

**LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER  
FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH  
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

**The Organic Body of Christ Building Itself Up in Love**

RS/BD Hymns 840

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:8-16

- Eph 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."  
Eph 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?  
Eph 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)  
Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,  
Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,  
Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,  
Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,  
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

**I. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the giving of the gifted persons (such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers), who are constituted in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, by Christ as the Head in His ascension (including His resurrection), to His Body—Eph. 4:8-12; Acts 2:24, 27; 1:9:**

- Eph 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."  
Eph 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?  
Eph 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)  
Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,  
Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,  
Acts 2:24 Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.  
Acts 2:27 Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you permit Your Holy One to see corruption.  
Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.
- A. Ephesians 4:8 says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men":
1. *Height* in the quotation from Psalm 68:18 refers to Mount Zion (vv. 15-16), symbolizing the third heaven, where God dwells (1 Kings 8:30).  
Psa 68:18 You have ascended on high; You have led captive those taken captive; / You have received gifts among men, / Even the rebellious ones also, / That Jehovah God may dwell among them.

Psa 68:15 O mighty mountain, O mountain of Bashan, / O many-peaked mountain, O mountain of Bashan:

Psa 68:16 Why do you look with envy, O many-peaked mountains, / At the mountain on which God desires to dwell? / Indeed Jehovah will dwell there forever.

1 Kings 8:30 And listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear then in Your dwelling place in the heavens; and when You hear, forgive.

2. Psalm 68 implies that it was in the Ark that God ascended to Mount Zion after the Ark had won the victory (Num. 10:35); this portrays how Christ won the victory and ascended triumphantly to the heavens.

Psa 68 be omitted.

Num 10:35 And when the Ark set out, Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let Your enemies be scattered; / And let those who hate You flee before You.

3. Through His universal traffic and in His ascension, Christ led as captives those who had been taken captive by Satan and made them gifts to His Body—Eph. 4:8-11:

Eph 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."

Eph 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

- a. The redeemed saints had been taken captive by Satan before they were saved by Christ's death and resurrection—cf. Luke 4:18.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed,

- b. In His ascension Christ led them captive; that is, He rescued them from Satan's captivity and took them to Himself—Psa. 68:18.

Psa 68:18 You have ascended on high; You have led captive those taken captive; / You have received gifts among men, / Even the rebellious ones also, / That Jehovah God may dwell among them.

- c. In His ascension Christ led them to the heavens as His captives in His train of vanquished foes and made them gifts to His Body.

- d. Now God is celebrating Christ's triumph over them, His vanquished foes, and leading them as His captives in a triumphal procession in His move for His ministry to build up His Body—2 Cor. 2:14.

2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.

- B. The more Christ ascends and descends within us, capturing and vanquishing us, the more He fills us with Himself to constitute us as gifts to His Body—cf. Eph. 4:9-10.

Eph 4:9 (Now this, "He ascended," what is it except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He who descended, He is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things.)

## II. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the gifted persons' perfecting of the saints in the divine dispensing so that all the saints may be able to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12:

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body

- of Christ,
- A. The Greek word for *perfecting* in verse 12 also means “completing,” “equipping,” “supplying the functions”; the way to be perfected is to grow in life and to become skillful in function.  
 Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- B. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them according to the tree of life with the life supply for their growth in life—Gen. 2:9; 1 Cor. 3:2, 6.  
 Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.  
 1 Cor 3:2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. But neither yet now are you able,  
 1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
- C. The gifted persons perfect the saints (according to their measure) to do what they do for the direct building up of the Body of Christ—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-12; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12:  
 Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.  
 Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,  
 Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,  
 1 Tim 1:16 But because of this I was shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ might display all His long-suffering for a pattern to those who are to believe on Him unto eternal life.  
 1 Tim 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
1. The apostles perfect the saints by visiting the churches (Acts 15:36, 40-41; 20:20, 31), by writing epistles to the churches (Col. 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2), and by assigning their co-workers to stay in certain places to perfect the saints (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15; Titus 1:5).  
 Acts 15:36 Now after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brothers in every city in which we announced the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.  
 Acts 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and went out, having been commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers.  
 Acts 15:41 And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.  
 Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house,  
 Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.  
 Col 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, cause that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.  
 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:  
 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things  
 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.  
 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.  
 Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things which I have begun that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
  2. The prophets perfect the saints by teaching them to speak the Lord into people, by speaking in the meetings to set up a model, and by helping the saints to live a prophesying life by being revived every morning and overcoming every day—Acts

13:1; 1 Cor. 14:31; Prov. 4:18.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

3. The evangelists perfect the saints by stirring them up to be burning in the gospel-preaching spirit, by teaching them with gospel truths, by training them to preach the gospel, by helping the saints to be equipped with the power of the economical Spirit, and by setting an example of loving the sinners and praying for them—2 Tim. 4:5.

2 Tim 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.

4. The shepherd-teachers perfect the saints by shepherding—feeding and nourishing the young saints and teaching the growing saints—Acts 11:25-26; 13:1.

Acts 11:25 And he went forth to Tarsus to search for Saul;

Acts 11:26 And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened with them that for a whole year they were gathered in the church and taught a considerable number and that the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

- D. The result of this perfecting is that we will all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—Eph. 4:13; cf. John 17:23.

Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

- E. This perfecting will cause us to be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a satanic system of error—Eph. 4:14.

Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

- F. Shepherding and teaching are the essential functions among the gifted persons given by Christ as the ascended Head to the churches for the building up of His Body (John 21:15-17; Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 4:17b; 7:17b; 2 Cor. 11:28-29); in addition, Christ as the Head of the church also charged the apostles to appoint elders in all the local churches to carry out His shepherding of His flock (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17a; 1 Pet. 5:2a) and to be apt to teach in order to strengthen the shepherding and carry out its goal (1 Tim. 3:2b; 5:17b).

John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

1 Cor 4:17b ... who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

1 Cor 7:17b ... And so I direct in all the churches.

2 Cor 11:28 Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.

- 2 Cor 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?
- 1 Tim 3:1 Faithful is the word: If anyone aspires to the overseership, he desires a good work.
- 1 Tim 3:2 The overseer then must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach;
- 1 Tim 3:3 Not an excessive drinker; not a striker, but forbearing; not contentious; not fond of money;
- 1 Tim 3:4 One who manages well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity
- 1 Tim 3:5 (But if one does not know how to manage his own house, how will he care for the church of God?);
- 1 Tim 3:6 Not a new convert, lest being blinded with pride he fall into the judgment suffered by the devil.
- 1 Tim 3:7 And he also must have a good testimony from those outside, that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
- 1 Tim 5:17a Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, ...
- 1 Pet 5:2a Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; ...
- 1 Tim 3:2b ... the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach;
- 1 Tim 5:17b ... especially those who labor in word and teaching.

### **III. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the direct building by all the members—into the Head and out from the Head:**

- A. In order to be built up, we must hold to truth in love, growing up into the Head, Christ, in all things—Eph. 4:15:
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
1. We must hold to the divine truth of God's eternal economy, of the all-inclusive Christ, and of the church as the Body of Christ.
  2. We must be subject to the Head, Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23; 1:22, 10), and allow His divine life to expand and increase into all our inward parts (Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4).
 

1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.

Eph 5:23 For a husband is head of the wife as also Christ is Head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body.

Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

2 Cor 5:4 For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.
  3. The word *Head* in Ephesians 4:15 indicates that our growth in Christ should be a growth as members in the Body under the Head; our growth is not only in Christ but also in His Body.
 

Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- B. Out from the Head, in the divine dispensing, all the Body is joined closely together through every joint of the rich supply and knit together, interwoven, through the operation in the

measure of each one part—v. 16:

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. When we grow into the Head, we can produce out from the Head many functions for the building up of His Body.
2. Every member of the Body of Christ has a measure through the growth in life and can function for the growth and building up of the Body of Christ.

C. The joints supplying and the parts functioning cause the growth of the Body unto the building up of the Body itself in the divine love—v. 16:

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. All the Body causes the growth of the Body—cf. 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31.

1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.

1 Cor 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

2. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—Eph. 3:17a:

Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...

- a. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church—Col. 3:10-11.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

- b. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—1:18; 2:19.

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

3. The love in which the Body builds itself up is the love that is the very element, the inner substance, of God; it is the love of God in Christ, which becomes the love of Christ in us, by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body—1 John 4:7-8, 11, 16, 19; Rom. 5:5; 8:39:

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God.

1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God has loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Rom 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- a. It is in the condition and atmosphere of such a divine love that we are saturated with God to be holy and without blemish before Him—Eph. 1:4.

Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

- b. It is in such a divine love, realized and experienced by us in a practical way, that we are rooted for growth and grounded for building—3:17.

Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

- c. It is in such a divine love that we bear one another for the oneness of the Body—4:2-4.
    - Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,
    - Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
    - Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
  - d. It is in such a divine love that we hold to truth, that is, to Christ with His Body—v. 15.
    - Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
  - e. It is in such a divine love that we need to walk—to live, act, and have our being—as the beloved children of God, who are God-men, born of God, possessing the life and nature of God, and belonging to the species of God, to be imitators of God—5:1-2.
    - Eph 5:1 Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children;
    - Eph 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
- D. “The direct building of the organic Body of Christ is by the Body itself. The Body is built directly by all the members of Christ functioning, each in his own measure, mainly in prophesying—speaking for the Lord... This direct building by all the members of Christ takes place through the perfecting work of all the gifted persons under the bountiful supply of the divine element of the ascended Christ in His ascension. We need to practice [this] so that we can see the reality of such an organic building on this earth” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988*, vol. 4, “Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ,” pp. 388-389).

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE APOSTLES’ PERFECTING

#### By Visiting the Churches

First, the apostles perfected the saints by visiting the churches (Acts 15:36, 40-41). When Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, they had not been invited (14:21-22). Later, Paul desired to return to these churches again, and he said to Barnabas, “Let us return now and visit the brothers in every city in which we announced the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing” (15:36). Because Paul was burdened to perfect the saints in these churches, he returned to visit them.

In Paul’s talk with the elders in Ephesus in Acts 20, Paul said that he taught them “publicly and from house to house” (v. 20). To teach the saints publicly, no doubt, indicates that he taught them in a meeting. He also taught them from house to house. This phrase *from house to house* means “according to houses.” Paul spoke Christ to all the saints in their homes. He admonished the saints with tears even for as long as three years (v. 31). Our concept of an apostle may be that he is a good speaker who is eloquent, knowledgeable, and highly appraised and exalted. But here is an apostle in Acts 20 who visited the homes of the poor saints and admonished them with tears. An apostle should go to the saints’ homes, especially to the poor ones’ homes.

The apostles perfected the saints by visiting them. In Acts 20 Paul sent for the elders in Ephesus to come to him, and he told them that he had stayed with them for three years, teaching the saints publicly and visiting them from house to house. There is a different teaching being taught today, saying that once the apostles have established the churches and appointed the elders, they should keep their hands off the churches and the elders. This is a wind of teaching that distracts the saints from the truth in God’s Word.

Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years to touch many homes of the saints after the elders had already been established. This is a proper apostle. How could a mother who gave birth to some children keep her hands off her children once they have been born, leaving them as orphans? It is a wrong and damaging teaching to say that the apostle should have nothing to do with the churches once they have been established and the elders have been appointed. If the apostles keep their hands off the churches and the elders, the saints cannot be perfected, and the Body cannot be built up. Acts 20 reveals that the way to be an apostle is to stay with a church like Paul did. I regret that since I came to the United States over twenty-five years ago, I have never stayed in a place for a longer time to teach and to bring the elders into the proper eldership. My concern is that it might be that a number of the elders in the Lord's recovery are taking the lead in the churches in a probing way. This is because they have not been fully perfected to be proper elders. I am looking to the Lord that He would give me the time to stay in a place the way Paul did for three years to perfect the elders and the saints.

### **By Writing Epistles to the Churches**

The apostles' perfecting work was also carried out by their writing Epistles to the churches. Paul's heart was in the churches. If there was not the possibility for him to visit the churches, he wrote to them. In his writing, he rebuked, corrected, nourished, taught, and admonished the saints (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-4, 2; 12:31; 4:14). In his Epistle to the Galatians he unveiled Christ to the saints and labored on them so that Christ might be formed in them (1:16a; 4:19). In his Epistles, Paul also ministered Christ and His riches to the saints for the building up of the church to accomplish God's eternal economy (Eph. 3:8-10). Paul ministered Christ and His unsearchable riches to the saints in his writing, especially in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. In his Epistles, Paul admonished and taught the saints to present each of them to God full-grown in Christ (Col. 1:28). Paul also indicated that what he wrote to the churches was to be read by all the saints (4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2). What an apostle Paul was! He is a pattern of what an apostle should be.

All of us need to be perfected to do what Paul did. We need to be the sent ones. We can go to the homes, visit the new ones, and bring God to them, ministering Christ into them. After some have received the Lord and have been baptized, we can go again to visit them in their homes two times a week, exhorting them with tears. The church can be doubled yearly if some faithful ones will pick up the burden to visit people in their homes with the gospel and visit the newly saved ones to perfect them and establish them.

### **By Assigning Their Co-workers to Stay in Certain Places to Perfect the Saints**

The Scriptures also reveal that Paul assigned his co-workers to stay in certain places to perfect the saints, such as his assigning Timothy to stay in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15) and his assigning Titus to stay in Crete (Titus 1:5). In 1 Timothy and Titus, Paul gave many instructions to these dear brothers regarding how to take care of the church and how to teach the church. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:15, "If I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth." This indicates that 1 Timothy gives instructions concerning how to take care of a local church. Paul wrote his letter to Timothy that he might know how to behave, how to go out and come in, in the church, which is the house of the living God.

### **By Teaching the Saints to Do the Work of the New Testament Ministry, That Is, to Build Up the Body of Christ as the Apostles Do**

According to Ephesians 4:11-12, the apostles teach the saints to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ as the apostles do. I have the burden to perfect the saints in the churches that the Lord has raised up through my ministry. My expectation is that after the saints receive my perfecting, they will do the same work that I do. I expect that many saints will be perfected to

speaking for the Lord and to speak forth the Lord even for three minutes in the way of teaching and revelation. Many saints need to be perfected to do what the apostles do to build up the Body of Christ. The professors in a university expect their students to be perfected to do what they do.

I hope that many of the brothers would be perfected and have something to minister in different aspects in the line of God's New Testament economy. The writers of the New Testament talked about Christ, but they spoke concerning Christ from different angles and not in the same way. Mark did not copy Matthew, nor did Matthew copy Luke. These three writers of the synoptic Gospels did not teach the same thing concerning Christ as John did in his Gospel. The Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John speak the same thing from different angles and with new light. God's speaking in His oracle is with new light.

### THE PROPHETS' PERFECTING

According to the record of the New Testament, it is not adequate for a prophet merely to visit a church. He must stay with a church in order to perfect the saints. Acts 13:1 says that in the church in Antioch there were some prophets and teachers. The prophets were in the church in Antioch to perfect the saints to speak for the Lord. The professors in a college need to stay in their school at least two or three times a week in order to take care of their classes. They must do this constantly, regularly, and continually to perfect their students. The ones among us who have learned to speak the Lord as prophets should stay in a certain church to perfect the saints. The prophets perfect the saints by teaching them to speak for the Lord, to speak forth the Lord, and to speak the Lord into people to do the work of the New Testament ministry to build up the Body of Christ, as the prophets do. Teaching means instructing and implies allowing the saints to practice speaking for the Lord.

A prophet who is staying with a church should not merely speak in the meetings but should go to visit all the members of the church in order to perfect them. Sometimes he may instruct the saints in a small group, and sometimes he may tutor certain saints, that is, help one saint at a time. His burden is that the saints would learn how to speak for the Lord in a meeting. To teach students a course takes a period of time. One cannot teach a course in just one day or a few days. A prophet who is burdened to perfect the saints must speak in the meeting to spontaneously set up a model. According to the model he has set up, he can then contact the saints to perfect them.

To learn anything that can build up the Body of Christ requires a spiritual life. Therefore, a prophet has to help the church first of all in a general way. He would tell the saints that since we all love the Lord, and we know that the Lord desires to build up His Body by our growth in life, we must have a daily revival. Every morning after we rise up, we have to have a new start with the Lord. Lamentations tells us that the Lord's compassions are new every morning (3:22-23). The Lord's kindness and mercy are fresh every morning like the morning dew. Every morning, even according to the natural law, there is a new start. Even in the new heaven and new earth outside the New Jerusalem, the moon will still be there to divide the twelve months (Rev. 22:2), and the sun will also be there to separate day and night into periods of twelve hours each (21:23, 25). Therefore, we must follow the natural law in God's creation. In the new creation we must have a new start every day.

Proverbs 4:18 says, "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day." In the Christian life there is no afternoon. The Chinese expression for *afternoon* means "going down from noon," while the Chinese expression for *morning* means "going up to noon." Our Christian life should be a life that is going up to noon. Sometimes, however, we experience a going down from noon. But when we go to bed, the dawning of the sun is awaiting us. We can have a new start with the Lord. Every twenty-four hours there is a new start.

We must be revived every morning. Then we must daily live an overcoming life. An overcoming life is to live Christ by walking in our spirit. Every morning we should experience Christ as the rising sun to be revived by Him, and all day long we should live Christ. We must be such persons so that we can learn how to speak Christ. Without such a life, such a living, how can we speak Christ? If a brother quarrels with his wife and behaves recklessly, how can he go out to preach the gospel? He will not be

able to speak Christ. If we are defeated in our Christian life or are angry with others, we cannot speak Christ. To speak Christ requires a victorious life, a life that is right in the morning and overcoming the entire day. Then we are qualified and have the capital to do the business of speaking Christ. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988*, vol. 4, “Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ,” pp. 357-366)

### **THE EVANGELISTS’ PERFECTING**

An evangelist perfects the saints by stirring them up to be burning in the gospel-preaching spirit. An evangelist must have the ability to stir up the saints, to set them on fire for the gospel. An evangelist should burn the whole church in the gospel-preaching spirit. We may not be qualified to perfect the saints as an evangelist because we do not have such a gospel-preaching spirit. Our spirit may be very cold instead. How can others be very strong and hot in preaching the gospel if we are not? A real evangelist has a burning spirit within him that stirs others up to preach the gospel. We need this kind of perfecting.

To perfect the saints in gospel preaching, the first thing the evangelists have to do is to stir them up. Then they have to teach the saints with the gospel truths. The saints need to be taught what it means to repent and what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus. There are many gospel truths that need to be imparted into the saints. The evangelists also need to train the saints to preach the gospel. They have to train them how to preach, how to speak, how to contact people, and how to converse with people. They also need to equip the saints with the power of the economical Spirit. This means that they themselves must be experientially and presently under the outpouring of the Spirit. The evangelists should also set an example of loving the sinners and praying for them. They must have an overwhelming concern for the salvation of sinners.

The evangelists preach Christ, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the kingdom of God as the gospel in the way of dispensing for the building up of the Body of Christ, and they teach the saints to do the same thing (Acts 5:42; Eph. 3:8; Acts 8:12). To preach about going to hell or to heaven is too low. That kind of preaching is not adequate for the building up of the Body of Christ. We have to preach Christ as the gospel according to Acts 5:42, we have to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel according to Ephesians 3:8, and we have to preach the kingdom of God as the gospel according to Acts 8:12. This kind of preaching is in the way of dispensing Christ. The evangelists’ perfecting work is to equip and furnish the saints in gospel preaching to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ. We need this kind of perfecting in order to fully enter into the reality of 1 Corinthians 14:26.

### **THE SHEPHERD-TEACHERS’ PERFECTING**

The shepherd-teachers perfect the saints by shepherding—feeding and nourishing the young saints. We need to teach others to take care of the young saints, the new believers. The shepherd-teachers also perfect the saints by teaching the growing saints (Acts 11:25-26; 13:1). Finally, the shepherd-teachers raise, equip, and furnish the saints to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ, as the shepherd-teachers do.

### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BY THE GIFTED PERSONS AND THE BUILDING UP BY THE PERFECTED SAINTS**

There are two kinds of building up—one is by the gifted persons, and the other is by the perfected saints. The building up of the Body of Christ by the gifted persons is under the Head’s supply and is done indirectly. The gifted persons do not build up the Body of Christ directly. Even Christ as the Head of the church does not build the church directly. In Matthew 16:18 the Lord told us that He would build His church, but He builds His church indirectly through His giving of the gifts to His Body. Then these gifts

perfect the saints, and the perfected saints do the building work directly. The building up of the Body of Christ by the perfected saints is under the gifted persons' perfecting and is done directly. Ephesians 4:16 says that the Body builds itself up in love because all the members build up the Body of Christ. They build up the Body of Christ by growing into the Head in all things (v. 15). The growth in life of each member of the Body added together equals the building up of the Body. The perfected saints also build up the Body by functioning out from the Head, causing the growth of the Body that the Body may be built up directly by itself (v. 16).

We must have this kind of perfecting work among us in the Lord's recovery. We must enter into this new light. The co-workers and the elders especially must immediately start to practice this. We should learn how to be apostles, how to be prophets, how to be evangelists, and how to be shepherd-teachers. We need to spend the time to teach each of the saints. After a certain period of time, many of the saints will have the ability to speak Christ. They will practice speaking Christ daily, and at the end of each week they will have prepared something to offer in the larger church meeting. Then in the church meeting spontaneously 1 Corinthians 14:26 will be fulfilled. The attendants will not be waiting for inspiration, but they will have something already.

In 1 Corinthians 14:26 Paul uses the word *has* five times. He does not say that we will have but that we have something already. When we come to the meeting, we should already have something. It would be tragic if I came to a meeting for the ministry of the word and did not have something to speak. It would be a tragedy if I had to ask the saints to pray that the Lord would give me something to speak. Every attendant of the church meeting must have something when he comes to the meeting. This is just like the Israelites in the ancient times who went to the festival in Jerusalem three times a year with something of the produce of the good land in their hands. God charged them to not appear before Him empty-handed (Deut. 16:16). We may have been Christians for many years and members in a local church in the Lord's recovery for years. However, how many times did we have something of Christ with us to speak when we came to the church meetings? We may have had the thought when we came to the meetings that someone else would speak for us. We need to build up a habit of bringing something of Christ to the meeting to speak.

If the co-workers and elders endeavor to practice this new light, they will develop the ability to teach others. The co-workers and elders especially need to teach others to do what the apostles do, what the prophets do, what the evangelists do, and what the shepherd-teachers do. Then the whole church will be full of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. What a church this will be! Spontaneously, there will be the building up of the Body of Christ among us. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988, vol. 4, "Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ," pp. 374-377*)