the new birth, there is no difference in the Old and New Testaments. All is the work of the Holy Spirit. We must not think of the new birth as something peculiar to the New Testament. The Lord told Nicodemus that as a teacher in Israel he should understand the new birth. What is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? In the Old Testament one thing is certain: we cannot find the Holy Spirit dwelling in human hearts. Of course, He worked in human hearts, but He never dwelt within them. We cannot find one verse in the Old Testament that says the Holy Spirit took up His abode in human hearts. In the Old Testament we find the Holy Spirit coming upon, but not in, human beings. In the Septuagint we find *epi*, upon, used continuously, but never in. In the New Testament we also find the Holy Spirit coming upon people. This aspect of the Holy Spirit continued, but the Holy Spirit did more than that. On the night the Lord was betrayed, He said, "He abides with you and shall be in you" (John 14:17b). This was something quite new. Thereafter men are said to be temples of the Holy Spirit. Being temples of the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit lives within men.

In the New Testament we find two aspects of the Spirit's work: (1) His coming upon men, and (2) His dwelling within men. His coming upon men is still for power, miracles, and witness. His dwelling within men is for holiness. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is to minister Christ to us, to make Christ ours, to make Him our life, and to make us bear the fruit of holiness.

If we carefully differentiate between the two, we can understand the many misconceptions regarding the Holy Spirit. Many think that if they can only have their "Pentecost," their problems would be settled. But now that you

have had your "Pentecost," has it solved your problems related to holiness? Has it brought you victory over your temper, etc.? This has not settled the question of victory over sin. With this kind of "Pentecost," we find only gifts but not fruit.

When Paul saw the condition of the church in Corinth, he did not say, "Things are too bad here; we must stop everything." Many modern teachers would sweep everything away as carnal and devilish. Paul did not sweep everything away; rather, he brought something in to balance it. First Corinthians 3:16 says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" We must learn what it means to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Modern teachers teach us that the gifts are childish. They say, "We are grown up. We do not need toys like tongues. Our Christianity is far beyond that stage. We are far beyond the apostles. We can cast them away." However, those who stand for the gifts of the Holy Spirit have nothing in their mind except the gifts; they despise everyone who has not had a similar experience. They say, "On such and such a day I had the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Both of these parties are wrong.

In the New Testament we find these two aspects set before us. From the Lord's last supper until Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was spoken of four times: (1) During the Lord's supper, He was spoken of as the Paraclete, the Comforter. "He will give you another Comforter...He...shall be in you" (John 14:16-17). (2) After the Lord's supper the Holy Spirit was spoken of on the evening of His resurrection. He breathed into them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). (3) Immediately before the Lord was taken up to heaven, He referred to the Holy Spirit when He said, "I send forth the promise of My Father upon you;...stay in the city until you put on power from on high" (Luke 24:49). (4) Finally, the Holy Spirit was referred to on the day of Pentecost.

People generally think that the promise of the Comforter was fulfilled at Pentecost, but this is not borne out by the Word of God. Both chapter fourteen and chapter twenty of the Gospel of John were written by John. In John 14 the Lord promised, "He will give you another Comforter" (v. 16). In John 20 this promise was fulfilled. There is no promise that the Holy Spirit would come upon men before the death of the Lord; before His death He only promised that the Spirit would dwell within men. On the day of His

resurrection, He breathed into them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). What is a breath? A breath is life. If we give up breathing, we give up life. Christ breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Did the Lord say, "You must wait another fifty days"? No. He breathed into them, and they received the Holy Spirit then and there. John 14 was fulfilled in John 20. The promise that was given at the Lord's supper was fulfilled on the day of resurrection. Then the Lord said to His disciples, "Stay in the city until you put on power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Pentecost was the fulfillment of Luke 24. Luke was written by Luke and Acts also was written by Luke! Acts 1 can be considered to be Luke 25 because it is the continuation of Luke. It is only natural that Luke would continue his own narrative.

Based on this we can see that the indwelling Holy Spirit, imparted by the Lord's breathing and based on His resurrection, is for life. The coming-upon Spirit, based on glorification of the Lord, is for service.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SPIRIT OUTPOURED AND INDWELLING

The Normal Christian Life

The Book of Romans sets forth the phases of Christian experience. Among those which lies at the heart of all our experience as the vitalizing power of effective life and service, I refer to the personal presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.

Here we see two verses from Romans first, one from each of our sections. “The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us” (Romans 5:5). “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Romans 8:9).

God does not give His gifts at random, nor dispense them in any arbitrary fashion. They are given freely to all, but they are given on a definite basis. God has truly “blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3), but if those blessings which are ours in Christ are to become ours in experience, we must know on what ground we can appropriate them.

In considering the gift of the Holy Spirit it is helpful to think of this in two aspects, as the Spirit outpoured and the Spirit indwelling, and our purpose now is to understand on what basis this twofold gift of the Holy Spirit becomes ours. I have no doubt that we are right in distinguishing thus between the outward and the inward manifestations of His working, and that as we go on we shall find the distinction helpful. Moreover, when we compare them, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the inward activity of the Holy Spirit is the more precious. But to say this is not for one moment to imply that His outward activity is not also precious, for God only gives good gifts to His children. Unfortunately we are apt to esteem our privileges lightly because of their sheer abundance. The Old Testament saints, who were not as favored as we are, could appreciate more readily than we do the preciousness of this gift of the outpoured Spirit. In their day it was a gift given only to the select few—chiefly to priests, judges, kings and prophets—whereas now it is the portion of every child of God. Think! we who are mere nonentities can

have the same Spirit resting upon us as rested upon Moses the friend of God, upon David the beloved king, and upon Elijah the mighty prophet. By receiving the gift of the outpoured Holy Spirit we join the ranks of God's chosen servants of the Old Testament dispensation. Once we see the value of this gift of God, and realize too our deep need of it, we shall immediately ask, How can I receive the Holy Spirit in this way to equip me with spiritual gifts and to empower me for service? Upon what basis has the Spirit been given?

THE SPIRIT OUTPOURED

Let us turn first to Acts chapter 2 verses 32 to 36:

“(32) This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. (33) Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. (34) For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, (35) Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.(36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.”

Let us for the moment set verses 34 and 35 aside and consider verses 33 and 36 together. The former are a quotation from the 110th Psalm and are really a parenthesis, so we shall get the force of Peter's argument better if we ignore them for the time being. In verse 33 Peter states that the Lord Jesus was exalted “at the right hand of God” (mg.). What was the result? He “received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost”. And what followed? Pentecost! The result of His exaltation was—“this, which ye see and hear”.

What, then, was the basis upon which the Spirit was first given to the Lord Jesus to be poured out upon His people? It was His exaltation to Heaven. This passage makes it absolutely clear that the Holy Spirit was poured out because the Lord Jesus was exalted. The outpouring of the Spirit has no relation to your merits or mine, but only to the merits of the Lord Jesus. The question of what we are does not come into consideration at all here, but only what He is. He is glorified; therefore the Spirit is poured out.

Because the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, I have received forgiveness of sins; because the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, I have received new life; because the Lord Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, I

have received the outpoured Spirit. All is because of Him; nothing is because of me. Remission of sins is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's crucifixion; regeneration is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's resurrection; and the enduement with the Holy Spirit is not based on human merit, but on the Lord's exaltation. The Holy Spirit has not been poured out on you or me to prove how great we are, but to prove the greatness of the Son of God.

Now look at verse 36. There is a word here which demands our careful attention: the word 'therefore'. How is this word generally used? Not to introduce a statement, but to follow a statement that has already been made. Its use always implies that something has been mentioned before. Now what has preceded this particular 'therefore'? With what is it connected? It cannot reasonably be connected with either verse 34 or verse 35, but it quite obviously relates back to verse 33. Peter has just referred to the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples "which ye see and hear", and he says: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified". Peter says, in effect, to his audience: 'This outpouring of the Spirit, which you have witnessed with your own eyes and ears, proves that Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified is now both Lord and Christ'. The Holy Spirit was poured out on earth to prove what had taken place in Heaven—the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth to the right hand of God. The purpose of Pentecost is to prove the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

There was a young man named Joseph, who was dearly loved of his father. One day news reached the father of the death of his son, and for years Jacob lamented Joseph's loss. But Joseph was not in the grave; he was in a place of glory and power. After Jacob had been mourning the death of his son for years, it was suddenly reported to him that Joseph was alive and in a high position in Egypt. At first Jacob could not take it in. It was too good to be true. But ultimately he was persuaded that the story of Joseph's exaltation was really a fact. How did he come to believe in it? He went out, and saw the chariots that Joseph had sent from Egypt.

What do the chariots represent here? They surely typify here the Holy Spirit, sent both to be the evidence that God's Son is in glory and to convey us there. How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by wicked men nearly two thousand years ago, did not just die a martyr's death but is at the Father's right hand in glory? How can we know for a surety that He is Lord of

lords and King of kings? We can know it beyond dispute because He has poured out His Spirit upon us. Hallelujah! Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Christ! Jesus of Nazareth is both Lord and Christ!

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the basis on which the Spirit has been given. Is it possible then that the Lord has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? On what basis did you receive forgiveness of sins? Was it because you prayed so earnestly, or because you read your Bible from cover to cover, or because of your regular attendance at Church? Was it because of your merits at all? No! A thousand times, No! On what ground then were your sins forgiven? “Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). The sole ground of forgiveness is the shedding of blood; and since the precious Blood has been shed, your sins have been forgiven.

Now the principle on which we receive the enduement of the Holy Spirit is the very same as that on which we receive forgiveness of sins. The Lord has been crucified, therefore our sins have been forgiven; the Lord has been glorified, therefore the Spirit has been poured out upon us. Is it possible that the Son of God shed His Blood and that your sins, dear child of God, have not been forgiven? Never! Then is it possible that the Son of God has been glorified and you have not received the Spirit? Never!

Some of you may say: I agree with all this, but I have no experience of it. Am I to sit down smugly and say I have everything, when I know perfectly well I have nothing? No, we must never rest content with objective facts alone. We need subjective experience also; but that experience will only come as we rest upon Divine facts. God’s facts are the basis of our experience.

Let us go back again to the question of justification. How were you justified? Not by doing anything at all, but by accepting the fact that the Lord had done everything. Enduement with the Holy Spirit becomes yours in exactly the same way as justification, not by your doing anything yourself, but by your putting your faith in what the Lord has already done.

If we lack the experience, we must ask God for a revelation of the eternal fact of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the exalted Lord to His Church. Once we see that, effort will cease, and prayer will give place to praise. It was a revelation of what the Lord had done for the world that brought to an end our efforts to secure forgiveness of sins, and it is a revelation of what the

Lord has done for His Church that will bring to an end our efforts to secure the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We work because we have not seen the work of Christ. But when once we have seen that, faith will spring up in our hearts, and as we believe, experience will follow.

Some time ago a young man, who had only been a Christian for five weeks and who had formerly been violently opposed to the gospel, attended a series of meetings which I was addressing in Shanghai. At the close of one in which I was speaking along the above lines, he went home and began to pray earnestly, 'Lord, I do want the power of the Holy Spirit. Seeing Thou hast now been glorified, wilt Thou not now pour out Thy Spirit upon me?' Then he corrected himself: 'Oh no, Lord, that's all wrong!' and began to pray again: 'Lord Jesus, we are in a life-partnership, Thou and I, and the Father has promised us two things—glory for Thee, and the Spirit for me. Thou, Lord, hast received the glory; therefore it is unthinkable that I have not received the Spirit. Lord, I praise Thee! Thou hast already received the glory, and I have already received the Spirit.' From that day the power of the Spirit was consciously upon him.

FAITH IS AGAIN THE KEY

As for forgiveness, so equally for the coming upon us of the Holy Spirit, the whole question is one of faith. As soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Cross, we know our sins are forgiven; and as soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Throne, we know the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us. The basis upon which we receive the enduement of the Holy Spirit is not our praying and fasting and waiting, but the exaltation of Christ. Those who emphasize tarrying and hold 'tarrying meetings' only mislead us, for the gift is not for the 'favored few' but for all, because it is not given on the ground of what we are at all, but of what Christ is.

The Spirit has been poured out to prove His goodness and greatness, not ours. Christ has been crucified, therefore we have been forgiven: Christ has been glorified, therefore we have been endued with power from on high. It is all because of Him.

Suppose an unbeliever expresses the desire to be saved, and you explain to him the way of salvation and pray with him. Suppose then he prays after this fashion: 'Lord Jesus, I believe Thou hast died for me, and that Thou canst blot out all my sins. I truly believe Thou wilt forgive me.' Have you any confidence

that that man is saved? When will you rest assured that he has really been born again? Not when he prays: 'Lord, I believe Thou wilt forgive my sins', but when he says: 'Lord, I praise Thee that Thou hast forgiven my sins. Thou hast died for me; therefore my sins are blotted out' You believe a person is saved when prayer turns to praise—when he ceases to ask the Lord to forgive him, but praises Him that He has already done so because the Blood of the Lamb has already been shed.

In the same way, you can pray and wait for years and never experience the Spirit's power; but when you cease to plead with the Lord to pour out His Spirit upon you, and when instead you trustfully praise Him that the Spirit has been poured out because the Lord Jesus has been glorified, you will find that your problem is solved. Praise God! no single child of His need agonize, nor even wait, for the Spirit to be given. Jesus is not going to be made Lord; He is Lord. Therefore I am not going to receive the Spirit; I have received the Spirit. It is all a question of the faith which comes by revelation. When our eyes are opened to see that the Spirit has already been poured out because Jesus has already been glorified, then prayer turns to praise in our hearts.

All spiritual blessings are given on a definite basis. God's gifts are freely given, but there are conditions which must be fulfilled on our part before the reception of them is possible. There is a passage in God's Word which makes the conditions of the outpoured Spirit perfectly clear: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (Acts 2:38, 39).

Four things are mentioned in this passage: Repentance, Baptism, Forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit. The first two are conditions, the second two are gifts. What are the conditions to be fulfilled if we are to have forgiveness of sins? According to the Word they are two: repentance and baptism.

The first condition is repentance, which means a change of mind. Formerly I thought sin a pleasant thing, but now I have changed my mind about it; formerly I thought the world an attractive place, but now I know better; formerly I regarded it a miserable business to be a Christian, but now I think differently. Once I thought certain things delightful, now I think them vile; once I thought other things utterly worthless, now I think them most precious.

That is a change of mind, and that is repentance. No life can be truly changed apart from such a change of mind.

The second condition is baptism. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith. When in my heart I truly believe that I have died with Christ, have been buried and have risen with Him, then I ask for baptism. I thereby declare publicly what I believe privately. Baptism is faith in action.

Here then are two divinely appointed conditions of forgiveness—repentance, and faith publicly expressed. Have you repented? Have you testified publicly to your union with your Lord? Then have you received remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost? You say you have only received the first gift, not the second. But, my friend, God offered you two things if you fulfilled two conditions! Why have you only taken one? What are you doing about the second?

Suppose I went into a book-shop, selected a two-volume book, priced at ten shillings, and, having put down a ten-shilling note, walked out of the shop, carelessly leaving one volume on the counter. When I reached home and discovered the oversight, what do you think I should do? I should go straight back to the shop to get the forgotten book, but I should not dream of paying anything for it. I should simply explain to the shopkeeper that both volumes were duly paid for, and ask him if he would therefore kindly let me have the second one; and without any further payment I should march happily out of the shop with my possession under my arm. Would you not do the same under the same circumstances?

But you are under the same circumstances. If you have fulfilled the conditions you are entitled to two gifts, not just one. You have already taken the one; why not just come and take the other now? Say to the Lord, 'Lord, I have complied with the conditions for receiving remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but I have foolishly only taken the former. Now I have come back to take the gift of the Holy Ghost, and I praise Thee for it.'

THE DIVERSITY OF THE EXPERIENCE

But you ask: 'How shall I know that the Holy Spirit is come upon me?' I cannot tell how you will know, but you will know. No description has been given us of the personal sensations and emotions of the disciples at Pentecost. We do not know exactly how they felt, but we do know that their feelings and

behavior were somewhat abnormal, because people seeing them said they were intoxicated. When the Holy Spirit falls upon God's people there will be some things which the world cannot account for. There will be supernatural accompaniments of some kind, though it be no more than an overwhelming sense of the Divine Presence. We cannot and we must not stipulate what particular form such outward expressions will take in any given case, but one thing is sure, that each one upon whom the Spirit of God falls will know it.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost there was something quite extraordinary about their behavior, and Peter offered an explanation from God's Word to all who witnessed it. This, in substance, is what he said: 'When the Holy Spirit falls upon believers, some will prophesy, some will dream dreams, and others will see visions. This is what God has stated through the prophet Joel.' But did Peter prophesy? Well, hardly in the sense in which Joel meant it. Did the hundred and twenty prophesy or see visions? We are not told that they did. Did they dream dreams? How could they, for were they not all wide awake? Well then, what did Peter mean by using a quotation that seems scarcely to fit the case at all? In the passage quoted (Joel 2:28, 29), prophesy, dreams and visions are said to accompany the outpouring of the Spirit, yet these evidences were apparently lacking at Pentecost.

On the other hand, Joel's prophecy said not a word about "a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind", nor about "tongues parting asunder like as of fire" as accompaniments of the Spirit's outpouring; yet these were manifest in that upper room. And where in Joel do we find mention of speaking in other tongues? And yet the disciples at Pentecost did so.

What did Peter mean? Imagine him quoting God's Word to show that the experience of Pentecost was the outpouring of the Spirit spoken of by Joel, without a single one of the evidences mentioned by Joel being found at Pentecost. What the Book mentioned the disciples lacked, and what the disciples had the Book did not mention! It looks as though Peter's quotation of the Book disproves his point rather than proving it. What is the explanation of this mystery?

Let us recall that Peter was himself speaking under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Book of the Acts was written by the Spirit's inspiration, and not one word was spoken at random. There is no misfit, but a perfect harmony.

Note carefully that Peter did not say: ‘What you see and hear fulfills what was spoken by the prophet Joel’. What he said was: “This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). It was not a case of fulfillment, but of an experience of the same order. “This is that” means that ‘this which you see and hear is of the same order as that which is foretold’. When it is a case of fulfillment, each experience is reduplicated and prophecy is prophecy, dreams are dreams, and visions are visions; but when Peter says “This is that”, it is not a question of the one being a replica of the other, but of the one belonging to the same category as the other. “This” amounts to the same thing as “that”; “this” is the equivalent of “that”; “this is that”. What is being emphasized by the Holy Spirit through Peter is the diversity of the experience. The outward evidences may be many and varied, and we have to admit that occasionally they are strange; but the Spirit is one, and He is Lord. (See Corinthians 12:4-6).

What happened to R.A. Torrey when the Holy Spirit came upon him after he had been a minister for years? Let him tell it in his own words:

‘I recall the exact spot where I was kneeling in prayer in my study... It was very quiet moment, one of the most quiet moments I ever knew... Then God simply said to me, not in any audible voice, but in my heart. “It’s yours. Now go and preach.” He had already said it to me in His Word in 1 John 5:14, 15; but I did not then know my Bible as I know it now, and God had pity on my ignorance and said it directly to my soul... I went and preached, and I have been a new minister from that day to this... Some time after this experience (I do not recall just how long after), while sitting in my room one day... suddenly... I found myself shouting (I was not brought up to shout and I am not of a shouting temperament, but I shouted like the loudest shouting Methodist), “Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God”, and I could not stop. ... But that was not when I was baptized with the Holy Spirit. I was baptized with the Holy Spirit when I took Him by simple faith in The Word of God.’ (The Holy Spirit, who He is and what He does, by R.A. Torrey, D.D., pp. 198-9.)

The outward manifestations in Torrey’s case were not the same as those described by Joel or by Peter, but “this is that”. It is not a facsimile, yet it is the same thing.

And how did D.L. Moody feel and act when the Spirit came upon him?

‘I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day, in the city of New York—oh, what a day!—I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths; and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world—it would be as the small dust of the balance.’ (The Life of Dwight L. Moody, by his son, W.R. Moody, p. 149.)

The outward manifestation that accompanied Moody’s experience did not tally exactly with Joel’s description, or Peter’s, or Torrey’s, but who could doubt that “this” which Moody experienced was “that” experienced by the disciples at Pentecost? It was not the same in manifestation, but it was the very same in essence.

And what was the experience of the great Charles Finney when the power of the Holy Ghost came upon him?

‘I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me body and soul. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love.’ (Autobiography of Charles E. Finney, chapter 2.)

Finney’s experience was not a duplicate of Pentecost, nor of Torrey’s experience, nor of Moody’s; but “this” certainly was “that”.

When the Holy Spirit is poured out upon God’s people their experiences will differ widely. Some will receive new vision, others will know a new liberty in soul-winning, others will proclaim the Word of God with power, and yet others will be filled with heavenly joy or overflowing praise. “This... and this... and this... is that!” Let us praise the Lord for every new experience that relates to the exaltation of Christ and of which it can truly be said that “this” is an evidence of “that”. There is nothing stereotyped about God’s dealings with His children. Therefore we must not by our prejudices and preconceptions make a

water-tight compartment for the working of His Spirit, either in our own lives or in the lives of others. This applies equally to those who require some particular manifestation (such as ‘speaking with tongues’) as evidence that the spirit has come upon them and to those who deny that any manifestation is given at all. We must leave God free to work as He wills, and to give what evidence He pleases of the work He does. He is Lord, and it is not for us to legislate for Him.

Let us rejoice that Jesus is on the throne, and let us praise Him that, since He has been glorified, the Spirit has been poured out upon us all. As we accept the Divine fact in all the simplicity of faith, we shall know it with such assurance in our own experience that we shall dare to proclaim with confidence—“This is that!”

THE SPIRIT INDWELLING

We move on now to the second aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which, as we shall see in our next chapter, is more particularly the subject of Romans 8. It is that which we have spoken of as the Spirit indwelling. “If so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you...” (Romans 8:9).

As with the Spirit outpoured, so with the Spirit indwelling, if we are to know in experience that which is ours in fact, our first need is of Divine revelation. When we see Christ as Lord objectively—that is, as exalted to the throne in Heaven—then we shall experience the power of the Spirit upon us. When we see Christ as Lord subjectively—that is, as effective Ruler within our lives—then we shall know the power of the Spirit within us.

A revelation of the indwelling Spirit was the remedy Paul offered the Corinthian Christians for their unspirituality. It is important to note that the Christians in Corinth had become preoccupied with the visible signs of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring and were making much of ‘tongues’ and miracles, while at the same time their lives were full of contradictions and were a reproach to the Lord’s Name. They had quite evidently received the Holy Spirit and yet they remained spiritually immature; and the remedy God offered them for this is the remedy He offers His Church today for the same complaint.

In his letter to them Paul wrote: “Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). For others

he prayed for enlightenment of heart, "...that ye may know" (Ephesians 1:18). A knowledge of Divine facts was the need of the Christians then, and it is no less the need of Christians today. We need the 'opening of the eyes of our understanding' that we may know that God Himself through the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in our hearts. God is present in the person of the Spirit, and Christ is present in the person of the Spirit too. Thus if the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts we have the Father and the Son dwelling within. That is no mere theory or doctrine, but a blessed reality. We may perhaps have realized that the Spirit is actually within our hearts, but have we realized that He is a Person? Have we understood that to have the Spirit within us it to have the living God within?

To many Christians the Holy Spirit is quite unreal. They regard Him as a mere influence—and influence for good, no doubt, but just an influence for all that. In their thinking, conscience and the Spirit are more or less identified as some 'thing' within them that brings them to book when they are bad and tries to show them how to be good. The trouble with the Corinthian Christians was not that they lacked the indwelling Spirit but that they lacked the knowledge of His presence. They failed to realize the greatness of the One who had come to make His abode in their hearts; so Paul wrote to them: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Yes, that was the remedy for their unspirituality—just to know who He really was who dwelt within.

THE TREASURE IN THE VESSEL

Do you know, my friends, that the Spirit within you is very God? Oh that our eyes were opened to see the greatness of God's gift! Oh that we might realize the vastness of the resources secreted in our own hearts! I could shout with joy as I think, 'The Spirit who dwells within me is no mere influence, but a living Person; He is very God. The infinite God is within my heart!' I am at a loss to convey to you the blessedness of this discovery, that the Holy Spirit dwelling within my heart is a Person. I can only repeat: 'He is a Person!' and repeat it again: 'He is a Person!' and repeat it yet again: 'He is a Person!' Oh, my friends, I would fain repeat it to you a hundred times—The Spirit of God within me is a Person! I am only an earthen vessel, but in that earthen vessel I carry a treasure of unspeakable worth, even the Lord of glory.

All the worry and fret of God's children would end if their eyes were opened to see the greatness of the treasure hid in their hearts. Do you know, there are resources enough in your own heart to meet the demand of every circumstance in which you will ever find yourself? Do you know there is power enough there to move the city in which you live? Do you know there is power enough to shake the universe? Let me tell you once more—I say it with the utmost reverence: You who have been born again of the Spirit of God—you carry God in your heart!

All the flippancy of the children of God would cease too if they realized the greatness of the treasure deposited within them. If you have only ten shillings in your pocket you can march gaily along the street, talking lightly as you go, and swinging your stick in the air. It matters little if you lose your money, for there is not much at stake. But if you carry a thousand pounds in your pocket, the position is vastly different, and your whole demeanour will be different too. There will be great gladness in your heart, but no careless jaunting along the road; and once in a while you will slacken your pace and, slipping your hand into your pocket, you will quietly finger your treasure again, and then with joyful solemnity continue on your way.

In Old Testament times there were hundreds of tents in the camp of Israel, but there was one tent quite different from all the rest. In the common tents you could do just as you pleased—eat or fast, work or rest, be joyful or sober, noisy or silent. But that other tent was a tent that commanded reverence and awe. You might move in and out of the common tents talking noisily and laughing gaily, but as soon as you neared that special tent you instinctively walked more quietly, and when you stood right before it you bowed your head in solemn silence. No one could touch it with impunity. If man or beast dared to do so, death was the sure penalty. What was so very special about it? It was the temple of the living God. There was little unusual about the tent itself, for it was outwardly of very ordinary material, but the great God had chosen to make it His abode.

Do you realize what happened at your conversion? God came into your heart and made it His temple. In Old Testament days God dwelt in a temple made of stone; today He dwells in a temple composed of living believers. When we really see that God has made our hearts His dwelling place, what a deep reverence will come over our lives! All lightness, all frivolity will end, and all self-pleasing too, when we know that we are the temple of God and

that the Spirit of God dwells within us. Has it really come to you that wherever you go you carry with you the Holy Spirit of God? You do not just carry your Bible with you, or even much good teaching about God, but God Himself.

The reason why many Christians do not experience the power of the Spirit, though He actually dwells in their hearts, is that they lack reverence. And they lack reverence because they have not had their eyes opened to the fact of His presence. The fact is there, but they have not seen it. Why is it that some Christians are living victorious lives while others live in a state of constant defeat? The difference is not accounted for by the presence or absence of the Spirit (for He dwells in the heart of every child of God) but by this, that some recognize His indwelling and others do not. True revelation of the fact of the Spirit's indwelling will revolutionize the life of any Christian.

THE ABSOLUTE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

“Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

This verse now takes us a stage further, for, when once we have made the discovery of the fact that we are the dwelling place of God, then a full surrender of ourselves to God must follow. When we see that we are the temple of God we shall immediately recognize that we are not our own. Consecration will follow revelation. The difference between victorious Christians and defeated ones is not that some have the Spirit while others have not, but that some know His indwelling and others do not, and that consequently some recognize the Divine ownership of their lives while others are still their own masters.

Revelation is the first step to holiness, and consecration is the second. A day must come in our lives, as definite as the day of our conversion, when we give up all right to ourselves and submit to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. There may be a practical issue raised by God to test the reality of our consecration, but whether that be so or not, there must be a day when, without reservation, we surrender everything to Him—ourselves, our families, our possessions, our business and our time. All we are and have becomes His, to be held henceforth entirely at His disposal. From that day we are no longer

our own masters, but only stewards. Not until the Lordship of Jesus Christ is a settled thing in our hearts can the Spirit really operate effectively in us. He cannot direct our lives effectually until all control of them is committed to Him. If we do not give Him absolute authority in our lives, He can be present, but He cannot be powerful. The power of the Spirit is stayed.

Are you living for the Lord or for yourself? Perhaps that is too general a question, so let me be more specific. Is there anything God is asking of you that you are withholding from Him? Is there any point of contention between you and Him? Not till every controversy is settled and the Holy Spirit is given full sway can He reproduce the life of Christ in the heart of any believer.

An American friend, now with the Lord, whose name we will call Paul, cherished the hope from his early youth that one day he would be called 'Dr. Paul'. When he was quite a little chap he began to dream of the day when he would enter the university, and he imagined himself first studying for his M.A. degree and then for his Ph.D. Then at length the glad day would arrive when all would greet him as 'Dr. Paul'.

The Lord saved him and called him to preach, and before long he became pastor of a large congregation. By that time he had his degree and was studying for his doctorate, but, despite splendid progress in his studies and a good measure of success as a pastor, he was a very dissatisfied man. He was a Christian, but his life was not Christ-like; he had the Spirit of God within him, but he did not enjoy the Spirit's presence or experience His power.

He thought to himself, 'I am a preacher of the Gospel and the pastor of a church. I tell my people they should love the Word of God, but I do not really love it myself. I exhort them to pray, but I myself have little inclination to pray. I tell them to live a holy life, but my own life is not holy. I warn them not to love the world, and, though outwardly I shun it, yet in my heart I myself still love it dearly.' In his distress he cried to the Lord to cause him to know the power of the indwelling Spirit, but though he prayed and prayed for months, no answer came. Then he fasted and besought the Lord to show him any hindrance there might be in his life. That answer was not long in coming, and it was this: 'I long that you should know the power of My Spirit, but your heart is set on something that I do not wish you to have. You have yielded to me all but one thing, and that one thing you are holding to yourself—your Ph.D.' Well, to you or me it might be of little consequence whether we were

addressed as plain 'Mr. Paul' or as 'Dr. Paul', but to him it was his very life. He had dreamed of it from childhood and labored for it all through his youth, and now the thing he prized above all was almost within his grasp. In two short months it would be his.

So he reasoned with the Lord in this wise: 'Is there any harm for me to be a Doctor of Philosophy? Will it not bring much more glory to Thy Name to have a Dr. Paul preaching the Gospel than a plain Mr. Paul?' But God does not change His mind, and all Mr. Paul's sound reasoning did not alter the Lord's word to him. Every time he prayed about the matter he got the same answer. Then, reasoning having failed, he resorted to bargaining with the Lord. He promised to go here or there, to do this or that, if only the Lord would allow him to have his doctor's degree; but still the Lord did not change His mind. And all the while Mr. Paul was becoming more and more hungry to know the fullness of the Spirit. This state of affairs continued to within two days of his final examination.

It was Saturday, and Mr. Paul settled down to prepare his sermon for the following day, but, study as he would, he could get no message. The ambition of a lifetime was just within reach of realization, but God made it clear that he must choose between the power he could sway through a doctor's degree and the power of God's Spirit swaying his life. That evening he yielded. 'Lord', he said, 'I am willing to be plain Mr. Paul all my days, but I want to know the power of the Holy Ghost in my life.'

He rose from his knees and wrote a letter to his examiners, asking to be excused from the examination on the Monday, and giving his reason. Then he retired, very happy, but not conscious of any unusual experience. Next morning he told his congregation that for the first time in six years he had no sermon to preach, and explained how it came about. The Lord blessed that testimony more abundantly than any of his well-prepared sermons, and from that time God blessed and owned him in an altogether new way. From that day he knew separation from the world, no longer as an outward thing but as a deep inward reality, and in daily experience he knew the blessedness of the Spirit's presence and power.

God is waiting for a settlement of all our controversies with Him. With Mr. Paul it was a question of his doctor's degree, but with us it may be something quite different. Our absolute surrender of ourselves to the Lord generally

hinges upon some one particular thing, and God is after that one thing. He must have it, for He must have our all. I was greatly impressed by something a great national leader wrote in his autobiography: 'I want nothing for myself; I want everything for my country.' If a man can be willing that his country should have everything and he himself nothing, cannot we say to our God: 'Lord, I want nothing for myself; I want all for Thee. I will what Thou willest, and I want to have nothing outside Thy will.' Not until we take the place of a servant can He take His place as Lord. He is not calling us to devote ourselves to His cause: He is asking us to yield ourselves to His will. Are you willing for anything He wills?

Another friend of mine, like my friend Mr. Paul, had a controversy with the Lord. before his conversion he fell in love, and as soon as he was saved he sought to win the one he loved to the Lord, but she would have nothing to do with spiritual things. the Lord made it clear to him that his relations with that girl must be broken off, but he was deeply devoted to her, so he evaded the issue and continued to serve the Lord and to win souls for Him. But he became conscious of his need for holiness, and that consciousness marked the beginning of dark days for him. He asked for the Spirit's fullness that he might have power to live a holy life, but the Lord seemed continually to ignore his request.

One morning he had to preach in another city and he spoke from Psalm 73:25: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." On his return home he went to a prayer meeting, and there a sister read out the very same verse from which, unknown to her, he had just preached, and followed it with the question: 'Can we truly say: "There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee"?' There was power in that word. It struck right home to his heart and he had to admit to himself that he could not truthfully say that he desired no one in Heaven or earth apart from his Lord. He saw, there and then, that for him everything hinged upon his willingness to give up the girl he loved.

For some it might not have involved much, but for him it was everything. So he began to reason with the Lord: 'Lord I will go to Tibet and work for Thee there if I may marry that girl'. But the Lord seemed to care a great deal more about his relationship with that girl than about his going to Tibet, and no amount of reasoning on his part availed to effect any change of emphasis on the part of the Lord. The controversy went on for several months, and

when again the young man pleaded for the fullness of the Spirit, the Lord still pointed to the same thing. But that day the Lord triumphed, and that young man looked up to Him and said: 'Lord, I can truly say now, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee".' And that was the beginning of a new life for him.

A forgiven sinner is quite different from an ordinary sinner, and a consecrated Christian is quite different from an ordinary Christian. May the Lord bring us to a definite issue regarding the question of His Lordship. If we do yield wholly to Him and claim the power of the indwelling Spirit, we need wait for no special feelings or supernatural manifestations, but can simply look up and praise Him that something has already happened. We can confidently thank Him that the glory of God has already filled His temple. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God?"

CHAPTER FIVE

ENDUEMENT

CWWN, The (Set 2) Vol. 46 & 41:

Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (6), Chap. 167

Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (1), Chap. 19/20/21

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:32-41

SPIRIT BEING POURED OUT

Let us specially note Acts 2:33, which says, "He has poured out this." The Holy Spirit was poured out by the Lord Jesus at Pentecost. He was poured out on the basis that Jesus was exalted! The Spirit was not poured out because I have a clean heart or have been earnestly seeking and praying, but only because the Lord had been exalted. Israel must be brought to know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. The Spirit was not poured out to prove that we have been good and earnest, but to let the whole house of Israel know that Jesus is Lord and Christ. How does God prove this? Verse 36 is connected with verse 33 by the word "therefore." What have they seen and heard? The Spirit poured out! The Spirit is poured out in order to prove that Jesus is Lord (cf. John 7:39).

The Spirit has been poured out. This is the gospel. There was a man in China who had this truth presented to him, then he knelt down and prayed, "Lord Jesus, You have received two things from the Father: Glory for You and the Spirit for me. You have received the glory, but I have not received the Spirit." Then he quickly corrected himself and said, "It is unthinkable that You have not received the glory, therefore it is equally unthinkable that I have not received the Spirit. I praise You that I have received the Spirit." Immediately, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon him. The remission of sins is based on what Christ has done on the cross. The Spirit of Christ was poured out because the Lord is on the throne, that is, on the basis of His glorification. The outpouring of the Spirit was based on the condition of His being glorified, not on us being or doing anything. We did nothing for the forgiveness of our sins, and we have done nothing to receive the Spirit. Look at verse 38. The

condition for the remission of sins is also the condition for the gift of the Spirit. If we have fulfilled the condition for the remission of sins, we have also fulfilled the condition for receiving the Spirit. If we go to a shop and pay ten shillings for two books but bring only one book back, should we return and pay another five shillings for the one we left behind?

In Acts 8:14-17 the Spirit was poured out upon the Samaritans. Individuals receive the remission of their sins as, for example, the thief on the cross, but the outpouring of the Spirit is not for individuals, but for the whole Body. The outpouring joins all the disconnected members into one Body, just as cement unites separate stones into one building. "For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). In the case of the Samaritans, Philip went out, he was not sent by the church. If the Holy Spirit had fallen upon them when Philip was preaching, the oneness of the Body would have been lost. The apostles laid hands on them to express their identification with them. With this expression of the oneness of the Body, the Spirit fell upon them. At the inception of things, God reveals the governing principles. The Samaritans were saved, but had no fellowship with the Body. This fellowship had to be clearly established before the Holy Spirit could be poured out.

Even though the Spirit has been poured out on all the Body, many of us have not realized it. A room may be full of furniture, but we cannot see until the light is turned on. Although Joseph had reached the place of exaltation in Egypt, his father considered that he was as good as dead. Joseph's brothers could not persuade their father that he was alive, much less that he had been exalted. But when their father saw the chariots, he believed. In the Old Testament chariots represent power.

Acts 10:44 says, "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell." If the Spirit had not acted directly upon the audience and Peter had been called on to lay hands on the Gentiles as he did on the Samaritans, would he have been willing? The laying on of hands implies identification. Was Peter identified? If he had laid hands on them and the Spirit had fallen, how would the brothers in Jerusalem have reacted? They would have said to Peter, "This is all your fault. If you had not laid hands on the Gentiles nothing would have happened." They were still distinctly Jewish in their outlook. Peter did not lay hands on those gathered at Caesarea; he did not even speak about the Spirit, but while he was in the middle of his speech the Spirit fell. So Peter said, "Can anyone forbid the water so that these would not be baptized, who have

received the Holy Spirit even as we?" (v. 47). To those in Jerusalem he said, "Who was I that I could have forbidden God?" (11:17). Peter was silenced by the falling of the Holy Spirit

The outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 19:1-6 was supplementary to that at Caesarea. In both cases the outpouring was upon the Gentiles. They were true believers because first, they were referred to as "disciples" (cf. 11:26), and second, if they were not saved, then Paul was preaching regeneration by baptism. Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus, by which they bore testimony to their connection with the Head. The laying on of hands followed the testimony of their connection with the whole Body.

The passages prove that the Spirit that has been poured out upon believers is the common heritage of the whole Body, and that it should mean power in ministry. Why do so few really have power? It is because they lack the in-wrought work of the cross. The result of having the Spirit "within" and the Spirit "upon" is power. Paul speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection. Without the experience of resurrection life there can be no true power. Resurrection is life going into death and coming out with the natural energy, abilities, etc., ruled out. We have many natural powers, including intellect, personality, magnetism, etc. These must go before there can be resurrection power. Everything that does not come with the new birth must go. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). We count on our natural ability for divine service, but because of our eloquence we lose utterance. We need a crisis, a revelation of the hatefulness and emptiness of our natural ability. God has no need of our strength or our wisdom.

A WORD OF EXPLANATION CONCERNING THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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.

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.

THE MANIFESTATIONS AND EVIDENCES OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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 SIX

THE WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BENEFIT OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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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 SEVEN

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT— ENLIGHTENING AND FELLOWSHIP

The Gospel of God,

Vol. 1, Chap. 8

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT— ENLIGHTENING AND FELLOWSHIP

In the past few evenings we have seen how God manifested His grace and accomplished His righteousness. We have also seen how God through His Son Jesus died for us and for our sins, thus accomplishing the work of redemption (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:3). His work of redemption justifies us before God through faith in His blood (Rom. 3:24-25). His resurrection from the dead becomes the assurance of our faith. Through this resurrection we know that God has accepted the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. The work of the Lord Jesus has satisfied God's requirements. His resurrection is a proof to us of this fact. All who believe in the blood of His Son and who come to Him through His redemption are now justified.

Tonight I will not cover the other aspect of the Lord's work, which is His ascension. Since many brothers and sisters already know about this, I will just mention it in brief. The ascension of the Lord Jesus is His appearing before God on our behalf, that we might be accepted in Christ. What is ascension? In the Bible ascension means only one thing objectively, which is for one to be accepted before God. Today the Lord Jesus has appeared before God (Heb. 9:24). We also appear before God in Him. In this way God accepts us in the same way that He has accepted Christ.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT— ENLIGHTENING TO SEEK OUT SINNERS

Tonight we must mention another matter. The gospel is inadequate if it mentions only the work of the Father and the Son without mentioning the

work of the Holy Spirit. There must be the mention of the Holy Spirit also. The work of the gospel is of three aspects. Luke 15 shows us three parables. On the one hand, we see the loving Father waiting to receive the sinners. On the other hand, we see the good Shepherd coming to the world to seek for the lost sheep. One sees the Father waiting at home for the repentant and saved sinner, and one also sees the Son coming to the world to save sinners. But after the Lord's work was completed and before the sinner reaches home, there was another parable, which is the woman patiently and carefully seeking the lost coin with a lighted lamp.

First, one sees the Lord Jesus coming to earth to seek for the sinners. Second, one sees the woman lighting the lamp to enlighten, sweep, and seek for the lost coin. Hence, the Holy Spirit is working together with the Father and the Son to seek out the sinner for the accomplishing of the gospel work. The Son came to die for the sinner; the Father receives the sinner home; and the Holy Spirit works to enlighten man's heart and to show man his real position.

If a person does not have the light of the Holy Spirit, it is possible that he can be like Judas, who saw his sin, was suffering and had no peace within, but would not see his own position before God. Without the light, he would not see his position of perdition. Man's feeling concerning sin goes only so far as to realize that he has done wrong. He does not realize that he is a lost one before God. We are willing to admit that we are sinful. But without the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, we will not admit that as a result of sin, we became lost persons before God. In the eyes of God, we are lost persons.

There is the possibility of a fleshly counterfeit even in the matter of sin-consciousness. The flesh can replace the work of the Holy Spirit. Many tears in revival meetings are but results of man's flesh. They are not produced through the work of the Holy Spirit in man. It is one thing for man to know that he has sinned. It is another thing for man to know that his relationship with God is wrong. The Holy Spirit patiently and carefully enlightens man and shows him that he is lost. What the Holy Spirit does is to show man that his position is wrong. Hence, the first feeling of everyone who has experienced the work of the Holy Spirit of God is not something related to sin, but the feeling that he is away from home. His relationship with God is cut off. He has developed a problem with God. He is a lost man.

Our problem before God does not lie merely in how much we have wasted ourselves in eating, drinking, fornication, or gambling. It is a problem of being away in a distant country. When the Holy Spirit enlightens man, the first thing He does is show man that he is in a distant country. When one reads the last parable in Luke 15, he has to take note of what the prodigal said to the father. He did not say that he had squandered all his father's estate with harlots. The first thing he realized when he came to himself was that in his father's house there was an abundance of bread. Why then was he living with the hogs in a distant country and not able even to satisfy his hunger with the carob pods which were for the hogs? When the Holy Spirit enlightens a person, he will realize that he has a problem with God, that he has left his Father's house, and that he is away from his Father. My friends, when a person in the world has come to the end of himself in his sinful condition, he may, like Judas, become aware of his sins. But without the light of the Holy Spirit, he will not feel that he has left the Father's house and is in a distant country. I am not saying that sins are not serious. Sins are sins. But the Bible shows us that man's chief sin lies in the fact that he is lost. He is standing on an improper ground. He may not be in an improper condition. Of course, all those who are in an improper condition must stand on improper ground. When the Holy Spirit enlightens us, first He shows us that we are on an improper ground. Then He shows us our improper condition. This is the enlightening of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, although there is the love of the Father and the work of the Lord, there is still the need for the Holy Spirit to prepare man's heart. He still has to work in man's heart so that man will receive all that the Lord Jesus has done. One can say that the Lord Jesus is our objective Savior from God and that the Holy Spirit is our subjective Savior from God. The Lord Jesus is the Savior who accomplished redemption for us outwardly, and the Holy Spirit is the Savior who accomplishes salvation for us inwardly. All of us sitting here have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. We all know that we are the lost sheep, that we have all turned to our own ways (Isa. 53:6). We all like sheep were lost. Our problem was not sickness or lameness, but taking a wrong path. The path that one takes is very important. In John 16:8-9, the Lord Jesus told us that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment." What does it mean to be convicted concerning sin? We are convicted concerning sin "because they do not believe into Me." We have developed a problem with Him, and we have

come into conflict with Him. We are convicted of sin because we have not seen His blood and His authority, because we have not met His demands, and because we now have a problem with Him. The greatest sin of man is the refusal to believe in the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to show us that we have developed a problem with the Lord Jesus and with God. Our position is wrong.

But let me ask a question. Is it possible that a person in a distant country can be a good son? Is it possible that he can be frugal and thrifty? Is it possible that he can be a diligent worker? Is it possible that he can be discreet in making friends? We know that this is impossible. If a person has wandered to a distant country and is wrong in his relationship with his father, he must be wrong in all other relationships. That is why the prodigal began to live dissolutely. When the Holy Spirit enlightens a person, not only will He show him that he is in a lost position, but He will also show him that his past conduct has been wrong. The Holy Spirit does not overlook past sins. He pays attention to all sins. However, He turns one's attention to all the sins only after He has shown such a one his perishing position. The Holy Spirit first shows you how dangerous a position you are in, then He shows you how many sins you have. The light of the Holy Spirit enlightens and exposes all the areas in which you have transgressed against others. It exposes all unrighteousness and all the hidden sins in our words and thoughts.

God's chastisement is for His healing. The Holy Spirit's rebuking is for His comforting. God is not pleased to chastise and punish His children without reason. The only reason God punishes is that man would obtain peace. The reason the Holy Spirit shines on man and shows man his shortcomings and his waywardness is that man would accept all the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Without the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, we are not able to see even one of our sins.

GOD POURING OUT THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON MAN FOR HIS SALVATION

What should we do now that the Holy Spirit has enlightened and we have seen our position? There is one thing we continually neglect in our preaching of the gospel, which the Bible pays attention to all the time. We have to realize that the work of the Lord Jesus for the sinners is indeed precious and crucial. But likewise the work of the Holy Spirit for the sinners is equally precious and

crucial. The Bible shows us that not only does the Holy Spirit come to enlighten us and to show us our sins, our lost position, and our unrighteousness before God and men, but this Spirit is also sent from God and is poured forth upon all flesh for the purpose that man everywhere could be saved through His work (Acts 2:17-18, 21).

Some who know a little more than others concerning the truth of the Bible think that it is easy to receive forgiveness and to accept the Lord Jesus as Savior. All he has to do is to kneel down and pray and accept Him from his heart. Perhaps he does not even have to kneel down; he only has to accept in his heart. But many people do not have this knowledge. They may be weak or from inaccessible lands and may not have had the chance to listen to the truth. They may think that it is a very difficult thing to be saved. They may think that they have to pray for a long time, and they have no assurance whether God would listen to their prayers. If I were to ask you today if you are saved, you can answer quickly that you are saved. But such a statement would sound strange to one from an inaccessible land. They would wonder how you could be saved. To them it is a most difficult thing to be saved. They would say that they have prayed for many years and are still not sure if they are saved. They hope to be saved, and they try their best to be saved. But they still do not know if they are saved. It seems as if they are not yet saved. To them, salvation is something very difficult to achieve. But my friends, just as the work of the Lord Jesus is complete, the work of the Holy Spirit in causing us to appropriate the Lord's work is also complete. The Bible shows us clearly that God sent the Holy Spirit for the purpose that we, the sinners, would receive the Holy Spirit's work and be saved. The Son of God came for the sake of the whole world. In the same way, the coming of the Holy Spirit is also for all flesh. As long as we are a man in the flesh, we can obtain the Lord's work for us.

WHOEVER CALLS UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED

Let us read Romans 10:13: "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The subject of Romans 10 is on God causing the Lord Jesus to die and resurrect for us. In the few verses prior to this verse, God asks if there is anyone who can bring Christ down from heaven to die for us and if there is anyone who can bring Christ up from the abyss to resurrect for us (vv. 6-7).

There is no such person. Such a work can only be done by God alone. It is God Himself who has caused Christ to die for us. It is also God Himself who caused Him to resurrect for us. Hence, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord today is saved.

I do not know if you realize that it is a most wonderful thing to be saved just by calling on the name of the Lord. In the original language, the word call means that we only need to say His name. Today in order to contact a brother, all I have to do is to go to his door and knock twice with the door handle. This is to call upon him. I do not have to beg him to listen. I do not have to implore him. I only need to go to him and inform him with a word. This is the meaning of calling. The Chinese version translates this word as implore. This is incorrect. Although one cannot say that the Greek word carries no sense of imploring, it does mean more of an invoking. Since God has caused the Lord Jesus to die and resurrect for us, all who desire to be saved need only to go to God and tell Him. They will then be saved. As long as you would go to the Lord Jesus and call His name once, you will be saved. All you need to do is to open your mouth once. You do not need to do anything else because He has already completed all the work. All the work has been completed. That is why we say that we are justified by faith, and not by works (Gal. 2:16). If you think that even to call once is a work, then God says just believe a little in your heart and it will be enough. Verse 8 says, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart." Since the Lord has done the work of death and resurrection, we have nothing to do. As long as we open our mouth once, everything is done. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

You may ask why it transpires so quickly. It is true that the work of Christ has been accomplished. But why will I be saved just by calling? How can the Lord's work in death, resurrection, and ascension be applied to me so quickly? Acts 2 is an added explanation to this. Verse 17 says, "And it shall be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." We have to remember that in the last days God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. What is the result of this? Verse 21 says, "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Verse 17 is linked to verse 21. God says that He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. Then He says that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved because God has poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. The Holy Spirit is working now on all flesh. If there is anyone today whose sins have not been forgiven and who still does not know how to

be saved and receive eternal life, who does not know that the Lord Jesus is his Savior, he must remember that God has poured out the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is upon you already; He is waiting for you. Once you call, you will be saved.

God says that He would pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. Why is there Pentecost? God gave us Pentecost because He wanted to pour out the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. Now one only needs to open his mouth and say, "O Lord!" and the Holy Spirit will come into him. The Holy Spirit is like the light. As long as there is a crack, light will come in. You may not realize how well light goes through cracks. If you do not believe this, just go next door. If you drill a hole in the wall, as soon as the drill is taken out, the light enters. You do not have to look for it because it comes in immediately. As long as there is a crack, the light will come in. Today God has poured out the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. As long as you are alive, the Holy Spirit is upon you. Whenever you say, "O Lord!" the Holy Spirit begins working. This is the meaning of calling on the name of the Lord. The ancient Chinese say that one must appeal to heaven, to earth, and to his parents. Now we only need to appeal to the Lord once. When one mentions prayer, he always thinks of supplication more than invocation. Actually, all we need to do is invoke Him. Once we open our mouth, the Holy Spirit comes in. When the Holy Spirit comes in, the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus is brought to us.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—FELLOWSHIP

The work of the Holy Spirit is fellowship. The characteristic of God is His love. The characteristic of the Lord Jesus is His grace, and the characteristic of the Holy Spirit is His fellowship. Second Corinthians 13:14 says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." God is love, and His characteristic is love. The Lord Jesus is grace, and His characteristic is grace. Lastly, the characteristic of the Holy Spirit is fellowship. The Holy Spirit has nothing in Himself. He brings the love of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus into you by the way of fellowship. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has not accomplished a work of love. He has not accomplished a work of grace. The Holy Spirit conveys to you what God and the Lord Jesus have accomplished. Hence, the work of the Holy Spirit is fellowship. The Holy Spirit after the Lord's ascension is just filled with the work of the Lord Jesus. He is like the light. As long as there is a crack, He will come in. When He comes in, He will

bring the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God into you. This salvation is surely complete.

Some time ago, a very famous servant of the Lord in England died. Of course, his death was under God's sovereignty. None of us can say anything about that. But humanly speaking, we can say something about his death. He was very weak and had been sick for years. The doctors had prescribed a kind of medicine for him. Whenever he inhaled that medicine, he became strong again. He put this medicine by his chest of drawers. Many times, when he suffered much and felt like dying, he would breathe in the medicine and become well. Although the medicine did not smell good, it was very effective. The night that he died he felt uncomfortable again. He tried to reach for the medicine but was too weak to open the drawer. The next morning others found him in his bed with his hand stretching for the medicine. He died there with half of his body outside his bed. It was not a matter of the lack of the best and most effective medicine. He had lived by that medicine for eight or nine years already. Every time he was about to die, he inhaled the medicine and became well again. Why did he die this time? It was not because there was no medicine, and it was not because he did not want the medicine. It was because the medicine did not get into his hand. In the same way, we are those who are about to perish. The Lord Jesus has accomplished the work. God's medicine has been prepared. As long as we take it, we will be healed. But who will give this medicine to us? There is the doctor to prescribe the medicine. There must also be someone to apply the medicine. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convey the work of the Lord Jesus to us. The love of God is in the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the grace of the Lord Jesus is in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Hence, all those who have received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit receive the grace of the Lord Jesus, and all those who have received the grace of the Lord Jesus have a taste of the love of God.

When the Holy Spirit comes, He gives you the light and shows you your failures and degradation. He shows you that you are lost. God has worked to such an extent that once you open your mouth and say a word and once your heart has a place for the Lord and would invoke Him, you will be saved. You do not have to go to a great cathedral to be saved. You do not have to pray to be saved. You do not have to step forward to the altar to be saved. The Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh already. Wherever you are, the Holy Spirit is there. Hallelujah! This is a fact! Today the Holy Spirit has already been poured out upon all flesh. You do not need to look for Him. He is looking for

you. You can call on the street or in a house. You can receive God's salvation in the sweetest place or the most unpleasant place. You can have it in the most crowded place or the most quiet place. The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh. No matter where you are, as long as you call on the name of the Savior, you will be saved.

Romans 10 talks about the fact, and Acts 2 talks about the reason. Romans 10 only tells us that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. It does not tell us the reason. Acts 2 tells us that the Holy Spirit is upon all men. Hence, as long as one opens his mouth, he shall be saved. The Holy Spirit has already entered in. When man calls on His name, he shall be saved.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD

There is another thing that the Holy Spirit does and this concerns the Word of God. Many people do not see the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Hence, they do not treasure the words of the Bible that much. How can man receive the work of the Lord's cross? Many are bewildered about this. Many sinners even pray, "Lord Jesus, be merciful to me and die for me." They do not know what redemption is at all. Here we see the preciousness of God's Word. After God has accomplished His work through His Son, He declares it to us and shows us through the words of the Bible. In other words, God has placed the grace that the Lord accomplished for us in His own Word and has sent this Word to us.

If we subtracted the work of the Lord Jesus from the Word of God, what would we have? If we took away the work of the Lord Jesus from the Word of God, God's Word would become zero; nothing would be left. The reason that God's Word is God's Word is that in it there is the fact of the Lord's work. What is a word? A word is a recorded fact. Without facts, words become lies. With the facts, the words become real. If the Lord's work for us is not real, the Word of God is not trustworthy. But if the work of the Lord Jesus is a fact, if God has accomplished His righteousness through the Lord Jesus, and if God has accepted us in the Lord Jesus, God's Word must be trustworthy. Hence, we have to remember that the work of the Lord Jesus is contained in the Word of God. Here we see the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit is the doorkeeper of God's Word. I like my English name, Watchman. It means one that guards and keeps watch. God has put the accomplished work of the Lord in the Holy Spirit. Today the Holy Spirit is carefully watching. He is like a doorkeeper. As soon as a person receives the Lord, immediately He opens up the matters in God's Word to him.

A few days ago a brother sent me a box of candy. The box was very big and had flowers printed on it. It was wrapped in peach-colored paper with a letter attached, saying that the candy was a gift for me. I can say that what I received was a paper box. I did not receive the candy itself. I did not even taste the candy. What was in my hand was a paper box. But what I had actually received was the candy because the candy was in the box. What I took home was the box. But at the same time, I took the candy that came with the box. What we receive today is the Word of God. But what we receive into us is the work of the Lord Jesus. When we receive the Word of God, we get the work of the Lord, for the Lord's work is in God's Word. When one believes today, he is not believing that the Lord has done something for him. He is believing in the Word of God. But when one believes in the Word of God, the Lord's work is automatically applied to him. Hence, if you say that you are not very smart and that you cannot understand the work of the Lord, I will say to you that God does not require you to believe in the work of the Lord. He only requires you to believe in God's Word. When you believe in God's Word, you will obtain His work in the Word. Apparently, what I took home was the paper box. How do I know that it contained candy? When I went home, I removed the colored paper and opened the box and took out the candy. Thank the Lord. This is how the Holy Spirit works. We receive God's Word by faith, and the Holy Spirit opens up the work of the Lord that is contained in God's Word. Therefore, we must realize that the work of the Holy Spirit is fellowship. The Holy Spirit conveys the work of the Lord contained in God's Word to us. Without the Holy Spirit's conveying, God's Word remains only the Word. But when the Holy Spirit comes, the Word is opened up. Hence, God has prepared the Lord Jesus. He has also prepared the Holy Spirit for this work of fellowship.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVEYING THE LORD'S WORK AND THE LORD HIMSELF TO US

Now we must see how the Holy Spirit conveys the work of the Lord to us. The Lord's work includes all that He has done on the cross, in His resurrection, in His ascension, in His second coming, and in everything that He bestows upon us. We cannot go into detail concerning all these items. There is too much to say about them. To speak of them, we would have to mention the work of the Holy Spirit in the entire New Testament. Tonight we can only mention it in brief. The coming of the Holy Spirit is not merely for conveying the Lord's work to us. It is also for conveying the Lord Himself to us. The purpose of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is to convey the Lord Jesus and His work to us. If a man has not received the work of the Lord, the Holy Spirit conveys this work to him. If a man has not received the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit conveys the Lord Himself to man. At the time we were saved, the work of the Holy Spirit was to convey the work of the Lord to us. Later His work is to convey the Lord Himself to us. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the Lord Jesus.

A week ago, two sisters came to me asking me how to translate the English phrase to minister with Christ into Chinese. This is a difficult phrase to translate. It means to serve others with Christ, like serving someone with a cup of tea or a bowl of rice. The work of the Holy Spirit is to serve the Lord Jesus to us. When we received the Lord, the Holy Spirit transferred the Lord's work to us. Hence, all the work that the Lord has accomplished, such as the gift of repentance, forgiveness, cleansing, justification, sanctification, and joy, are accomplished by the Holy Spirit in us. Matters such as regeneration or the receiving of eternal life are accomplished in us through the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convey the life of the Lord Jesus to us. It is similar to a wire conveying electricity from the power plant at Willow Tree Creek to us. Through the Holy Spirit, we receive a new life, a new heart, and a new spirit (cf. Ezek. 36:26). When we receive a new spirit and a new heart, the Lord Jesus is able to abide in us through the Holy Spirit. Hence, regeneration is the Holy Spirit preparing a new temple for the Lord.

Since we are of the flesh, the Lord Jesus cannot dwell in us. We are like the world under judgment at the time of Noah. After the water subsided, Noah released a dove from the ark (Gen. 8:8-9). But the dove found no place of rest; it could not abide anywhere. In the same way, we are full of sin. The Lord Jesus can find no place to abide in us. That being the case, God gave to us the Holy Spirit. The Lord accomplished everything objectively. Now the Holy Spirit gave us a new spirit subjectively, so that the Son of God can abide in our

spirit. The Holy Spirit came first to prepare a dwelling for the Lord Jesus. Then the Lord came to live in us.

On the one hand, the Holy Spirit gave us a new life within. On the other hand, day by day He conveys God's truth and purpose into us. This is why the Lord says that when the Spirit of reality comes, He will guide us into all reality (John 16:13). Furthermore, there is another item of the work of the Holy Spirit, which is to communicate to us the gifts, such as prophecy, tongues, healings, miracles, revelations, words of wisdom and words of knowledge, faith, and all kinds of other gifts.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PRESERVING THE ETERNAL FRESHNESS OF THE LORD'S WORK

I do not want to enumerate in detail all the items of the Holy Spirit's work of fellowship. I will only stress one thing: all of the work of the Lord Jesus is conveyed to us today through the Holy Spirit. Even the Lord Jesus Himself is conveyed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is God's salvation. Many people do not understand the Holy Spirit's work of fellowship. They ask me how the Lord's work that was accomplished nineteen hundred years ago could be applied to us today. Actually, if there were not the work of the Holy Spirit, their question would be fully justified. How can a work accomplished nineteen hundred years ago be applied to us today? What the Lord accomplished nineteen hundred years ago was not left to "dry in the wind and the sun." God has preserved and nurtured this work in the Holy Spirit. That is why this work remains so fresh. Today we can receive the work of the Lord Jesus. This work can be the same as it was before.

Once I went to a shop and the shopkeeper gave me a can of imported vegetable soup. The can looked old and ugly outside. It was covered with dust. The shopkeeper recommended it very much and was willing to sell it to me at a discount. I bought it and took it home. When I examined the date afterwards, I found out that the date was older than my age. Later, when I opened it and cooked it, I found out that the soup was still quite palatable. If the Lord Jesus' work were not preserved in the Holy Spirit, the question of time and space would come in. How could the Savior who died on Calvary nineteen hundred years ago come into me? But with the Holy Spirit, there is no question of time and space. God has preserved the work of the Lord in the

Holy Spirit. Now the work of the Lord is living. This is why the Holy Spirit is able to convey the work of the Lord into us.

I have a brother who studies biochemistry. He conducts experiments all the time. In order to cultivate a certain bacteria, he has to use a certain kind of chemical. As long as he maintains a certain temperature, the bacteria will live. If the temperature becomes too high or too low, or if other elements are added into the culture, the bacteria will die. The best environment to preserve the work of the Lord is the Holy Spirit. Once the work of the Lord leaves the Holy Spirit, it will not be able to live and will die. The same is true with the Christian life. A Christian life can never be separated from the Holy Spirit. If the truths understood by the Lord's children are separated from the Holy Spirit, they will gradually dry out and die. Hence, all spiritual matters have to be in the Holy Spirit. Apart from the Holy Spirit, everything will die. Nothing will survive. We have to see that the Holy Spirit is the source of life. In Him is life. Apart from Him, everything is dead.

Through the Holy Spirit, God conveys everything of Himself and the work of the Lord into us. God has prepared everything related to our salvation. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit has come and is ready to convey everything that God has prepared. If there is anyone who is not saved yet, he cannot say that God has not loved him, or that the Lord Jesus has not accomplished redemption for him. He cannot say that the word is too far from him and is unreachable.

My friends, do you have a mouth? Some people may argue that they are dumb and that they do not have a mouth. But they have a heart. They can be without a mouth. But they cannot be without a heart. Romans 10:8-9 says, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Why is this? Because God has said that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Perhaps you wonder how it can be so simple and how it is that one can be saved just by calling. This is because the Holy Spirit has come. He will save you as soon as you call. How does one call? If he has a mouth, he can use his mouth. If he does not have a mouth, he can call with his heart. This word is not far from us. It is in our mouth and even in our heart. This word is the word of justification by faith that we have been speaking of in the past few days.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SEAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Notes on Scriptural Messages (1), Issue No. 14

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30

The two passages we just read are the only places in the whole Bible that mention the Holy Spirit as a seal. Today I am going to talk about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Christian. There is one item concerning the Holy Spirit which I would ask you to pay special attention to. Many people think that after a man is saved, he still needs to seek the Holy Spirit. I will now prove whether or not this statement is true. Please do not believe something just because I have said it. One must see what the Bible says, for only the word of the Bible is reliable.

Let us consider Ephesians 1:13: "In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation." What is the word of the truth? It is the gospel of salvation. After we hear the gospel, we believe in Christ. What we believe is a person, Christ, and not a doctrine or a theory. The word of the truth tells us about the Christ who can save us. Its aim is to bring us to have faith in Christ through the hearing of the gospel; its purpose is not to bring us to have faith in some gospel sermons or some doctrines written on pieces of paper. The latter are not the genuine thing and will not save us. What we hear is the word of the truth, the gospel of our salvation. What we believe is Christ. Therefore, the first step is that we hear the word of the truth, the gospel of our salvation, and the second step is that we believe in Christ.

After a person has heard the word of the truth and believed in Christ, he is "sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise." The words "you were sealed" are very important. It means at that moment when one believes, he receives the Holy Spirit of promise. It does not mean that one has to wait for a while; it does not mean that one has to wait for three days, five days, or for some time before he can receive the Holy Spirit. When the Bible tells us that "you were sealed," it means "you were sealed." Brothers and sisters, while you are sitting here, I would like to ask if you have heard the word of the truth and believed

in Christ. If your answer is yes, do you not think that you have the Holy Spirit? The Bible tells us that "you were sealed"; the Holy Spirit dwells in the believers like the sealing of a seal. Do we have the Holy Spirit? Let me say this. Even if you are a backsliding or very bad Christian, the Holy Spirit is still dwelling in you in the same way that he is dwelling in other believers. In a minute I will show you the difference between a sanctified believer's feeling and an unsanctified believer's feeling towards the Holy Spirit; I will show you the difference between an obedient believer's feeling and a disobedient believer's feeling toward the Holy Spirit. However, whether it is the sanctified believer or unsanctified believer, the obedient one or disobedient one, the Holy Spirit dwells in them all; there is no difference, and there is no distinction whatsoever. Even though there may be differences in other matters, there is no difference as far as the Holy Spirit dwelling in them as a seal. If you have heard the gospel and have believed in Christ, the Holy Spirit will dwell in you in the same way He dwells in other believers. But if you have not believed in Christ, there will surely be a difference. It does not matter what kind of a person one is, whether he lives a good life or a bad one, whether he is advancing or backsliding, obedient or disobedient to God; there is no difference between them. If you think that you have the Holy Spirit because you obey God, love Him, have a joyful feeling, see some visions or some tongues of fire, etc., and that, unless you have these things, you do not have the Holy Spirit, you are in a heresy. Whoever believes in the Lord has the Holy Spirit. At the time we believe, the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Here it says that one receives "the Holy Spirit of the promise" (v. 13). What is a "promise"? The whole book of Galatians tells us that a "promise" is something received freely. A "promise" is of grace; it is not a wage. It is given to us freely by God. Most people do not understand why every Christian, that is, every saved person, has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. They think that their spiritual condition must reach a certain level before the Holy Spirit will dwell in them. Yet the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit dwells in us because of the work of the Lord Jesus' redemption and not because of our own work. We can understand this by looking at one of the types in the Old Testament. Leviticus 14:25 says, "Then he shall slaughter the lamb of the trespass offering; and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot." What happened after this? Following this, verse 28 says, "Then the priest shall put some of the oil which

is in his palm on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot—upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering." Those who received the application of the blood received the anointing of the oil. Where there is no blood, there is no oil. The oil is put upon a person after the blood is first put upon him. The Holy Spirit comes down because the blood is there already. God pours down the Holy Spirit of promise not because of our good behavior, but because of the blood. Therefore, all those who have heard the word of the truth and believed in Christ have received the Holy Spirit.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A SEAL

What does the last part of verse 13 tell us about the Holy Spirit? It is like a "seal." Thank God that the Holy Spirit is like a "seal." Brothers and sisters, do you know why the sealing is needed and what "the seal" means? Second Timothy 2:19 says, "Having this seal, [1] The Lord knows those who are His, and, [2] Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." Therefore, there are two meanings to the sealing. First, once something is sealed, it signifies that the thing belongs to the man who sealed it. Second, what is being sealed bears the resemblance of the seal. "The Lord knows those who are His," indicates that all those who are sealed by the Lord belong to Him. "And, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness," indicates that all those sealed by the Lord should bear His image. The first meaning of the sealing is that we belong to the Lord. The second meaning is that we are the same as the Lord and bear His image. For instance, when I put a seal on an envelope with sealing wax, the seal on the envelope is just like my seal. Sometimes we see sons that look like their fathers and daughters that look like their mothers. We say that they must have come out of the same mold. This is the second meaning of the Holy Spirit as a seal. Therefore, the Holy Spirit as a seal tells us two things. First, I belong to Him; second, I should bear His image, for He is holy.

The Ephesians understood the Holy Spirit as a seal much better than we do, for their city was engaged in lumber business. Ephesus was close to a harbor, and the trees were cut on the mountain and floated downstream to the harbor. Once I read a book about Ephesus. It said that many merchants went there to buy lumber. Each of them brought with him a different seal of iron, like a hammer. When they completed negotiation on a load of lumber, each of them would seal the lumber he bought with his own hammer-seal before he went

home. It did not matter if they did not come back after three or five months; some did not have need for the lumber right away. Whenever they wanted their lumber, they would send their men to get it, bringing along the hammer-seal used previously. They only needed to compare the seals on the wood with their own seal. All the pieces that had their seal belonged to them, and they could take them away. No mistake could be made this way. This is the way the lumber merchants in Foochow conducted business also. They would buy the lumber in the upper part of the Ming River and seal it with their hammer-seals. Then the wood would be floated down the Ming River to Foochow. There the buyers would come and check their purchase by comparing it with their seal.

God has not only sealed us with the Holy Spirit as a seal, indicating that we belong to Him now, but has also told us that we are sealed unto the day of redemption. Hence, Ephesians 4:30 says, "You were sealed unto the day of redemption." It does not say "for a while" but "unto the day of redemption." What does "the day of redemption" refer to? It refers to the day our body is redeemed and raptured. When the Lord comes to reap and rapture the believers, there will be some in Shanghai, some in Southeast Asia, some in China, some in England, some in Africa, and some elsewhere. How can the Lord recognize His people? It is by the seal. The seal is just for the day of redemption. Where there is the seal, there will be no confusion and no mistake. God is like the lumber merchant. He only accepts those who belong to Him according to His seal. Those without the Holy Spirit are not His, and He will not accept them. Those with the Holy Spirit are His, and He will reap, raise them up, and take them home at the proper time. (Here, we will not cover the matter of the times and the order of rapture, for it is beyond the scope of this subject.) Our Christian life begins with salvation and ends with our redemption. From the beginning to the end, the Holy Spirit is always like a seal. The Holy Spirit is the seal of God. The Holy Spirit is not the sealer but the seal. It is God who puts the Holy Spirit into us as a seal. If you have not believed in the Lord Jesus, your position is very dangerous. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus as Savior and as Lord, no matter if you are a new believer or have been a believer for a long time, you are safe and sound, for the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you. How long will this indwelling last? It will last unto the day of redemption. Some may think that if they are not good, if they stumble, or if they commit sins, the Holy Spirit will cease to dwell in them. But the Bible says, "Unto the day of redemption." There is something

called "the chart of the heart" printed by some churches. It contains some excellent truths. But its teaching concerning the Holy Spirit is completely wrong. It shows the Holy Spirit as a dove which flies away when a believer commits a serious sin, and man's heart is left without the Holy Spirit but with the devil and all kinds of lust. This is a great mistake. The Bible tells us very clearly that in the New Testament age, the Holy Spirit dwells in us unto the day of redemption; He never leaves us halfway through. Once God seals us with the Holy Spirit, it indicates that we belong to Him; it means that we will belong to Him forever, and this fact can never be changed.

But this is not all. There is another very glorious gift, which is that we can have the power to be like Him. When God seals us, not only does it indicate that we belong to Him, but that we, the sealed ones, bear the image of His seal. We know that if we put a seal on soft wax, it will naturally bear the image of the seal. When we are sealed within by God with the Holy Spirit, we will have God's nature and life. Such a nature and life are God-like. If we live according to them, we will have a living on earth that is God-like.

Many people are misled to think that they should try to improve and cultivate themselves and work hard before they can be like God, but this is not true. At the time we are saved, God has already made us like Him and given us something of Himself in our inner being. God has never commanded us to be like Him, because it is impossible for us to do it by ourselves. Yet we do have our responsibility, which is to express this image and not allow it to be covered by anything of the world. What a glorious truth that God's seal is in us! By this seal, that is, the Holy Spirit, we can live out God's life. With such a provision, nothing is impossible! Now we must realize that in us there is a treasure out of which we can bring forth many precious things.

As those who have the seal of God, our only responsibilities are, on the one hand, to reckon ourselves as being dead to sin and believe that everything that is against such an image has been dealt with by the Lord's cross. On the other hand, we have to consecrate ourselves to God and let the Holy Spirit live out God's life. When we fail and stumble, we still have not lost the image given by God's seal; we have only covered up this image and not lived out a life that is of God.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT BEING AN EARNEST

Now let us look at verse 14: "Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory." Paul told us in verse 13 that the Holy Spirit has sealed us. First, this indicates that we belong to God and, second, it makes us like God. He told us in verse 14 that the Holy Spirit is like a pledge (or what we commonly know as a deposit). What does this mean? Paul told us not only that the Holy Spirit has sealed us, but also that the Holy Spirit was given as a pledge, a deposit. In the original language, deposit means an actual deposit and a sample.

A. Deposit

What is a "deposit"? Suppose I am buying a piece of land for two thousand dollars. I pay one hundred dollars in advance as a deposit. This means that the seller receives one hundred dollars first, and I give him the balance later. I only pay him a portion at first, while I must pay the balance later. If I am faithful, I will pay him the balance of one thousand nine hundred dollars. God does likewise. He gives us the Holy Spirit as a pledge. This means that He gives to us part of the heavenly blessing first as a guarantee that He will give us all the heavenly inheritance later. God puts Himself in a legally unchangeable position. He has paid the deposit and must therefore pay the whole later. God's Holy Spirit is the guarantee of His promise. The Bible says that we, the believers, will receive much in abundance. Yet, how do we know He will carry out His word? We know it through the Holy Spirit. God makes the Holy Spirit a deposit and proves to us that none of His promise will fail. Since God has given us the Holy Spirit as a "deposit," He is saying to us through the Holy Spirit that all of His will be ours. Once He does this, it becomes impossible for Him to change. Is there anyone in the world who has paid a deposit and will not pay the rest unless he is dishonest? God is faithful and righteous. Once He pays the deposit, He will surely pay the balance.

Mr. Philip Mauro said, "What is the deposit like? It is just like an engagement ring." It means that now your fiancé gives you a small part, and that he will give you all that he has on the wedding day. Therefore, God gives us the Holy Spirit as a "deposit" indicating that all the riches in the heavens will be ours.

B. Sample

People in ancient times had another custom. At the time of the sale of a piece of land, not only did the buyer pay some money as a deposit to the seller, but the seller also gave some of the soil as a sample to the buyer. This meant that the soil one received on that day would be the same as the soil he would receive in the future. God has given us the Holy Spirit not only as a deposit but also as a sample so that we can enjoy a foretaste of the heavenly things. By this, we know that what is given to us by God today will be the same in nature as what He will give to us in the future. If silver is given today, silver will be given in the future. If gold is given today, gold will be given in the future. God gives us the Holy Spirit today in order that we can have a foretaste of the heavenly things on earth today.

Brothers and sisters, have you ever tasted the heavenly things? The Bible tells us that Paul heard unspeakable words and tasted heavenly things. We fellowship with God, and we also fellowship with one another in the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the means through which we fellowship with God and by which we receive the heavenly joy and the bestowing of the Lord's love. When we come to the Lord, worship Him, or fellowship with one another, do we not feel the Lord's love and joy? This is the foretaste of the heavenly things! Once a brother talked about the Lord's love with me. He said, "When the Lord's love comes upon me, I cannot sit still. I want to go out and run for a while." What we taste today is good and rich. Yet in the future it will be better and richer. Sometimes we feel the Lord's love and joy burning within us like a fire. Yet what we taste today is still only a little. There will be much more in the future! What we taste today is just a little—a little today, a little tomorrow, and a little the day after. What we will taste in the future is not just this little. We cannot imagine how good it will be. It will be so good that we will say, "Even eternity is too short!"

We must remember that there are two meanings to the Holy Spirit being a deposit from God to us today. The first is that God gives us a part today and that He will give us the whole in the future. The other is that what God gives us today, He will give us in the future. When the spies of Israel cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes from the brook of Eshcol, and two carried it, they told Moses, "We came to the land to which you sent us; and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit" (Num. 13:27). This cluster of grapes indicated the nature of the land of Canaan. Surely it flowed with milk and honey! The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is also like this cluster of grapes. The taste today is just like what the heavenly taste will be in the future. We

thank and praise God that He has given us the Holy Spirit, not only as our deposit, guaranteeing that He will give us the whole, but as a foretaste of the heavenly things.

III. GRIEVING NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT

What we have covered thus far is the grace of God that has been given to us. Now we will consider the responsibility that we should bear. Let us read Ephesians 4:30: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption." Paul exhorted us with the fact that the Holy Spirit is a seal. He meant that since we have the Holy Spirit as a seal, we should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

What does "grieve" mean? Does it say here, "Let not the Holy Spirit of God be angry"? No, it does not say this. The Bible clearly says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." It is not "being angry with," but "grieve." This is a matter of love! Where there is hatred, there is anger. One cannot make the Holy Spirit of God angry, but one can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. We thank and praise God for the Holy Spirit of God within us only grieves; He never becomes angry through hatred. No matter how bad we are, the Holy Spirit only "grieves"; He does not become angry. I have heard someone say, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit to the point that He runs away." This is impossible. When Paul said, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God," he continued immediately with, "In whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption." No Christians can pray as David did: "Do not take the Spirit of Your holiness away from me" (Psa. 51:11). This is a prayer of the Old Testament age. No one in the New Testament can ever pray this prayer. No Christian, rightly taught, would pray like this. If a Christian knows the gospel, he would never pray such a prayer. Since the Holy Spirit can never run away, Paul entreated the believers in Ephesus, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." When a person is not good, others will either become angry with him or run away from him. Man may become angry or run away, but the Holy Spirit will never run away. The Holy Spirit can only grieve. If He could run away, He would not have to grieve. The Holy Spirit cannot become angry because He loves you! Neither can the Holy Spirit run away because He loves you! Therefore, you should not grieve Him.

What does "grieve" mean? It is the same word as "sorrowful" in Matthew 26:37. Brothers and sisters, what kind of sorrow is this sorrow? It is the

sorrow of our Lord Jesus at Gethsemane when God put upon Him all sins; He was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. If a Christian becomes weak and commits sins, the indwelling Holy Spirit will be sorrowful as the Lord was sorrowful even unto death. He will continually grieve within us. We should know that this is not a small thing. The Holy Spirit within us can be in either of two states: He can either be happy or sorrowful. Therefore, we should ask ourselves whether the indwelling Holy Spirit is happy or sorrowful. If He is not happy, He must be sorrowful. We can make Him either happy or sorrowful. May God enlighten us to know ourselves and see how rebellious, sinful, and evil we are. Yet the Holy Spirit never becomes angry within us, and He never runs away from us. He loves us and would only grieve within us.

When the Lord was at Gethsemane, He said to the disciples, "So were you not able to watch with Me for one hour?" (Matt. 26:40b). The Lord's sorrow was just for a while or for one hour. But the Holy Spirit dwells within us unto the day of redemption. As such, His sorrow is an enduring one. The sorrow of our Lord Jesus was over after a while, but the Holy Spirit is under the pressure of our sins moment by moment and day after day. If we disobey Him and refuse to listen to His voice all the time, do we realize how much He grieves within us? I do not know whether the Holy Spirit is happy or sorrowful in you. But you should know that either you are making Him happy, or you are making Him sorrowful.

What makes the Holy Spirit sorrowful? It is sins! Offenses against others, filthiness, fondness in criticisms, stealing of others' secrets and gossiping about them, finding fault with others, not forgiving others, not being faithful to the work of the Lord, to ones' own family, or to all things, inability to love others, or hunting for opportunity to profit oneself—these sins will grieve the Holy Spirit within us! Not only do sins grieve Him, even our disobedience to God's will, the choosing of our own way, or taking the wrong way, also grieves Him! This is not all. Young Christians who love the world, who are reluctant to give up the world, to suffer, to testify for the Lord, or who do not care for the souls of sinners but have a cold heart, not caring if others are saved or perishing, also grieve the Holy Spirit!

You can grieve the Holy Spirit, but He will never leave, and He never becomes angry. He loves you. This is why He is sorrowful in you! Sometimes you may say, "Why am I not happy?" Let me tell you: if the Holy Spirit is not happy, you cannot be happy. If the Holy Spirit is happy, you can be happy. If

the Holy Spirit grieves, how can you be happy? Even if you have worldly happiness, you cannot make the Holy Spirit within you happy. If you know what you must do, yet you do not do it according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, you will grieve the Holy Spirit within you, and you cannot be genuinely happy. You can only have "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). If the Holy Spirit does not rejoice in you, you cannot rejoice in Him either.

May God enlighten us today to truly know that the Holy Spirit is like a seal and a deposit. Our responsibility on earth today is not to grieve the Holy Spirit. This is what we should be watchful to do everyday. May God bless us!

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SPIRIT

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Chap. 12

Scripture Reading: Heb. 12:5-7, 9-11; Gal. 5:22-23; 4:19; 1 Cor. 3:12, 14;
Gen. 2:12; Phil. 4:11-12

The title "the God of Jacob" implies how the Holy Spirit disciplined Jacob, how He dealt with Jacob's natural life, how He constituted Christ into Jacob, and how He bore the fruit of the Spirit in Jacob. If we want to know the God of Jacob, we have to know the constitution by the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. If we want to know the God of Jacob, we need to allow the Spirit to perform His work in us, to deal with our natural life, to constitute Christ into our inward being, and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in us so that we can become the vessels of God's testimony.

God deals with our natural life for the purpose of ushering us into the carving work of the Spirit, the processing by the Spirit, and the constituting of the Spirit. What is the meaning of constitution? The constitution referred to here is a vertical and horizontal interweaving of knitwork. The constitution of the Spirit means that the Spirit constitutes Christ into our being to the point that we and Christ become one. Therefore, the constitution of the Spirit is one step more advanced than Christ being our life. Christ being our life is the foundation; the Spirit constituting Christ into our being is maturity. Christ being our life is Christ within us living for us. The constitution of the Spirit is the constituting of Christ into us to the extent that Christ's character becomes our character. God's goal in dealing with our natural life is that we would have the constitution of the Spirit. The knowledge of the God of Isaac is a knowledge of the God who has given Christ to us for our enjoyment. The knowledge of the God of Jacob is the knowledge of the Spirit who is constituting Christ into our being. This condition is like the weaving and constituting of an embroidery work.

PARTAKING OF GOD'S HOLINESS

Hebrews 12:9-10 says, "The Father of spirits...disciplined...for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness." God deals with us and the Spirit works in us step by step, leading us through many hardships and distressing situations for the purpose of making us partakers of "His holiness." "His holiness" here is not the "sanctification" spoken of in 1 Corinthians 1:30. The sanctification in 1 Corinthians 1 is a matter of Christ being our sanctification; Christ is made sanctification to us. Hebrews 12 speaks of the Father of spirits who takes us through disciplines and trials so that we may partake of His holiness. Such a holiness is produced through our trials. It is wrought out of discipline and produced by the Spirit through all the difficult and adverse environments we encounter. "Now no discipline at the present time seems to be a matter of joy, but of grief; but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it" (Heb. 12:11). This is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

The natural life of some Christians is inclined to exhibition. They are like Hezekiah, who was fond of showing off all that he had to others (2 Kings 20:12-13). When God heals them of a particular kind of sickness, they incessantly "testify" of this matter to others. Actually this is not testifying, but idle talking, and the particular sickness often returns because these people are prone to show themselves off; therefore, God has to discipline them. When they eventually become tired of their exhibition, they will spontaneously stop their bragging "testimonies." They will not need to grit their teeth and make up their minds to not brag anymore. They will have been dealt with by God to such an extent that the peaceable fruit has been produced spontaneously, and they no longer act the way they once did. This is the constitution of the Spirit. God has not only given Christ to us to be our life, but He is constituting Christ into our being to be our character. Christ being our life is the foundation, while the nature of Christ becoming our nature is the constitution of the Spirit. The Spirit deals with our natural life with the purpose of producing a new character in us. God uses all kinds of ways to discipline us so that we may partake of His holiness and bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

This is what the history of Jacob shows. Jacob not only knew that God is the beginning of everything and the strength behind everything; he also acquired a new character. God worked on him and constituted Christ's character into him so that Christ's character became his character. In his later years, Jacob was entirely changed because Christ's character was constituted into him.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." This shows us that "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" are not virtues given to us by the Holy Spirit, but are fruit borne by the Holy Spirit in us. The fruit of the Holy Spirit means that something of Christ is assimilated by us through the work of the Holy Spirit with the result that these things become our character and our characteristics. This is the meaning of the fruit of the Spirit. This is what we mean when we say that the Holy Spirit is constituting Christ into us. The Holy Spirit is doing one work in us, which is to deal with our natural life and to constitute Christ in us, making Christ's character our character so that spontaneously "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" will be lived out of us and we will bear the fruit of the Spirit. This is what God is showing us today.

CHRIST BEING FORMED IN US

Paul told the Galatians that he travailed "again in birth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). God has given Christ to the believers; this is the first step. But He wants to do a deeper work, which is to have Christ formed in us. God deals with our natural life so that Christ may be formed in us, that is, that Christ may be wrought into us and constituted in us.

Peter was originally a very strong person. His natural life always put him ahead of others. After God touched his natural life, that is, after He touched his strongest part, Peter became weak. However, Peter's weakness was not the end. God went on to constitute Christ into his being. As a result, when others touched Peter, they realized that his being was changed and that he had become a new person. What is the extent of the work of the Spirit? He works to the extent that Christ is constituted and formed in us.

Paul said in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned." This was Christ being formed in him, which he learned step by step. He learned "how to be abased" and "how to abound;" he learned "in whatever circumstances...to be content." "In everything and in all things I have learned the secret" (v. 12). Paul's person had undergone a basic change. Therefore, not only do we need Christ in us to be our life, but we also need Christ to be formed in us. Not only do we have

the Christ given to us by God, but we also need the Christ assimilated by us and then formed in us. This is what God wants us to attain. This is to know the God of Jacob.

THE FORMING OF PRECIOUS STONES

We need to pay special attention to three portions of the Scripture. One portion is Genesis 2, where gold and precious stones are mentioned. Another portion is 1 Corinthians 3, where gold and precious stones are built upon a foundation. The third portion is Revelation 21, which speaks of the New Jerusalem being composed of pure gold, and the foundations of the wall of the city being adorned with every precious stone. God's purpose is not only with gold and silver, but also with precious stones. We know that gold typifies God the Father. All that is of God is gold. Silver signifies redemption, typifying the Son. All the gifts of Christ are silver. How about the precious stones? The precious stones are not like gold and silver, which are elements. They are compounds of several elements. Precious stones are formed through the process of intense underground heat. Continuous heat brings about a chemical change, and precious stones are formed. Only after the stones are carved, cut, and polished do they become beautiful and valuable gems. Therefore, the precious stones typify the work of the Holy Spirit in man. Day by day the Spirit works on us, carves us, deals with us, and constitutes us until Christ is formed in us. The Spirit leads us through many difficulties and environments so that Christ may be constituted into our being. When Christ in us becomes not only the Christ given by God, but the Christ digested and assimilated into us, we become the precious stones.

In Genesis 2 there is gold and there are the precious stones, but there is no silver. According to God's eternal plan, this signifies that everything comes out of Him and that the Holy Spirit constitutes Christ into us. Silver signifies the Christ that God has given to us; yet this alone is not enough. God wants Christ to be constituted into us, that is, to be digested and assimilated by us and formed in us until we become precious stones. In the new heaven and new earth, God will reach His goal, and there will be only gold and precious stones, but no silver. All the silver will have become precious stones. Hence, God's ultimate goal is to have precious stones. Consequently, in Genesis 2 God used the fruit of the tree of life to signify the life that He gives to us. Fruit is something that is eaten and digested. God not only wants to give us life; He also wants us to digest life.

May God open our eyes to see that in His holy way and according to His plan, He wants to gain some vessels to fulfill His goal. These vessels must know the God of Abraham; they must know that all things are of God. They must also know the God of Isaac; they must know that everything for our enjoyment and inheritance is given to us by Him. They must know that everything depends on our being in Christ and Christ being in us. They must also know the God of Jacob; they must know that God deals with our natural life and constitutes Christ into our being through the Spirit. May God bless us, and may He lead us to the knowledge of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob so that we may become vessels for His testimony.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Messages For Building Up New Believers,

Vol. 3, Chap. 42

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:28; Matt. 10:29-31; Jer. 48:11; Gen. 47:7-10

We have believed in the Lord and have received a new life. But there are many habits which we acquired before we believed in the Lord. Many character traits and aspects of our disposition were part of us before we believed in the Lord. Those habits, character traits, and disposition have now become a frustration to the expression of the new life. This is the reason many people do not touch the new life or experience the Lord when they meet us. Often, others touch our old person. We may be very clever, but our cleverness is an unregenerated cleverness. We may be very warm, but that warmth is an unregenerated warmth. We may meet someone who is very gentle or very quick, but their gentleness and quickness are unregenerated gentleness and quickness. These old traits frustrate others from touching the Lord.

From the day we were saved, the Lord has been doing two things in us. On the one hand, He is tearing down our old habits, character, and disposition. This is the only way for Christ to express His life freely through us. If the Lord does not perform this work, His life will be frustrated by our natural life. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit is creating a new nature and a new character in us little by little, with its new living and new habits. The Lord is not only tearing down the old but also constituting us with the new. There is not only a negative tearing-down work, but also a positive constituting work in us. These are the two aspects of the Lord's work in us after our we are saved.

I. GOD BEING THE ONE WHO DOES THE WORK

After they are saved, many believers realize that their own person needs to be completely torn down. Yet they are too clever; they try to use artificial means to tear down their old nature, character, and habits. But the first thing God will tear down is our artificial means. Brothers and sisters, it is futile and even troublesome to use human energy to try to tear down the very nature,

character, and habits which were built up by human energy in the past. We must realize from the very beginning that everything of the past must be torn down. But we cannot tear it down ourselves. Man's own effort to tear himself down will only result in outward adornment; it will only hinder the growth of the spiritual life. We do not need to tear ourselves down; God will do it for us.

We must be clear that it is God who wants to do this and God who does it. We do not have to come up with a way to deal with ourselves. God wants us to commit the entire work into His hands. We must be firmly impressed with this fundamental concept. God will work on us if He is merciful to us. God will order an environment that tears down our outward man. God knows how much there is that needs to be destroyed. He also knows our stubborn and strong spots. We may be too fast, too slow, too loose, or too legal in certain areas. Only God knows our need; no one else knows, not even ourselves. God is the only One who knows us thoroughly. We must allow Him to do the work.

In order to clarify the breaking and constituting work in us, we will use the phrase *the discipline of the Holy Spirit* for now. Although our whole environment is ordered by God, it is the Holy Spirit who applies this arrangement to us. God arranges the outward environment, but the Holy Spirit translates this arrangement into something inward and applies it to us. This conversion of outward events to inward experience is called the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, God orders the environment through the Holy Spirit; He does not order our lives directly but rather does so through the Holy Spirit. The dispensation between the Lord's ascension and His coming again is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In this dispensation all of God's work is carried out through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit arranges everything in the environment and provides inward guidance to God's children. There are a few passages in the book of Acts which say that the Holy Spirit prompted, stopped, and forbade. We call the environmental arrangements of the Holy Spirit and the inner prompting, stopping, and forbidding "the discipline of the Holy Spirit." This means that the Holy Spirit is disciplining us through all these experiences.

This discipline is not only for our guidance but also for our disposition. It involves not only our ways but also our character. We have a new life within us; the Spirit of God is dwelling in us. He knows what we need, and He knows the kind of experience that will bring us the most benefit. The discipline of the Holy Spirit is God's ordering of the proper environment through the Holy

Spirit in order to meet our need and accomplish His work of breaking and constituting us. Thus, the discipline of the Holy Spirit destroys our natural disposition and habits and brings in the constitution of the Holy Spirit in maturity and in sweetness.

Our environment is altogether arranged by God. Even our hairs are numbered. If no sparrow falls on the ground without our Father's permission, how much more is our environment under His caring hand? A harsh word, an unkind gesture, a misfortune, an unfulfilled wish, a sudden loss of health, an abrupt departure of loved ones—all these are measured by the Father. Whether it be happiness, affliction, health, sickness, joy, or pain, everything that comes our way is approved by the Father. God arranges the environment for the purpose of destroying our old character and disposition and reconstituting us with a new character and disposition. God arranges the necessary environment for us, and unconsciously, we are broken and the Holy Spirit is constituted into us so that we acquire a character and disposition that resembles God. This God-like character and disposition will be expressed through us day by day.

As soon as we believe in the Lord, we should be clear about a few things: First, we need to be torn down, and then we need to be built up again. Second, we do not do the tearing-down and building-up work ourselves; God arranges the environment to tear us down and build us up.

II. HOW GOD ARRANGES EVERYTHING

How does God arrange everything for our good?

Everyone is different in nature, character, living, and habit. This is why we all need a different kind of breaking work. The kinds of discipline that God arranges are as varied as the number of people there are. Everyone is put into a different set of situations. A husband and a wife may be very close to each other, yet God will arrange a different environment for each of them. A father and a son, or a mother and a daughter, may likewise be very close to each other. Yet God arranges a different environment for each of them. In operating through our environment, God measures discipline to each one of us according to our individual needs.

Every arrangement of God is with the view of training us. Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” In Greek *all things* means “everything.” *All* does not mean a hundred thousand things or even a million things. We cannot tell how big the number is. Everything, all things, are arranged by God for our good.

Therefore, nothing comes to us by accident. With us there is no coincidence. All things are arranged by God. From our point of view, our experience may seem confusing and puzzling; we may not see the intrinsic meaning behind everything, and we may not understand what it means. But God’s Word says that all things work together for our good. We do not know what thing will bring us what kind of good. Neither do we know how many things are waiting for us and what good we will gain from them. But there is one thing we do know: Everything works together for our good. Nothing will happen to us that does not bring us good. We must see clearly that God’s arrangement is to produce holiness in our character. We do not work out this holiness in ourselves; God is the One who creates this holy character in us through our environment.

One illustration will serve to explain how all things work together for our good. In Hangchow there are many silk weavers. Weaving involves many threads and colors. If one looks at the fabric from the back, everything seems to be a mess. An outsider will be puzzled; he will not know what pattern is on the other side of the fabric. But if he turns the fabric right side up, he will find beautiful figures, flowers, mountains, or rivers on it. Nothing is clear while the fabric is being woven; one sees only red and green threads moving back and forth. Likewise, our experience seemingly moves back and forth like a puzzle. We do not know what design God has in mind. But every “thread” which God uses, every discipline from His hand, has its function. Every color is there for a purpose, and the design is prearranged. God arranges our environment for the purpose of creating holiness in our character. Every encounter is meaningful. We may not be clear today, but one day we will be clear. Some of the things may not look that nice at the moment. But when we look back after some time, we will surely know why the Lord has done what He has done and what His purpose was for doing it.

III. OUR ATTITUDE

What should our attitude be when we face all these things?

Romans 8:28 says, “All things work together for good to *those who love God*.” In other words, when God works, it is possible for us to receive the good, and it is also possible for us not to receive the good. This is quite related to our attitude. Our attitude even determines how soon we will receive the good. If our attitude is right, we will receive the good immediately. If we love God, everything that is of God will work for our good. If a man claims that he has no choice of his own, that he asks nothing for himself, and that he only wants everything that God gives to him, he should have only one desire in his heart—to love God. If he loves the Lord in his heart, all of the things around him will work together in love and for his good, no matter how confusing they may seem.

When something happens to us and we do not have the love of God within us, when we crave and seek things for ourselves, or when we pursue private interests apart from God, the good that God has reserved for us will not come. We are very good at complaining, struggling, murmuring, and groaning about many things. Brothers and sisters, please bear in mind that although all things do work together for good, we will not receive the good immediately if our hearts do not love God. Many of God’s children have indeed encountered many problems, but they have not received any good. They experience much discipline, and God has arranged many things around them, but these things do not result in any riches on their part. The only reason for this poverty is that they have other goals besides God. Their hearts are not pliable towards God. They do not feel God’s love; neither do they love God. They have a wrong attitude. As a result, they may have received many dealings, yet nothing remains in their spirit.

May God be merciful to us that we learn to love Him from our hearts as soon as we become Christians. Being short in knowledge does not mean much, because the way to know God lies in love, not in knowledge. If a man loves God, he will know God even though he may lack knowledge. However, if he knows much but does not love God in his heart, all of his knowledge will not help him to know God. There is a good line in one hymn: “To bring thee to thy God, / Love takes the shortest route” (*Hymns*, #477). If a man loves God, whatever he encounters will turn out to his good.

Our heart must love God, and we must learn to know His hand and humble ourselves under it. If we do not see His hand, our eyes will be distracted by men. We will feel that others are wrong or have betrayed us. We will feel that our brothers, sisters, siblings, parents, and friends are all wrong. As we condemn everyone, we fall into disappointment and disillusion ourselves, and nothing works to our good. When we say that the brothers and sisters in the church are all wrong and that nothing is right and everything is wrong, we are gaining nothing for ourselves except anger and criticism. If we remember the Lord Jesus' word, that "not one of them will fall to the earth apart from your Father" (Matt. 10:29), and if we realize that everything is of God, we will humble ourselves under His hand and receive the good.

Psalm 39:9 says, "I was dumb; I did not open my mouth; / For You have done this." This is the attitude of one who obeys God. Because God has done it and because God has allowed it to come upon us for our good, we humble ourselves and say nothing. We will not say, "Why did that happen to others, and why is this happening to me?" When we love God and know His hand, we will not open our mouth. In this way we will witness God's breaking and constituting work in us.

Some may ask, "Should we accept everything from Satan's hand too?" The basic principle is that we will take whatever God allows to come upon us. As for attacks from Satan, we have to resist.

IV. BREAKING AND CONSTITUTING

The Lord causes many things to come our way, few of which are according to our preference. This is why the Bible charges, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). We should rejoice in the Lord. This is the only way we can rejoice always. Besides the Lord, what can make us rejoice always? Why does God allow all the bad things to come upon us? What is His purpose for doing these things? His goal is to break down our natural life. If we read Jeremiah 48:11, we will be clear.

Jeremiah 48:11 says, "Moab has been at ease from his youth; / And he is settled on his lees / And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel; / Nor has he gone into exile. / Therefore his taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed." The Moabites were the descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:36-37). They were related to Abraham but were of the flesh. Moab was at ease from his

youth and never experienced any tribulation, trial, blow, suffering, or pain. Nothing happened to him that would cause him to shed tears; nothing ever rent his heart or frustrated his way. In man's eyes this is such a blessing. But what did God say about the Moabites? He said, "He is settled on his lees / And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel." For wine to settle on its lees means that the liquid is a mixture. When wine ferments, the top part becomes clear liquid, while the lees sink to the bottom. As soon as the vessel is shaken, the lees and the liquid mix together again. In order to have a clear liquid, one has to pour the wine from one vessel to another. In the old days there was no filter, and the only way to remove the lees was to pour the liquid from one vessel to another. The liquid and the lees were originally mixed together. By pouring the liquid from one vessel to another, the lees were left behind. Sometimes some lees would escape with the liquid to the other vessel, and there would be the need to pour the liquid to yet another vessel. This would go on and on until all the lees were gone. Moab was never emptied from one vessel to another. He was like wine settled on its lees. His "lees" were not yet removed. This is why it says that "his taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed." Moab always tasted like Moab. His scent remained the scent of Moab. His condition had not changed since the first day. But God is not after the old scent. He wants to change the scent.

Some have been believers for ten years, yet their taste remains the same as it was ten years ago. They are like Moab, whose taste remained and whose scent was not changed. Some people were sloppy when they first believed in the Lord. After twenty years they are still sloppy. They lived in ignorance and foolishness the first day, and they still live in ignorance and foolishness today. Their taste remains the same, and their scent is not changed. God does not want this. God wants to remove our old habit, nature, and character; He wants to remove every undesirable element in us. He wants to empty us from this vessel to that vessel and from that vessel to another vessel. After being emptied a few times, our "lees" will be left behind, and the original taste will be gone.

Moab had an easy life, but as a result, "his taste remains in him, / And his scent is not changed." Perhaps our life is not as easy as Moab's. Perhaps we have not been "at ease from...youth." Perhaps we have had to go through "many tribulations" like Paul (Acts 14:22). If so, we should realize that the Lord is removing our lees and our original taste. The Lord wants to take away our own taste and natural scent. The old things must be torn down. The Lord

has to uproot them all. He is pouring us from one vessel to another and then to a third. He allows this to happen to us today and that to happen to us tomorrow. The Lord turns us from one environment to another, from one experience to another. Each time He arranges an environment around us and breaks us, we will shed some of our old taste and scent. Time after time we will be purified of our old taste. Every day we will be a little different than the day before, and the next day we will be different still further. This is the way the Lord works in us; He tears down a little today and a little tomorrow, until all our lees are gone, our taste is lost, and our scent is changed.

God is not only breaking us on the negative side but also constituting us on the positive side. From the life of Jacob in Genesis, we can see the meaning of constitution.

Jacob's life began from a low point. He struggled with his older brother in his mother's womb and strove to be the firstborn by holding on to his brother's heel. He was crafty and greedy, always deceitful and taking advantage of others. He deceived his own father, brother, and uncle. But in the end he was deceived by his uncle and his sons. He tried his best to prosper, but in the end he found himself in a famine. We can say that Jacob's way was fraught with suffering. Some people spend their lives in ease and comfort, but Jacob's life was full of affliction.

While he was going through his sufferings, God was breaking him down again and again. He suffered one thing after another. Every experience he went through was a suffering to him. But thank God, after going through so much suffering in His hand, he finally acquired a touch of God's holiness. We see this when he was in Egypt. There we see a gentle, humble, bright, and dignified man. He was so meek and humble that he could ask for grace and mercy from his son. Yet he was so crystal clear that he could utter prophecies which Abraham could not utter. He could give blessings which Isaac could not give. He was so dignified that even Pharaoh bowed his head to receive his blessing. This shows us that through God's breaking work, the lowly Jacob had become someone God could use. Jacob had become a man of God!

After years of breaking, God constituted Jacob with Himself. This is why we can see such a beautiful picture at Jacob's deathbed when he leaned on the top of his rod and worshipped God. Though he was sick in bed, he could still lean on the top of his staff and worship God. This proves that he still

remembered his pilgrim life and had not given up his pilgrim characteristic. At first he struggled to sit up, put his feet down by the bed, and prophesied. After prophesying, he gathered up his feet, gave up his breath, and died. The way he died was beautiful! This is indeed a beautiful picture.

We can muse carefully upon the whole life of Jacob. At the time he was born, I am afraid no one had a worse “taste” than he had. But when he left the world, his old taste was gone altogether. What we see is a man fully constituted by God.

We must realize that everything that comes upon us is for our edification one way or another. God tears us down through all kinds of sufferings. The tearing down can be quite painful. But after we pass through these trials, something will be constituted into us. In other words, when trials arise, it may appear that we are failing, but His grace will always carry us through. In the process of overcoming our trials, something is wrought into us. As we overcome our trials again and again, the constitution within us grows day by day. On the one hand, God puts us through difficult circumstances and tears us down through our trials. On the other hand, something is added into us as we rise from our trials.

Thank God that we have the discipline of the Holy Spirit. May God have mercy on us. May He break us and constitute us through the discipline of the Holy Spirit so that we may reach maturity.