

THE WILL OF GOD

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

The Will of God—Our Sanctification

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:10-11; 12:10, 14; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:26;
1 Thes. 4:3a; 5:23-24; John 17:17

- I. **The will of God is our sanctification; to be sanctified is to be made holy, which is to be separated unto God and saturated with God as the Holy One, the One who is different, distinct, from everything that is common—1 Thes. 4:3a; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:4-5; 5:25-27.**
- II. **Ephesians 1:4-5 and Hebrews 2:10-11 show that sanctification is for sonship; actually, sanctification is God’s “sonizing”:**
 - A. We were chosen in eternity past “to be holy...unto [for, or, resulting in] sonship”—Eph. 1:4-5; Rev. 21:2, 9-11.
 - B. The resurrected Christ is the Captain of our salvation, leading many sons into glory by sanctifying them—Heb. 2:10-11.
- III. **There are three aspects of sanctification in the Scriptures:**
 - A. There is the Spirit’s sanctification in seeking the God-chosen people before they repent and believe—1 Pet. 1:2.
 - B. There is the positional sanctification by the blood of Christ at the time of the believers’ believing—Heb. 13:12; 9:13-14; 10:29.
 - C. There is the Spirit’s dispositional sanctification in the believers’ full course of their Christian life—1 Thes. 5:23-24; Rom. 15:16b; 6:19, 22; cf. 5:10; Rev. 22:14; 2 Pet. 1:4.
- IV. **The divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament:**
 - A. The divine sanctification is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely, making us sons of God that we may become the same as God in His life and in His nature (but not in His Godhead), so that we may be God’s expression.
 - B. We say that sanctification is the holding line because every step of God’s work with us is to make us holy—John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Ps. 73:16-17, 25-26:
 1. The seeking sanctification, the initial sanctification, is unto repentance to bring us back to God—1 Pet. 1:2; Luke 15:8-10, 17-21; John 16:8-11.
 2. The redeeming sanctification, the positional sanctification, is by the blood of Christ, to transfer us from Adam to Christ—Heb. 13:12.
 3. The regenerating sanctification, the beginning of dispositional sanctification, renews us from our spirit to make us, the sinners, sons of God—a new creation with the divine life and nature—John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

4. The renewing sanctification, the continuation of dispositional sanctification, renews our soul from our mind through all the parts of our soul to make our soul a part of God's new creation—Rom. 12:2b; 6:4; 7:6; Eph. 4:23; Ezek. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
 5. The transforming sanctification, the daily sanctification, reconstitutes us with the element of Christ metabolically to make us a new constitution as a part of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 6. The conforming sanctification, the shaping sanctification, shapes us in the image of the glorious Christ to make us the expression of Christ—Rom. 8:29.
 7. The glorifying sanctification, the consummating sanctification, redeems our body by transfiguring it to make us Christ's expression in full and in glory—Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23.
- C. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit—15:16b; 8:4.

V. In order to live a holy life for the church life, we need the Lord to establish our heart blameless in holiness—1 Thes. 3:13:

- A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; John 14:1; 16:22; Acts 11:23)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
- B. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the “switch” of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by our small heart—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.
- C. God is the unchanging One, but according to our natural birth, our heart is changeable, both in our relationship with others and with the Lord—cf. 2 Tim. 4:10; Matt. 13:18-23.
- D. There is no one who, according to his natural, human life, is steadfast in his heart; because our heart changes so easily, it is not at all trustworthy—Jer. 17:9-10; 13:23.
- E. Our heart is blamable because it is changeable; an unchanging heart is a blameless heart—Psa. 57:7; 108:1; 112:7.
- F. In God's salvation the renewing of the heart is once for all; however, in our experience our heart is renewed continually because it is changeable—Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 4:16.
- G. Because our heart is changeable, it needs to be renewed continually by the sanctifying Spirit so that our heart can be established and built up in the state of being holy, separated unto God, occupied by God, possessed by God, and saturated with God—Titus 3:5; Rom. 6:19, 22; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Psa. 51:10-12.
- H. As our heart is being established blameless in holiness by the continual renewing of the sanctifying Spirit, we are becoming the New Jerusalem with the newness of the divine life, and we are becoming the holy city with the holiness of the divine nature—Rev. 21:2; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4.

VI. “The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it”—1 Thes. 5:23-24:

- A. The God of peace is the Sanctifier; His sanctification brings in peace; when we are wholly sanctified by Him from within, we have peace with Him and with man in every way—vv. 23, 13; 2 Thes. 3:16.
- B. God desires to sanctify us, and He Himself will do it as long as we are willing to pursue Him as holiness and cooperate with Him; in this way we can be holy as He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16); without holiness we cannot see Him (Heb. 12:14).
- C. By sanctifying us, God transforms us in the essence of our spirit, soul, and body, making us wholly like Him in nature; in this way He preserves our spirit, soul, and body wholly complete—1 Thes. 5:23:
 - 1. Through the fall our body was ruined, our soul was contaminated, and our spirit was deadened; in God’s full salvation our entire being is saved and made complete and perfect.
 - 2. For this, God is preserving our spirit from any deadening element (Heb. 9:14), our soul from remaining natural and old (Matt. 16:24-26), and our body from the ruin of sin (1 Thes. 4:4; Rom. 6:6).
 - 3. Such a preservation by God and His thorough sanctification sustain us to live a holy life unto maturity so that we may meet the Lord in His coming.
 - 4. Quantitatively, God sanctifies us wholly; qualitatively, God preserves us complete—that is, He keeps our spirit, soul, and body perfect.
 - 5. Although God preserves us, we need to take the responsibility, the initiative, to cooperate with His operation to be preserved by keeping our spirit, soul, and body in the saturating of the Holy Spirit—1 Thes. 5:12-24.

VII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our spirit in sanctification, we must keep our spirit in a living condition by exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:6-7:

- A. In order to preserve our spirit, we must keep our spirit living by exercising it to have fellowship with God; if we fail to exercise our spirit in this way, we will leave it in a deadened situation—2 Tim. 1:6-7; cf. Jude 19:
 - 1. To rejoice, pray, and give thanks are to exercise our spirit; to preserve our spirit is first of all to exercise our spirit to keep our spirit living and to pull it out of death—1 Thes. 5:16-18.
 - 2. We need to cooperate with the sanctifying God to be separated from a spirit-deadening situation—cf. Num. 6:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:4.
 - 3. We must worship God, serve God, and fellowship with God in and with our spirit; whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do toward God must be in our spirit—John 4:24; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 2:1.
- B. In order to preserve our spirit, we need to keep it from all defilement and contamination—2 Cor. 7:1.
- C. In order to preserve our spirit, we must exercise ourselves to have a conscience without offense toward God and men—Acts 24:16; Rom. 9:1; cf. 8:16.

- D. In order to preserve our spirit, we must take heed to our spirit, setting our mind on the spirit and caring for the rest in our spirit—Mal. 2:15-16; Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 2:13.

VIII. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our soul in sanctification, we must clear the three main “arteries” of our psychological heart, the parts of our soul—our mind, emotion, and will—cf. Psa. 43:4; Neh. 8:10; 1 John 1:4; Jer. 15:16:

- A. In order for our soul to be sanctified, our mind must be renewed to be the mind of Christ (Rom. 12:2), our emotion must be touched and saturated with the love of Christ (Eph. 3:17, 19), our will must be subdued by and infused with the resurrected Christ (Phil. 2:13), and we must love the Lord with our whole being (Mark 12:30).
- B. The way to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart is to make a thorough confession to the Lord; we need to stay with the Lord for a period of time, asking Him to bring us fully into the light, and in the light of what He exposes, we need to confess our defects, failures, defeats, mistakes, wrongdoings, and sins—1 John 1:5-9:
1. In order to unclog the artery of our mind, we need to confess everything that is sinful in our thoughts and in our way of thinking.
 2. In order to unclog the artery of our will, we need to confess the germs of rebellion in our will.
 3. In order to unclog the artery of our emotion, we need to confess the natural and even fleshy way that we have expressed our joy and sorrow; also, in many cases we hate what we should love, and we love what we should hate—cf. Rev. 2:4, 6.
 4. If we take the time necessary to unclog the three main arteries of our psychological heart, we will have the sense that our entire being has become living and is in a very healthy condition.

IX. In order to cooperate with God to preserve our body in sanctification, we must present our body to Him so that we may live a holy life for the church life, practicing the Body life in order to carry out God’s perfect will—Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Thes. 4:4; 5:18:

- A. Our fallen body, the flesh, is the “meeting hall” of Satan, sin, and death, but by Christ’s redemption and in the regenerated spirit as the “meeting hall” of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, our body is a member of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 6:6, 12, 14; 7:11, 17-25; 8:2-3; 1 Cor. 6:15, 19.
- B. To preserve our body is to glorify God in our body—v. 20.
- C. To preserve our body is to magnify Christ in our body—Phil. 1:20.
- D. To preserve our body, we must not live according to our soul, the old man; then the body of sin will lose its job and become unemployed—Rom. 6:6.
- E. To preserve our body, we must not present our body to anything that is sinful but instead present ourselves as slaves to righteousness and our members as weapons of righteousness—vv. 13, 18-19, 22; 1 Thes. 4:3-5.
- F. To preserve our body, we must buffet it and lead it as a slave to fulfill our holy purpose to become the holy city—1 Cor. 9:27; Rev. 21:2.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

GOD THE FATHER'S DISPENSING IN CHOOSING THE BELIEVERS TO BE HOLY BY PREDESTINATING THEM UNTO SONSHIP

The first item of the spiritual blessings is the Father's choosing. We may think that God's choosing is one thing, and God's predestinating is another thing, but this is wrong. We need to look at the grammar of Ephesians 1:4-5. These verses say, "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." These verses do not say that He chose us *and* predestinated us. Instead, they say that He chose us, predestinating us. *Predestinating* in verse 5 modifies the predicate *chose* in verse 4, so these are not two things. These are one thing. God chose us. How did He choose us? God chose us by predestinating us, by marking us out. To predestinate is to mark out. God chose us to be holy for the sonship. The choosing of God's people for them to be holy is for the purpose of their being made sons of God, participating in the divine sonship.

For a person to have sons, he has to beget them by imparting his life into them. This imparting is dispensing. Without the dispensing of life, no children can be produced. Without God's dispensing, how could God have sons? For God to have sons means that there has been the dispensing of His life. This is fully unveiled in John 1. Christ came to be received. Whoever receives Him, He will give that one the right, the authority, to become a child of God. The right, the authority, to be a child of God is the very divine life dispensed into us. We receive the life of God, and this life is our authority to be the sons of God. We are sons of God because His life has been dispensed into us.

God dispenses Himself in a sanctifying way. God's chosen ones are made His sons by His sanctifying Spirit. God sanctified us to become His sons. He chose us to be holy for sonship. John Wesley said that sinless perfection is holiness, but the Brethren showed that this was wrong. They taught that holiness, sanctification, is not sinless perfection but is a transfer of our position. In Matthew 23 the Lord Jesus said that the gold is made holy, sanctified, by the temple (v. 17) and that the gift is made holy, sanctified, by the altar (v. 19). When the gold was in the market, it was common and worldly. But when the gold was separated unto God through the temple, it was sanctified because its position changed. Likewise, when the gift's location changed from a common place to a holy place, it was sanctified. The teaching of the Brethren concerning positional sanctification is scriptural, but this is not the entire truth concerning sanctification.

Sanctification is to separate God's people unto God for God to work on them and to work in them to make them His sons. God had an intention and made an economy to get many sons. Then the Spirit came to separate the chosen ones unto God so that God could beget them. First, they were sanctified unto God; then through this sanctification they became the object of God's begetting. God came to beget them, making them His sons, and this was through the sanctification of the Spirit. Verse 4 of Ephesians 1 says that God chose us to be holy. Then verse 5 says that He did this by predestinating us unto sonship. Thus, sanctification is unto sonship, for sonship. First, the Spirit comes to sanctify God's chosen people. Then they are ready to be begotten by God into His sonship.

For us to be holy and for us to be sons both require God's dispensing. Without God dispensing His holy nature into our being, how could we be holy? God is the only One who is holy. For us to be holy we need a holy element dispensed into us. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He brings God's holy nature into us, and that holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. Stanza 1 of *Hymns*, #841 says, "By Thy holy nature / I am

sanctified; / By Thy resurrection, / Vict'ry is supplied." His holy nature makes us holy, and His resurrection power makes us victorious. We have God's holy nature imparted into our being, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which we are made holy. Our being made holy is for us to be sons. The imparting of God's holy nature into us and His begetting us are His dispensing.

SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP IN OUR DAILY LIFE

We may wonder what sanctification has to do with our daily life. This is my burden. We have to realize that sanctification for sonship is still going on. It is not a once-for-all matter. Every day we have to remember that God the Spirit is sanctifying us for God to impart more of His holy nature and holy life into our being to cause us to grow. We all have to grow in the divine life.

Now we need to consider how we can grow. In order for us to grow physically, we need the life within plus the nourishment. A young child has inherited a life from his parents. In other words, his parents have imparted their human life into this child. Then the mother feeds him every day, and he grows with the nourishment in the human life. In principle it is the same in the Christian life. We were born of God. God has imparted Himself into us as life. Now we need to grow by being nourished in the life of God. Our birth is a beginning, not a graduation. After our birth we need to grow in the life of Christ, in the divine life, in the eternal life, with the proper nourishment in the Spirit.

Both sanctification and the sonship are always carried out by the Spirit. This is why Ephesians 1:3 calls this a spiritual blessing, a blessing by the Spirit. Today we must learn to live by the Spirit, to act according to the Spirit, to have our being altogether by the Spirit, with the Spirit, and according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). As long as we have our being by the Spirit and act according to the Spirit, we are ready to grow in the divine life. Then we need some nourishment. We can be nourished in these three ways: by reading the holy Word, by listening to the spiritual speaking, and by coming to the meetings. This nourishment causes us to grow.

I am concerned that many dear ones among us are seeking after the Lord, but they still are not on the way of the growth in life. If we are driving a car for a long distance, we need to find the freeway and get on it. Once we get on the freeway, we have to be careful about the direction we take. If we get on the right freeway with the right direction, then our driving is okay. We need to get on the way of the growth in the divine life in the right direction. We still need some revelation to see the right way to grow in the divine life according to the New Testament teaching.

In order to grow, we must deal with the Spirit. We must get ourselves right with the Spirit. We must have our entire being in the Spirit, and walk, behave, and act according to the Spirit all day long. When the parents are with their children, they have to behave themselves according to the Spirit in order to be kept in the divine life. Many times the parents are too free and unrestricted in what they say to their children. They may be afraid of making mistakes when they talk to others, but they do not have any care when they speak to their children. This is wrong. We should not say anything according to our taste. Instead, we have to be regulated, corrected, and adjusted by saying everything and doing everything according to the Spirit.

It is the Spirit who sanctifies us unto sonship. It is the Spirit who begets us that we may be born of God (John 3:6). God chose us to be sanctified unto sonship. To be sanctified unto sonship is altogether a matter by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and with the Spirit. I am concerned when I see a number of dear saints who have been in the recovery for many years with

no growth. Although they may meet, read the Bible, and listen to the messages, they do not care for the Spirit. Instead of taking care of the Spirit when they speak, they freely gossip and criticize others. Although they say that they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church life, they do not care a bit for the Spirit. This is wrong. We have to take care of the Spirit. Today this Spirit, who is wrapped up with sanctification and with God's sonship, is in our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17). If we desire to take care of the Spirit, we should first take care of our spirit.

The Bible says that we should not provoke our children to anger (Eph. 6:4). When we are angry with our children, we often provoke them. In dealing with our children, we have to take care of our spirit. We need to check, "Does our spirit agree with us, or are we acting according to our emotion?" We should deny our emotion and turn to our spirit. Then in our spirit, the Spirit will speak to us. When we are becoming angry with our children, the Spirit may say, "Go into your room and pray. Don't talk to your children at this time." That is a kind of sanctification. When we pray, the speaking Spirit will continue to speak. He may lead us to read a portion of the Word. Then we are nourished, and we grow in the divine life with the spiritual nourishment. If we do not care for our spirit in our family life, we surely cannot have a pleasant household, and God cannot sanctify us for His sonship and His household.

We need to take care of our spirit in everything. When a brother buys a necktie, he should not buy it according to his taste. If he buys it according to his taste, this is wrong. Even in buying a tie, he should take care of his spirit. What would our spirit say to us when we go shopping? If we would listen to our spirit, the Holy Spirit will speak more in us.

Today we are promoting the prophesying of all the saints. We want to see the saints speak for the Lord. Some saints, however, have determined not to speak in the meetings. They come to the church meetings, but they sit at the back in silence. The leading ones who are taking care of the saints may be afraid to say anything to these ones about speaking, because they are afraid they will stop coming to the meetings. Thus, they may come to the meetings for years without speaking anything for the Lord. They have been regenerated, and they love the Lord, love the recovery, and love the church, but they just would not speak. Be assured that if this is your case, you will not grow at all in the Lord.

You must take care of your spirit. Get down on your knees in your bedroom to pray, and see what your spirit would say to you. Your spirit will tell you that you are stubborn and that you should go along with the church to speak for the Lord. If you take care of your spirit, the divine Spirit will take the opportunity to speak many more things to you. Then you will come to the meeting by taking care of your spirit. You may even confess to the saints, "Dear saints, I regret that I have not spoken for the Lord in the meetings." The whole church will be happy. Then as you continue to speak, the Holy Spirit will speak to you so that you have even more to speak. Then you will see that the speed of your growth in life will fly like an airplane. Within half a year, you will grow much in Christ and be much more sanctified unto much more sonship. By your growth in life, you will become not just a son but an heir of God to inherit the riches of God (Rom. 8:17). Then you will be so useful in the church life. You will become a supplier to supply, to minister, the bountiful supply of the Spirit to all the congregation.

Dear saints, this is my burden. We should not think that Ephesians 1:4 and 5 transpired once for all. Sanctification for sonship is still going on. Day by day, however, we do not live in our sonship, because we do not care for the sanctifying Spirit speaking and working in our spirit. We must turn to our spirit, realizing that we have been sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit. This sanctifying and regenerating Spirit has much to say to us. He still wants to sanctify us more and more so that we may participate in the sonship more and

more. Then we will grow, and the Father will have a pleasant household. If we care for our spirit and let the Spirit speak to us, we will grow as sons to become heirs, grown-up persons, to inherit all the riches of God. Then we can be a part of His pleasant household. The blessings in Ephesians 1 start from God's choosing for us to be sanctified that we might be more and more in the sonship of God. This should be a daily matter.

CONCLUDING NOTES

(1) Without dispensing His holy element into our being, how could God make us holy? Especially for God's sonship, there is the need for God to dispense His life and nature into our being.

(2) The Father's dispensing in His choosing and predestinating of the believers issues in His sonship through His sanctifying of His chosen people, making them holy as He is in His life and in His nature, to make them like God in the divine life and nature but without His unique Godhead. This is the divine sanctification unto (for) the divine sonship. This is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament. Such a divine sanctification is carried out by the sanctifying Spirit (Rom. 15:16). The divine sonship is accomplished by the regenerating Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Son of God (Gal. 4:6). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ," pp. 478-483)

THE DIVINE SANCTIFICATION FOR SONSHIP

We also have seen something further concerning the truth of sanctification. This has been a great subject among us in the recovery for the past seventy years. We studied and investigated this, spending much time to get into others' writings. But we were not fully satisfied with what we had seen. It was not until this year, 1993, that I saw the full intrinsic significance of sanctification. I saw this when the church in Anaheim was spending time to review our life-study on Hebrews, which was given in 1975. That life-study was very thorough, yet I did not see fully at that time how the sanctification of the Spirit is related to the sonship. Hebrews 2:10 says that the Lord as the Captain of God's salvation will lead many sons into glory. Then verse 11 speaks of the One who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified. When I considered these two verses, my eyes were opened to see that sanctification is for sonship. This is new light.

When I saw this, I entered into a fuller understanding of Ephesians 1:4-5. Verse 4 says, "To be holy," and verse 5 says, "Unto sonship." We need to put these two phrases together—*to be holy unto sonship*. This shows again that sanctification is for sonship. The Greek preposition for the word *unto* is very profound. It means "resulting in." To be holy results in the sonship. God's sonship comes to us through the Holy Spirit's sanctification. The concluding notes [in the previous "Concluding Notes"] point out that the divine sanctification is unto the divine sonship. I hope that the Lord will have mercy on all of us to pick up this thought. Divine sanctification is not for sinless perfection, nor is it merely for a change of our position. It is for the sonship and results in the sonship. We call it the divine sanctification because it is a matter of the Spirit Himself. It is a matter of the Triune God.

Now I would like to present a full view of the divine sanctification as unveiled in the holy Word. God has a desire. Based upon His desire, He made an intention with a purpose. This is His eternal economy, *oikonomia* (Gk.). This economy was made by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and carried out and applied to us by the Spirit. The carrying out of the eternal economy of God is by the Spirit's sanctification. The Spirit's sanctification is the carrying out of God's eternal purpose in four steps.

Seeking Sanctification

The first step of the divine sanctification by the Spirit is His seeking sanctification. This is the Spirit's coming to seek out God's chosen people who became lost. The seeking sanctification is fully unveiled in the second parable in Luke 15. There the Spirit is likened to a woman seeking a lost coin by lighting a lamp and sweeping the house (v. 8). She sought this lost coin finely. Eventually, she found it. Actually, the lost coin was the prodigal son. Due to the Spirit's seeking and finding, the prodigal son woke up. He came to himself (v. 17). He made the decision to rise up and go back to his father to repent.

John 16 goes on to show that this seeking Spirit is also the convicting Spirit. He convicts all the lost sinners of sin in Adam, of righteousness in Christ, and of the judgment for Satan (vv. 8-11). Man's full repentance is the result of the work of the seeking and convicting Spirit.

First Peter 1:2 tells us that this seeking and convicting of the Spirit is the sanctification of the Spirit before the sprinkling of the blood upon the repentant sinners. This shows that the seeking sanctification was before our repentance and believing in Christ. Actually, our repentance and believing were due to the seeking Spirit, the convicting Spirit. We were lost in sin and among a heap of sinners, but the seeking Spirit came to seek us out. As a result, we woke up, repented, returned to God, and asked Him to forgive us. This was the result of our Father's choosing with His predestinating in eternity past along with His Spirit's coming in time to seek us out and convict us. This seeking, this convicting, is the seeking sanctification.

Regenerating Sanctification

At the juncture we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus, the same Spirit, the seeking Spirit, sanctified us further by regenerating us. We were born of the Spirit (John 3:5), and God as the Spirit came into our spirit (Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22). Now we are the sons of God, the children of God. The seeking Spirit woke us up and brought us back to the Father. We repented and believed in the Lord Jesus. We received Christ, and the Spirit sanctified us further, making us the children of God. This is the second step of the divine sanctification, the regenerating sanctification.

The Father put Christ's redeeming blood upon us, just like the loving father put the best robe upon the returned prodigal son (Luke 15:22; Heb. 13:12). Also, the sanctifying Spirit entered into our spirit with God's life to make us children of God. Now we have the blood of Christ without and the life of God within. All our offenses have been forgiven through the blood, the redemption of Christ, and our spirit has been regenerated. The Spirit's regenerating sanctification transpired in our spirit (John 3:6).

Transforming Sanctification

After regeneration, the next step of the Spirit's sanctification is His transforming sanctification. This takes place in our soul. Our regenerated spirit has never been a problem to us. Our problems always come from two sources: our soul (comprising our mind, emotion, and will) and our body. Our untransformed mind, emotion, and will give us much trouble. Following the regeneration of the sanctifying Spirit in our spirit, the sanctifying Spirit carries out His continuous sanctification to transform us in our soul. We were regenerated, sanctified unto God, in our spirit, but we need the sanctifying Spirit's further work to sanctify our soul. This is the transforming sanctification.

This transformation implies renewing and conformation to the image of Christ. While the sanctifying Spirit works to sanctify us, we are being transformed. Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us clearly that transformation is by the Lord Spirit. This is a strong proof that the Spirit's transformation is His work to keep sanctifying us. Romans 12:2 says that we are to

be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The transformation of the sanctifying Spirit first renews our troublesome mind. For us to be transformed, we need some new element added into us to carry away our old element and replace us with the new element. This is a kind of metabolism, which results in a metabolic change within us. Thus, we become another person in our thinking, in our feelings, and in our intentions. The Bible says that we are being transformed from the old man into the new man. This is a further step of the sanctifying Spirit, the transforming sanctification. Now we have the seeking sanctification, the regenerating sanctification, and the transforming sanctification, which includes the renewing and the conforming to the image of Christ.

Glorifying Sanctification

Our full transformation will one day consummate in our glorification. That will be the work of the sanctifying Spirit to glorify us in our body. Another thing that bothers us besides our soul is our poor, vile body. Lust, weakness, sickness, and death are present in our corrupted body. Our body is really vile, but one day we will be glorified and transfigured in our body (Phil. 3:21). Our spirit has been regenerated, our soul is being transformed, and our body will be transfigured, changed into a glorious body with no more lust, weakness, sickness, or death. This is the glorifying sanctification.

When all these four steps of the divine sanctification (seeking sanctification, regenerating sanctification, transforming sanctification, and glorifying sanctification) take place, we will be glorified. We will be qualified to meet the Lord. By that time we will be able to shout, "We have been fully sanctified!" Today we are like a butterfly that is still in the cocoon. Eventually, we will come out of the cocoon. We will not walk on this earth; we will fly. This is the consummating sanctification. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Issue of the Dispensing of the Processed Trinity and the Transmitting of the Transcending Christ," pp. 487-491)