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W H E R E   P E R S O N A L   W O R K   B E G I N S

by Frank N. D. Buchman

Extracts and notes from talks given at the Lily Valley Conference  
near Kuling, China, 1-13 August 1918

## F O R E W O R D

At the beginning of this year 1984 Pope John Paul II spelled out a message of hope to all men everywhere.

"The message I send you is both simple and demanding, for it concerns each of you personally. It invites each one to do his or her share in the establishment of peace in the world without passing this duty on to others. The theme that I propose today for your consideration and action is this: 'From a new heart, peace is born'."

After speaking of how "the contemporary world is imprisoned in a web of tensions," he says, "It is in the face of these enormous problems that I propose the theme of a renewal of 'heart'. It may be thought that the proposal is too simple and the means disproportionate. And yet, if one reflects well, the analysis outlined here permits us to go to the very depth of the problems. Humanity's helplessness to resolve the existing tensions reveals that the obstacles, and likewise the hopes, come from something deeper than the systems themselves."

Many respond and ask how is this to be done. It would seem an appropriate moment therefore to circulate, privately in the first place, some of the thoughts of a man who made a study of how God can work through any of us to bring about this "change of heart", this "transformation", for which the Pope calls.

The pages which follow are extracted from the record of talks given by Frank Buchman on this theme at the Lily Valley Conference near Kuling in China in August 1918. To many his name will be known as the man whom God used to initiate the world-wide movement of the Spirit that has come to be known as Moral Re-Armament. Others will be familiar with such phrases as a "change of heart" which have passed into our daily speech.

This conference at Kuling was the third in a series. Frank Buchman's aim for it was to reach some of the political and military leadership of China as well as the missionaries and get them to deal with the real needs of the country. In doing so he had to break with the conventional moulds, and even the compromise, which marked some of the Christian leadership of the day.

Frank Buchman was reaching out, as he says in these talks, to "the king's palace" as well as "the coolie's hut". By then he counted Gandhi among his friends in India. In China he had already established a relationship, among others, with Sun Yat-sen of which Sun Yat-sen was to say, "He is the only man who tells me the truth about myself." The Secretary-in-Chief of Sun Yat-sen's Government, Hsu Ch'ien, was among those who took an active part in the conference.\*

\* Theo Spoerri, "Dynamic out of Silence" (Grosvenor Books 1976)

Hand in hand with Buchman's conviction about this change of heart went his belief that it was meant to have an impact on society as a whole, whether locally, nationally, or globally. Again in the words of the Pope, "As it is necessary to acquire a new heart to promote a new mentality of peace, all men and women, whatever their place in society, truly can and must assume their share of responsibility in the construction of a true peace, in the circle they live in, in the family, at school, in business, in the city, in their cares, conversations and actions; they must feel concerned for all their brothers and sisters who are part of the same human family, even if they live at the other end of the world."

This well describes Buchman's concern that such personal experience of a change of heart be immediately and directly related to the world about us, a conviction that deepened with the years as world conditions deteriorated. "The international problems of today are at bottom personal problems of selfishness and fear. Lives must be changed if problems are to be solved. Peace in the world can only spring from peace in the hearts of men. A dynamic experience of God's free spirit is the answer to regional antagonism, economic depression, racial conflict and international strife." (1932)  
"Apart from changed lives no civilisation can endure." (1934)

This was echoed in the House of Lords in London at that time (1936) by the late Marquess of Salisbury, as it has been by many the world over ever since: "The cause of the world's state is not economic: the cause is moral. If I may use a phrase which is common in a great movement taking place in this country and elsewhere, what you want are God-guided personalities, which make God-guided nationalities to make a new world. All other ideas of economic adjustment are too small really to touch the centre of the evil."

As these talks are addressed to a group of Christians they use the language with which they were familiar. Frank Buchman was equally at home with the Muslim, the Buddhist, the Hindu, the man of no faith at all, and in each case sensitive to their beliefs and to the language they would understand. He was a pioneer of much that is taken for granted today in the dialogue and teamwork between the faiths and became increasingly aware of their common task in bringing unity to a strife-torn world, without sacrifice of basic principles.

This is the spoken rather than the written word, and spoken in the style that was characteristic of the man, in short, compelling, at times almost staccato, phrases. They would have been delivered with the vigour and sparkle, the humour and lightness of touch which so distinctively marked this tall athletic figure some of us came to know so well in his 50's and 60's. Having been privileged to be one of Frank Buchman's personal secretaries between 1936 and 1939, I have had copies of the original documents in my care, at places corrected in his own hand. What follows are extracts ably edited by Michael Hutchinson, who knew Frank Buchman from his Oxford days. They are of an earlier day, but still vibrant with truth.

Aware as many are of his touches with Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Nobusuki Kishi and others at a formative time in world affairs, they are less familiar with the groundwork with people set out in these pages. At Kuling he was outlining what was to remain part of his basic equipment for the rest of his days.

To be asked to write a foreword is in itself a challenge, but a challenge which I can do no other than take up afresh, as I did when he asked us in Aberdeen University at the beginning of the '30s, "Where are the men who will live alongside Cabinets with the answers?" However inadequately I and others may have fulfilled this role in the intervening years, it is fair to say that we have seen strife and war answered in this way in the home, in industry, in and between communities and nations, classes and races, when God's living Spirit has been given free rein in the hearts and lives of some of those involved.

History has yet to make its final judgement on Frank Buchman and his work. At present, with our limited perception, we can only observe the outreach of a world network of men and women in many lands, which may yet prove to be part of the weaving by a higher hand of an answer to the world breakdown so many fear. Never was time more ripe nor message more apt. "The event is in the hand of God."

Lawson Wood

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## 1. The Art of Listening

It was my privilege to sit in class under the leadership of Henry Wright\* of New Haven. On the wall were these words: "The world has yet to see what Jesus Christ can do in, by, for and through a man who is wholly given up to the will of God." We never began any work in that classroom until two minutes had been given to the consideration of these words. Then Wright would say to us, "Will you be that man? Will you be that man?" Then always he added this verse, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

Some of us spent eight hours in a day just to get to that group for fifty minutes with Henry Wright. In the first minutes we were always faced with these words. Christian workers would come to that group and shake their heads and say, "It's not for me." But before the end of the year there was a considerable number who said, "God wants us to be miracle workers." Their influence has been felt to the farthest ends of the earth.

We face this triangle - God, myself and the other person. All true personal work begins with God. The next movement is out to some other person. This Henry Drummond\*\* calls spiritual apprehension or diagnosis, being able to find out the mind of God. We talk at a person instead of talking with a person. We talk, talk, talk, instead of listen, listen, listen. The diary of John Woolman<sup>x</sup>, which Charles Lamb called the finest autobiography, is the story of a man who listened to God. We need to revive this art of listening to God.

Drummond points out one danger, "theophobia". He says people become so absorbed in God that they forget their fellow men. A man may become known as a great saint, and yet never have the power to regenerate the lives of sinful men in his community. One test, if we are normal in our relation to God, is this: "By their fruit shall ye know them." Do you say, "I am not temperamentally built to do personal work"? Frankly, that is not of God. God asks that you bear fruit: "I have ordained you ... and that your fruit should remain."

There are some who say, "Oh, this listening to God is too mystical." I notice that these are the men who haven't miracles as a result of their work. They are living in the same old routine, doing excellent things but not transforming the lives of men. This listening to God is not the experience of a few men. It's the most sane, normal, healthful thing a person can do.

\* Henry B. Wright (1877-1923) at that time Professor of Christian Methods at Yale University, author of "The Will of God in a Man's Life".

\*\* Henry Drummond (1851-97), Professor of Natural Science, Free Church College, Glasgow, author of "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" and "The Greatest Thing in the World and Other Addresses (Collins, 1978).

<sup>x</sup> John Woolman (1720-72), American Quaker, author of a "Journal" of which Charles Lamb wrote, "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart and love the early Quakers."

To practise this art is the most practical thing in the world. It prepares you for a person. You can go off on the hilltop and listen as the sun is setting in the western sky, and the very man with whom God meant you to talk is home waiting for you when you get there. Here is God, and here are you, and here's the other person, prepared for you. It's a constant daily illustration. It is God that's working. You begin to realise your own nothingness.

No philosopher has ever yet proved that God can't talk to a man. Does God talk to you? It may be the simplest message. Brother Lawrence working over a cookstove in France was a better man because he practised the art of the presence of Christ.

What does it mean to listen to God? It means an unhurried time when God really can have a chance to implant His thoughts in your mind. For me personally at five o'clock or an earlier hour, I am awake and conscious of the presence of God. Some days it is simply a series of luminous thoughts of things God wants me to do that day. Some days it is just a sense of peace and rest and one or two outstanding things. Other days it is a sense of need for intercession on behalf of certain people. It takes all the fret, strain and worry out of life. It gives you a sense of calm.

The thing that comes to you will not come to me. God implants and rivets with luminous thoughts that which He would bring to you. I like the thought of Whittier:

"A grace of being, finer than one's own  
That beckons and is gone."

It is possible for you, busy as you are, to become a miracle worker. I am absolutely convinced the first secret is this: to have the courage to practise this art. You may begin with fifteen minutes; but you will find, when you use fifteen minutes, the time will come in your growth that you will long for an hour, then an hour and a half or two hours, and furthermore you will have time to do it. That's the most remarkable thing of all.

Men who listen to God will feel the sense of a finer life pulsing through theirs. When people fail to have this sense of God it is because of sin in their lives. A sin in my life kept me from power for a whole year. It was the sin of egoism and pride, not having the fine sense to be willing to step back, even though the other person is wrong, and let time tell whether you are right or not.

I was working with a group of men who I thought were Pharisaic. I resigned. That's perfectly all right if you can't work with people, but there is a way to resign. It was a very bitter experience when I had to leave, one of the few times I ever cried. I travelled all over, but there was a bitterness in my heart which I could not conquer.

One day when I was off the Isle of Patmos it came to me that I must write to those men and confess my sin of pride; but I gritted my teeth and said to a fellow-traveller, "I can never forgive those men." I went to England and somehow was led to go into a certain church. I had not planned to go to that service. There were fifteen people there, and the preacher that day spoke to me, picturing the dying Christ on the Cross, as I never saw Him pictured before. I saw the nails in His hands, the larger nail which held His feet, and the spear thrust in His side, and

I saw a look of disappointment on the face of Jesus Christ, and He seemed to be looking at my sin. There seemed to be a great distance between myself and Christ, a great abyss, and I knew it was my sin of nursing ill will. I had led Bible classes, spoken to missionaries, but I had had no power. I had spoken with the young King of Greece about Christ, but no power.

That afternoon I knew I had to write those letters. I began each one of them with these words:

"When I survey the wondrous Cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."

We sing these beautiful hymns, but do they really mean anything to us? It was easy to write the first three lines, but I wrote the fourth line, "pour contempt on all my pride", almost in my own blood. I never heard from any of those men, but my life was different. That very afternoon I was invited to a home where there was a young fresher from Cambridge. After tea he and I walked in the garden and he just naturally yielded his life to Christ.

There had been days when God seemed very far away, when I was always thinking of the people who had wronged me. That feeling left me completely.

On Christmas morning when I was attending service, who should be sitting in the pew in front of me but one of these very men against whom I had been harbouring ill will. When the service was over I reached out my hand and said, "A Merry Christmas". He couldn't meet my eye, his glance was on the floor. God kept me from any ill will. That morning was for me truly peace on earth, good will to men.

Seeming failure in God's eyes is often no failure - there is something further on. When I resigned it seemed at the time like defeat; but it was a glorious victory. I have always thanked God since that I couldn't get on with those people. I was glad for the discipline of that year.

I had started work in Philadelphia with seventeen dollars in pennies and lived entirely by faith and prayer in those days. It brought me Mary, my future cook, and her two children, who the doctor said would die if they didn't get four meals a day. I gave her two boys a home and she became a mother to hundreds of boys.

Sometimes I didn't know where our breakfast was coming from. It is a good thing to know how to abound, but I am glad I had that experience. I know that God will provide for all our needs and am willing to go on that basis today.

## II. The Heart of Individual Work

"The secrets of the Lord are with them who fear Him." \*  
Everything that's hid in a man's life shall be revealed; if you listen to God He will give you the secrets of men's lives. It is interesting, as you go about life, to know what people are doing, the intrigues, persecutions, etc.

God will not give you this power unless you can regard confidences as sacred.

It takes high courage to do individual work, to market the luminous thoughts that God has given you. He will give you the diagnosis of the problems of the very person with whom you are working. A sacred responsibility rests with a person who has the courage to listen to God. When a man tells you he has no power in his life, God will reveal to you why.

There is only one thing in all the world that keeps us from power, sin. When I was here before, I was only scratching the surface of this great truth. Sin is the only wall that keeps us from listening to God, and projecting power into the lives of our fellows. If we know how to read our Bibles, if we understand Jesus Christ we are driven back to that one word - sin.

It is messy, loathsome, the most stupid thing in all the world. You feel the evil influence that men exude from their lives. It's like the trail of a serpent, like a wall that separates you. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." It's the blinding power of sin.

Think of the drama of Paul's life; it was a constant battle with the evil forces about him. Come with your excuses, whatever they may be, it is sin that keeps you away from God. There are people who don't like the word "sin", they are so cultured! Jesus Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Sin is a disease; Jesus Christ is the cure; the result - miracles! Wherever people apply that simple truth there are miracles. You can't see sin in the life of the other person unless you see sin in your own life. I'm going to talk about the debatable sins, doubtful sin. "Doubtful linen is dirty linen." If you don't like the word sin, let us use a philosophical phrase, "malsensation", "maladaptation",

Criticism is the outstanding sin of Christian workers. There are two kinds, constructive and destructive. Constructive criticism simply means that you go to the person and tell him to his face what you have said behind his back to some other person. But it is the withering hand of criticism that is holding the average worker from power. The critic simply reveals himself. Slighting criticism, talking behind people's backs is the wall which prevents you from listening to God.

When we have the courage to confess sin, and try to make amends, "Jesus Christ is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."\*\*

\* Psalm 25: 14

\*\* 1 John 1: 9



It is a question of dying daily to these debatable sins. There was a man whom I wanted to come to this conference. I couldn't ask him to come until I had made some things right with him. He asked me one day if I had read a certain book. Now I hadn't read the book, but I had heard it discussed and I thought I knew enough about it to warrant a "yes" to his question. I thought about it afterwards and realised that I had lied to him. I wrote to him about it and invited him to the conference. When he replied he said that that was exactly his besetting sin and thanked me.

Right there is the heart of individual work. It is not because you are better than anyone else, it is because you are tempted like that other person, but through confession you have power from Jesus Christ, who has the only power to save from sin. There is only one power that will break down the wall. It can break down every debatable sin.

Avarice is keeping the Church from power today. You may be caught as I was in that sin, simply not paying your full railroad fare or something like that. It may be avarice in connection with your servants, with the members of your family. We can be robbed of power by a little money quite as much as by a lot of money.

We temporize, doing the easy thing, trying to keep everybody in the community happy. My aunt used to tell me about a farmer who came to town with apple butter and cottage cheese. He had only one spoon. He would sell some apple butter, using the spoon to fill the housewife's dish, then he'd sell some cottage cheese, using the same spoon, until finally one couldn't tell which was apple butter and which was cottage cheese.

We haven't the courage to go right into people's lives and find out what it is that it is robbing them of power. It is a great temptation with many of us to allow the good to be the enemy of the best. Not to do the best thing is to temporize.

Another sin, which is all too common, is impurity on the top level, evil thinking. Ninety-seven per cent of the men I see in interviews - Wright and Drummond confirm it - are troubled with evil thoughts. Do you ever think of their thought life when you deal with other men?

We are simply temporizing - giving people sugar-coated pills. We want to keep everything nice and smooth. We say, "You can't go that far with a person." If you don't go that far, you are only scratching the surface. Drummond said that when he had been out with men speaking to them of the deepest things in their lives, as he went home he wanted to change his very clothes.

This is going to bring antagonism. Read with absolute frankness how Paul dealt with this question. This candy-coated Christianity is the reason we are not having miracles in China.

Are you willing to be human? It is one of the great essentials in Christian work. Have you the courage to confess to another person the fact that occasionally you have been troubled with evil thoughts in your life? You will find the evil thought will go in your life as you have the courage to acknowledge the fact. Your pupils will begin to know that you are human. Jesus Christ "tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin."\* The only difference between you and the other person is the grace of God.

\* Hebrews 4: 15

### III. Method or Life?

Personalized evangelism is the propagation of life, and not the promotion of a plan. There arises at once in the minds of some people the thought that this is too vague, indefinite and undefinable. We want method; but where is the life to run the machine? A great many Christians today are being fooled by method. If there is no life there will be no fire. The fundamental need is the propagation of life.

What brought me to that fundamental decision? Three years ago I was asked to go to India to do what we have been doing in China. I was puzzled and perplexed, and the absence of true active life appalled me. I came to China last year with the same principle I had in mind for India. People said, "India and China are different." I have found, however, that the most promising and constructive work had for its foundation the winning of men one by one. I wondered to myself, "Why aren't people grasping this great simple truth of Jesus Christ and applying it?" It is not a complex method, it is a simple thing to propagate life.

I came to China with the one object, to find if China was the same in this respect as India, to find if men were following this fundamental principle of propagating life. The first year I merely touched the surface, last year I scratched it, and I hope that this year I will get down deeper.

After my visit to India and China, for two months I didn't want to see anybody. I wanted to think this thing through for myself, just take the letters that had come to me, and study the needs of the human heart as in a laboratory. I came to this conclusion, that the fundamental need is ourselves. I am so grateful for the hour which Bishop Roots had this morning emphasizing this fact. I thought I knew something about individual work when I first came to China. I am beginning to find out this year how little I actually know.

In the eleventh chapter of John are these words of Jesus Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life." The great secret of many people's failure in prayer is that they really do not expect answers to their prayers.

My thought for this morning is, "Untie the bandages, the grave clothes" - our bandages and grave clothes. The man in this story was a dead man, and Jesus, an Oriental, knew the reluctance that these people felt when they were asked to untie these bandages. They shrank from it: "You're asking us to do an impossible thing." Jesus Christ said, "Untie those grave clothes and let him move." Are we actually willing to meet the real need of men or do we say, "I shrink from it."?

Just a month ago I told the Lord there were certain things I could not do. He told me to do them and said, "Fear not for I am with thee." There is the corpse. It has been dead four days. Will you touch it? There's the condition of the real need of the people about us. And we ourselves sin, so we must first untie our own bandages if we are going to have the real power in our lives, which will be permanent and lasting.

There are certain things we will do. We will come to China, teach in colleges, hold secretarial positions; but when it comes to intimate personal dealing with men we say, "No, I can't do that, I'm not built that way." You will never know the real need, the real China, unless you are willing to untie the bandages of the people around you. And you can never untie bandages for dead men about you unless you have untied bandages first in your own life. If you are bound yourself, you can't fearlessly go into another man's life. Do we see the bandages in other men's lives, do we see them actually smothering in bandages - their whole face covered with a towel?

In Cairo I saw a vast array of mummies, wonderfully preserved; but they were dead men. There was no life. There is a story told of one of these. When the bandages were removed they found a seed, which was accidentally dropped into a fold of the grave clothes when the artisan was preparing the body. That seed had life. Planted in a fertile place, it grew. Sin has many people bandaged hand and foot, but if you search you will find they have life. It can be cultivated if you place it in the proper surroundings.

I have just had a letter which is one of the saddest I have ever received. This man is a perfect machine. If I wanted anything organized this is the man I would choose to do it for me.

"I am in great personal need of spiritual power." He goes on to say, "Really I know very little of the strength and peace of God. I feel always a desire for the deeper spiritual life, and a doubt as to whether I really have any faith at all." A long incoherent letter shows the agony through which that man is going.

That man came to me a little while ago, and I didn't have the courage to go all the way with him, and I failed him. But I am going to make a journey to see him, if I do nothing else in China. It will be an expensive journey, but I am going to help him. "Untie those bandages and let him move."

When I first came to China last year, a man who is a real physician of souls came to my room and said, "I believe God has sent you to China for a certain purpose." He told me of one of the bandages which bind. I am beginning now to see the gravity of it. What he told me I didn't then sense, but now as I look back I see things that I never saw before. He said, "Do give a strong message wherever you go on 'absorbing friendships'." He used a word that was new to me, "crushes". On these hilltops I have seen "absorbing friendships". I can't judge, I can only say this, they may be unhealthful. He knew far more than I do. He asked me to be faithful in passing on that message. I cannot do other than give you that word of caution from an old tried physician of souls.

A Chinese gentleman in a conference in Japan rose and said, "I am not a young man. I have hated you Japanese. I have in my own blood written an oath that when my boys were old enough I would educate them to fight you." The Japanese admired his high courage. He continued, "I am here as a Christian worker and I have been tied." He prayed, "Lord, let me be a power to bring these two nations together." There is the secret of true citizenship.

Our great danger is that we untie some bandages, and say, "I won't touch this one, there is an ugly odour to it." There are men and women who have lost their faith in a living God. Let me take you for just a

moment to the Resurrection morn. What did the disciples see when they came to the tomb? The grave clothes were there, and off to one side was the napkin neatly folded. Bandages belonged to the tomb. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is the risen Christ who gives us the power to untie our bandages - first ourselves, and then we will be ready for the next step.

#### IV. The Key to People's Lives

We want to keep our eyes fastened on the central thought that Henry Wright gave us thirty-six hours in the year: "The world has yet to see what Jesus Christ can do in, by, for and through a man who is wholly given up to the will of God." That was the thought of Moody, "not a rich man, not wise, not brilliant, but a man wholly given up to the will of God." This thought, coupled with this other verse, "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me," we faced for thirty-six hours in the year. It took me six weeks until I came to absolute conviction and yielded myself to that principle.

Two years ago I was going home on "The Empress of Russia". A man in the smoking room, an honours man in an Eastern University, was drinking and talking too much. He thought I was a business man. I stepped into his stateroom one day and said, "You know what the men are saying about you in the smoking saloon, don't you? They say you are making a fool of yourself." We talked awhile, and when Christmas came I sent him a Christmas card, but received no acknowledgment. I found his address in Shanghai, and this past Christmas I sent him another card and present. When I returned to my hotel after a trip, I found that he had left five calling cards. I happened to be in his hotel one day, and he purposely avoided me because he feared I would ask him to make a decision for Christ.

However, he finally made his decision. Later he sailed to America to take up a commission as a Christian in France, on the basis of yielding his life wholly and completely to God.

Frankly, that man was "impossible". I only had a little touch with him, only that word of what people were saying of him in the smoking saloon. On that basis it is possible to win anyone who is impossible. "With God all things are possible." It is possible on this fundamental truth: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

My message is a growth. A group of men have contributed to it. But it's not mine, it's God's. For instance, when I came to China this last time I wasn't fully convinced of the truth that "a confessing Christian is a propagating Christian." It became a reality in my life when Bishop Moloney opened our retreat in Hangchow and said that if a Christian is going to have power he must confess. A servant in his family came and told him that he had taken "squeeze". The bishop then remembered that he had failed to pay a physician's fee. He went to his servant and told him that he had taken "squeeze", and then went to his physician and paid his bill, because he thought that as a bishop he ought not to have special privileges. This was the beginning of a revival in his diocese.

Confession ought to be the most normal thing in all the world. There was a certain person whom it was very difficult for me to like. It was hard to ask him to come to this conference. I wrote him that my letter was as much an honest confession as it was a hearty invitation. It cost me a great deal, but I knew I would never have power in this conference if I did not do that thing. These things cost; but it's the price of power.

We have to face every person whom we consciously know we have wronged, so that there is not a single wall between ourselves and the person whom we are trying to win. If we go in that spirit we are more apt to win him than in any other way. People are not willing to hear about the good you are doing; they are more interested in your failures. Everyone knows of the successes of Drummond, but my heart just leaps when I read the chapter in his biography called "Misunderstood".\* You see in it the inner heart and dignity of the man.

There was a lie I told one time on the Yangtze. It was the most difficult thing in the world to go to the man with whom I had been speaking, and tell him that I had lied. I was troubled the next day and had no distinct luminous thoughts in my morning watch. I went and told him, and felt the return of power.

There are certain things that ought never to be confessed in public. If your sin is a public sin, like that of the leader in a church quarrel, you ought to confess it. If you are sincere, people will have sympathy for you. If there are sins of impurity in your life, just say "impurity". If it is dishonesty or insincerity or impurity, say so. If you are difficult to live with, say so.

In Canton an Anglican arose and said she was testy. There was humour in that, for everyone who lived with her knew it. But she won the co-operation of the difficult people in her station.

You will never be a helper of men until you know what it is to suffer. Our danger is that we fail to do the costly thing. A certain man here in China, after spending an hour with me in Hankow, travelled one thousand miles to speak to one man. He said, "I failed that man for a whole year." One of the sins he had to confess was about arguing over religion, not living a life that corresponded with his words. "Confess your faults one to another." Face your brother honestly and do the hard thing, and you will have power.

It ought to be brief, honest, simple, contrite. Any sin that doesn't concern the public should be confessed not to the public, but to the person concerned.

This may be against your church practice. I myself was reared in a liturgical church. When I was Secretary of the YMCA I said there was one thing I never would ask the men to do, and that was to stand up and give a public confession of Christ.

One night Bishop McDowell came to speak to the men. On the platform he leaned over and whispered to me, "Can I put decision at this meeting?" I had been working for months with a young Virginian, hoping to bring him to the point of accepting Christ. He was in that meeting and I thought, if

\* "Henry Drummond", by Cuthbert Lennox, chapter 18



the bishop puts that question, then it is all off with that man. I was limiting the Holy Spirit. To save my face, I said "Yes" to the bishop, but I trembled for that young man whom I had so carefully nursed.

The bishop said, "I would like to cast the net." I was repelled by that sentence. My whole training had been against that sort of thing. But when the bishop gave the invitation the first up on his feet was that man. He confessed Jesus Christ before the men, and other men in the meeting also stood up and followed his example. He said he was just waiting for a chance to witness for Christ.

I crave for you the thing I lacked myself, to have a sympathy that's so catholic that it attracts and does not repel people. As a body of Christians we are taught by our Lord that we ought to be willing and to have the courage to confess our sin. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

The next step is that we gain the confidence of the person with whom we are working.

The second step is that you have men confess to you. I mean by this that a man will tell you things he doesn't tell to other people.

The third step is conviction.

The fourth step is conversion. The thing that we need to work for, and that some people fail to expect, is individual work that leads to a miracle, a conversion.

The fifth step is conservation. The man won becomes a force instead of a field. He becomes a worker for other men. It ought to happen the same day. The person you have won will begin to be a miracle worker. Find out what the fundamental thing in that person's life is. The next step is to arouse that person to action, get him to say, "I will." Our danger is that we try to arouse the emotion instead of the will. Emotion is a fruit and not a root.

When some people do personal work they simply screw themselves all up. Personal work should be simple, natural, wholesome.

Faith is a gift of God. Suppose a man comes to see me, and I have to bring him a way of salvation that is intelligent. A professor in the Imperial University in Japan said, "It satisfied us, just that simple way. That thing is scientific."

People use words that others do not understand, like "sanctification", "consecration" and "salvation". Your man doesn't understand that; he knows he is in sin, and he knows that the middle letter of sin is "I", and he can't see God. What he wants is just Jesus.

Jesus

Just  
Exactly  
Suits  
Us  
Sinners

He will be nervous, so just remember that "Jesus just exactly suits us sinners." Jesus, the cure for sin. The two come together.

What is the craving of the human heart? Fun, enjoyment, satisfaction, peace, joy - and they come when Jesus and the sinner are reconciled. The sinner can understand joy. J O Y Jesus owns you. You owe Jesus. You are no longer your own, Jesus bought you with His blood on the Cross.

A friend has this acrostic over his desk:

Go  
Right  
On  
Working

When there is joy there is growth.

Your young Christian must watch and pray lest he enter into temptation. He must watch his words, his thoughts, his actions, and the citadel he needs to guard most is his thought life. He must learn to say, "No, Mr. Evil Thought, you can't come in." Watch and pray.

Pray and don't simply talk about prayer, but you naturally pray with that person. Do not pray too long a prayer. In the beginning it may be too long for him to comprehend. The prayer uttered by a young student in Amoy was, "O Lord, manage me, for I can't manage myself."

Can we just naturally talk to God, just as little children talk to their parents? The other man may be having growing pains. He may be sick, hot, nervous. You say, "O Lord" and he says, "O Lord"; you say, "help me" and he says, "help me", and so you help him naturally. Give yourself with abandon and you will have no trouble gaining confidence.

You must also know your Bible well so that you will know exactly what to give your friend when he is in need. You can't market anything to anybody that isn't a great possession of yours.

The trouble with us is that our experiences are memories, and we have nothing fresh to offer. We must have a first hand experience of the living Christ. We must be able to feel the touch of God Himself.

#### V. Interesting Sinners make Interesting Saints

After I came home from a year's trip in the Near East John R. Mott said to me, "I want you to go to the most godless university in the country." I waited two-and-a-half months before I said I would go. On Christmas Day I said I would. I reached there on the second day of January. That evening there were seventeen liquor parties in the College. The dormitories were in frightful shape; they had just gotten through with a strike that had lasted a month. It certainly was a godless place.

The first thing you have got to expect is persecution. I wasn't in my room two hours before two fellows came to see me with the express purpose of "roughing me up". I sensed just what they had in mind. That day someone who knew I was living in a God-forsaken place, had sent me a box of Huyler's chocolates, I said to these men, "Fellows, let's sit around this five-pound box of Huyler's." It was just that that disarmed them. When they left my room they were ready to say, "He's a pretty decent sort of fellow."

I got it in the college show and in the college paper because I was standing squarely for things they knew to be right. They termed me "Pure John". They wrote on signboards, "Pure John - 99% pure".

Frankly, some movements in China, I am afraid, are too popular. We want to be nice with people. Look out if you conform your life to everyone else's.

About twenty-five uninteresting Christians in that university had the form of godliness but no power, like squirrels in a cage. How are you going to reach three thousand men and make religion virile in a university? The thing to do is to go after the interesting sinner. Interesting sinners make interesting saints.

I gained the confidence of a group of fellow who stole chickens. Twelve of them would go out. They were interesting sinners. Two of the men were the ones I treated to Huyler's candy. This group said, "He's big enough to stand being persecuted and we admire him for it. He believes liquor parties are wrong, he believes cheating wrong. We'd like to hear what he has to say."

"Irish", a great big Irishman who later became a real Christian and married one of the finest Christian girls in North America, was one of the group. "Red" suggested that they organize a Bible class and they called it the "Royal Rooster Bible Class". Previously they had been going out to steal chickens, now they sometimes met up to 2.30 Sunday mornings. It was a real discussion group. They were getting down to real facts.

What resulted from that Bible class? The first president of the YMCA at State College was George, a football man. George had lots of force. He knew how to see inside of a man's life and how to develop him. To work with George and two or three others I found to be better than trying to work with three thousand men. I was glad when forty or fifty men came out to the Sunday afternoon meeting, because these men really counted. I allowed George to select his own men. I would suggest a certain man and George would say, "That man cheats in exams, he doesn't amount to much." He wanted to have real men in the cabinet. He was thorough-going. He wouldn't have known how to teach a Bible class technically. He was not a perfect product. There were crudities about him.

Some people object to using marginal men in this kind of work. I wonder what they think St. Augustine was in Milan.

You have to do selective work if you are going to do permanent work. At the end of six months you couldn't have dragged George away from that place. If you give a man something to do that is bigger than he is, it will drive him to his knees. Don't be atheistic and say, "I wonder if he will do the job." You have to get your point of contact with your man that leads to vital communion with Jesus Christ. Our great danger is that we are so full of tact that we have no contact.

Seemingly, my first year at State College was a failure. They laughed at me and called me nicknames. One man, Armstrong, a princely fellow, the son of a Presbyterian elder, made fun of religion and took it out on me. He was the soubrette in the college show. He could rag you a lot and make life miserable. When I invited "Dad" Elliott to speak I asked this student to sing. Afterwards he said, "Why haven't you spoken to me about Jesus Christ? My teasing and ragging you was only a mask."

The next year we brought in more contagious personalities. You begin to live on a world plane, and your men begin to think in world terms. I had read about Melinda Scott\* in "The British Weekly" and had her come to State College. She is just a mite of a person, frail, you might have thought the wind would blow her away. When she was eight years old she began to stitch on Knox's top hats. She worked at this so constantly that her body was dwarfed; her body, but not her soul. When people began to realize the high, noble life she was leading, she was made the head of the National Laborers' Association for Women. Just to listen to the story of that person's life is a sermon.

When people like that talk to the men, there is no yawning, no snapping of watches - you can't keep the men away from chapel. College men, whether in China or in America, will respond to reality. I know nothing like being real yourself, genuine, and then associating yourself with genuine people who you know will not fail you twenty-four hours in the day.

We must live ourselves into the heart of the interesting sinner. A physician knows about disease. He won't always talk about it, but he must know what is going on in the background of a man's mind. We need imagination, to sense what is going on in his life. Tom was a great fine popular fellow, played wonderful football and made nearly every honour society at Cornell. In his freshman year he became dissipated. He spent five or six thousand dollars a year and at the end of the third year he was asked to leave.

His father, a State Senator, sent him to Penn State. The first time I met him he was drunk in a hotel. He put his hands over mine and said, "If you will drink a bottle of champagne with me I will become a Christian."

We were getting ready for the Rochester conference. Some people always take the same old crowd, but I selected fourteen men who were influential in the college. Some of the old crowd felt badly, but I stuck to the fourteen. Tom sent Pete over to see me, and Pete said, "Tom wants to go. He says all the men at the track house have been asked but him, and his vanity is hurt." It was settled that Tom was to go along with the rest of us.

On Christmas Day I had a telegram from him: "Count on me. I'll be in Rochester the first day of the conference." I set him to work registering students. He worked all the first night and began to feel he had a part, making the freshmen feel at home. The next day he said, "We need ushers." I decided to use these fifteen men. He said, "We'll do it. I'll be head usher." Everything went well for three days.

When I returned one night he was waiting outside for me at the hotel. "Frank, I want to talk with you," he said. "I'm getting too much religion."

I turned on him and said, "You've never had enough," and he laughed.

When people have not been in the right mood for things, we've been too stupid to find out the real need. We have to live ourselves into the lives of other people. I said to myself, "I suppose he is being fed up. I'm going to organize a sleighing party." I asked some of the

\* A pioneer of the Catholic workers' movement

most interesting men to come and at noon told Tom about it. He wasn't interested at all. I finally persuaded him to go, but when we got to the centre of the town he said, "I'm not going," and got out.

We got home very late that night. I tried the knob of his door. It was locked. I just knew that Tom was inside. At three o'clock in the morning he came to my room and said simply, "Frank, will you get up and pray for me." We knelt and prayed for power. Some of us are not quite sure we have the courage to face things alone for twelve hours. He said first he read the "Saturday Evening Post" and then he took the Bible. He called the fellows together and said, I want you to know that the last nineteen hours have been the best hours of my life." They were together for five hours that night and covenanted that State College would be a different place.

The big conference was the occasion for these fifteen men. The miracle came because they were of one mind together in one place. The movement spread through all the conference.

Tom's twenty-first birthday came. "I must go home," he said. "All our old family friends will be there. I am going to ask my mother and father not to serve liquor at that dinner."

He couldn't come back to college until three weeks afterwards. He came to my office one night and said, "We must get the faculty and students together Thursday night." He got the fraternity men to come, some faculty men, and the track house men. The building was filled with men and women listening to a real story. Tom said, "The last time I surveyed the front campus I fudged, but I am going to get my diploma honestly." That was reality.

His father lost his money. I went to Tom's home to find that he was getting up at four o'clock to milk fourteen cows, because the family fortune had become depleted. He didn't buy new clothes because, he said, "I must do something to pay back the money I wasted." He became the engineer of that county, and he is now holding an influential position in his state and is living an honest, pure and honourable life. I understood his life, and was willing to go where sinners went and they felt that there was no intrusion.

The true personal worker must not pry into the affairs of another. He must go as a great friend, as a great lover of his kind."\*

## VI. A Man Who Understands

Listening to God reveals diagnosis to us. He will show us just what he would have us do and know about the very person with whom we are working. There is the whole romance of Christian living, when we begin to be co-workers with God. It is not how much we know, how much training we have had before. It depends on how much we cooperate with God, how

\* For more about the transformation at Penn State College see "The Making of a Miracle", an informal talk by Frank Buchman, in 1948, in "The Art of Remaking Men" by Paul Campbell. (Himmat Publications, 1982).



much we let God work with us. Anyone who is doing real personal work will give of himself. It is only the power of the living God that can do this.

All true diagnosis begins with God. Some people will begin to be fearful. Certain Scripture passages bring to mind the thought of Jesus as a great diagnostician. Jesus saw Nathanael.\* It was not a casual glance. Jesus noted his bearing, his eyes. He clearly sensed men. He knew instantly what was going on there. "When you were sitting under the fig tree I saw you." Jesus Christ, the true soul physician, brings divinity into the life of Nathanael. There is more action there, more discernment than the casual reader will grasp. There was a hard struggle going on in that man's mind. Jesus did not say anything to him about it.

The true diagnostician does not always reveal all he knows, because he is just biding his time waiting for the God-directed movement. He lives and moves with God because he goes on God's bidding.

When we go into the life of that other person, it is the God-directed movement, not a man-made thing. You are as responsible for the people you repel as for the people you win.

To turn to another phase of personal work - "There is nothing covered up that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be made known."\*\* The fact is that sins are revealed. How does this revealing knowledge come? St. Paul wrote, "Some people's sins are notorious and call for judgment, but in some cases sin only comes out afterwards." X

Another striking passage on diagnosis is in the fourth chapter of John, the story of the woman at the well. "Here is a man who understands." That is what the world is hungry for. The most difficult man you know is waiting for someone to understand.

You understand the needs of a railway commission man from Nagasaki. He goes to the dining car. You have already eaten, but you order two eggs, just to sit down and live your life into the life of that man. He may go back to Nagasaki among men who are living godless lives and begin something which will reorganize their lives.

Listening to God is the fundamental thing. On Sunday morning in my usual morning hour before I went to church, I became conscious that a certain person was in desperate need, and I looked for a natural point of contact. Yesterday, Wednesday, he came to see me. God works at both ends, with the person and with you. I said to him, "God revealed to me the other day that you are in desperate need." He said, "Yes, that's true, I have been in desperate need."

Of course, you are not going to talk about these things to anyone else in a way that they can be traced. The reason a great many men fail to be used in personal work is that they have never learned the ethics of the physician, who will never break the confidence of his patients, unless he has their permission.

Check up the person who tells you something about another person. Find out whether you are simply gossiping or whether you really have a pure motive toward that man.

\* John 1: 47-50

\*\* Luke 12: 2

X I Timothy 5: 24

Here I want to put you on your guard. There is such a thing as spiritual nagging, and that's not personal work. When a person comes to you, you meet the need and then forget about it. The secrets of a man's soul are to be told once for all, and the next time you meet that person blot those things from your mind. Present him with a fine red apple and a comfortable chair, and make him feel so comfortable he will want to come to you. Never mention again that person's sin or bring it to his remembrance.

Have you such an atmosphere about you, of trust and generous judgment, that people just naturally steal away to you and tell you things they have never told to anyone else? If you don't, there is something wrong about your life. "By their fruits shall ye know them." The sinner should feel absolutely at home with us, and he ought to be able to tell us anything about himself, the deepest things in his life. Be such a great lover of your kind that people will come to you quite naturally.

Have you ever told your pupils that you had been caught cheating? The man who apologized publicly in the classroom helped me the most.

We ought to live ourselves back into adolescence with all its shyness and hesitancy. When I first was in China a woman said to me, "What are you going to do with a girl who stole 60 cents?" The atmosphere was so thick you could have cut it. I turned to the dowager dame of the 1860 period and said, "Madam, when did you steal last? Quick as lightning she returned, "Why, I took money from my mother's purse, and I must have been about fourteen or fifteen."

Everyone in some way or another has stolen, but they have forgotten it. Did you ever steal, and your mother kept you home from school for a half day and lovingly dealt with you, told you never to steal again and impressed on you the fact that it was wrong to steal a pin? The next day you went to school and the temptation never came again.

That is the atmosphere there must have been about Jesus Christ, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

People need to play together. As you do so you get natural points of contact. It is a good index into people's lives to see how well they play.

A physician will say, "When did you do so-and-so?" Is that taking undue advantage of a person? A true physician is not a detective. He has only one concern, and that is to heal the patient. He knows certain things are necessary to cure him. He will watch, be prudent and bide his time. The soul physician knows that when the time comes the cure will be wrought.

God expects us to use our own human ability, all the cumulative experience of the past. When I began to do personal work I did not know men. I was the product of a mould, of a stereotyped education - four years in a church college and three in a conservative theological seminary. I was a flat failure until I read F. B. Meyer.\* I went to England to see him, because he knew men, and said, "What is the matter with my preaching?"

\* F. B. Meyer, English Congregational minister, author of "The Secret of Guidance" (Bethany House Publishers).

He said, "Your problem is an easy one. Tell people on Sunday what they have told you on weekdays."

When it comes to diversity of gifts\*, personal work is not mentioned. Everybody is supposed to do it. Individual work, propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ, is the essence of Christianity. He began with twelve ordinary men.

We must take time to listen to God, and we must be absolutely real; then we will express ourselves in the lives of all sorts of people. If I want to win a hostler, I must know something about horses. If I want to win the president of a government, I have got to have that ease of manner, that nonchalance, that freedom from restraint that gives me my point of contact with him. Any person who is a great human can go anywhere. He can be at home in a king's palace or in a coolie's hut.

The greatest need in the church today is the "how" - how to do a thing. We inspire people Sunday after Sunday, but do not show these Christians how to work. If we teach people how, they will begin to learn the romance of Christian living.

When you have had an influential man or woman decide for Christ, did you within a week take them out and show them how to win another person? You invited them to a service, a prayer group, a Bible class. All these things are like food; but work is exercise. You show your person by actual living demonstration. It is the peripatetic school. I would rather have a group of people around me see me work than hear me speak. When the two of us go out to meet a difficult man we first pray for him; then we go out together; then we follow him through.

One question put to me is, "Do you judge a man? This answer came to me: Do we think of a surgeon as a butcher, or as one who uses the knife for the good he can do? We are sometimes not willing to apply some principles of surgery in our soul analysis. In the dilettante stage I objected to having people talk about personal matters. I was not willing to be a fool for Christ's sake, to give myself with that abandon. The person who is not willing to give himself has something to hide. There is a spare room there that needs to be cleaned out.

How do men reveal themselves? The relation between heart, face and bearing is an interesting study. After a while a man will be constantly studying men. He will get reactions. He will watch whether a person is at ease. Some men exude an unwholesome atmosphere. Instinct tells you at once to shrink from them. Women's instincts are surer than men's and more developed. It is interesting to get the judgment of a woman.

People reveal themselves by their inefficiency, and by forced activity. They do a number of things to cover up inefficiency. "An empty barrel rattles." They will have paper-made plans but do not produce.

People reveal themselves by their criticisms. A person may be absolutely just in his criticism. It may, however, be an index of his own need. Men reveal themselves quite as much by their refusals and their silences as by what they say. They will try to throw dust in your

\* I Corinthians 12: 4

eyes when they begin to feel that you are on their track. They also reveal themselves by their violent antipathies. "Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself."\*

A man reveals himself by his enemies, by the people who oppose him. Christ revealed Himself by His enemies. He attacked them on the very thing that was their sore point, so they separated themselves from Him.

Who is the person we go to when we are in spiritual darkness, whom we trust with our deepest secrets? The person who can help us is one who has had like temptations with us but has won the victory. You will say to yourself, "That person understands me and my need; he knows exactly the struggle I have." That is why a confessing Christian becomes a propagating Christian. See how many people come to you naturally to talk over with you the deepest things in their lives, and see what they come to talk to you about. The essence of Christianity rests just there.

Sin is sin, and you cannot call it anything else. Our danger is that we say it is a weakness of ours, a fault or a failure. It is the little sly foxes which keep us from power.

Sometimes you have to be severe and hard. Some people are so calloused that nothing short of dynamite will work. I was praying for a coach called Pop. Just a few days before, a father came to me and said, "My son was buried two weeks ago in Colorado. He had contracted tuberculosis because of the life of dissipation that Pop had taught him to lead. That was my boy's dying confession. I want you to do something."

How are you to tell the truth in love to a man like that? A luminous thought came to me to go down to a certain corner and there I would find him. Sin makes cowards of us all; but as we walked along I said to him, "I want to tell you a bold fact that has come to my notice this past week." Then I told him about the boy who died and what his father had said about Pop's starting him in a life of shame.

He said, "Get off that stuff."

I said, "I won't get off that stuff."

That great big fellow just broke down. "Yes," he said, "it's true. Buchman, you are a real friend. I have been unhappy a long time. I have been seeing a change in the lives of my football men, and I wondered if you were ever going to talk this matter over with me."

A great many people had talk about that affair to other people; but I told him.

That very night he took ten minutes of a meeting to confess his sin before the student body. I would rather hear that man read the Psalms than any other man I know. He is a miracle. That man's influence has meant more than many preachers'. He wrote to me, "The spirit of the old days is still going on. The booze parties have gone." There were times when we sent six hundred to a football game and they would all be drunk. The men banded themselves together to

have no licences granted to any saloon that sold liquor to any student. That was social service. That was student consciousness.

Telling the truth in love, on the basis of sin, was the thing Pop expected me to do, and it was difficult. We must be willing to use the surgeon's knife, to cut down deep to get something out. Then that person will thank you and do anything for you.

A man whom I had worked with for six months came into my office one day when I had a lot of letters to sign. What was the attitude to take? Time lies in abeyance when we are trying to win a man. When he saw how my time was taken up with this clerical work, he gave me a whole year of his services free to relieve me of office work. When we reach out of ourselves for others, other hands will do the work we cannot do ourselves.

What are the temptations that draw us aside? Things will be your greatest temptation, just things, just a lot of activity. We become like white mice in a cage. Our own spiritual life becomes dull because we are not expressing ourselves in the lives of people. Things will take care of themselves if we actually personalize our job. Henry Wright of Yale says he does three hours' work in two. So will you if you sit down with a man and find out what his real need is.

While I speak the truth in love, there must be sympathy and love for the man who has fallen. We sometimes toy with the word sympathy. Intelligent, understanding sympathy is the kind that is needed. In the scheme of salvation you have to know just the process through which a man has to go. He is not ready for anything cut and dried.

You must know that sixteen is the age for decision, the time for a boy to decide, when he is ready to do the big thing. Lincoln made the great venture when he saw the slave market. Remember that when a person reaches the age of 45 there is another critical stage.

Think of the stages in the scheme of salvation. First, the lower stages, the groping of a soul for the light, the reaching out of hands. You have these things in the back of your mind when you prepare for an interview. After the despair, there comes the glimmering light, just that first gray streak of dawn; next the growing faith, like the grain of mustard seed.

The next stage is the Christian life begun. Then follows the laborious working out in fear and trembling. Have you realized how large a place fear plays in the life of a boy? Look back into your own life, and think of the fear you had as a boy and the fear you have now.

When I had charge of a dormitory, George was a boy of fourteen who had to work for a living. We didn't get to know each other very well. After a while he wanted to know how it would feel to get drunk. He came in late and got to his room.

My first temptation was to go down and scold him. I was afraid I would lose my temper so I locked my door and didn't go down. Next morning I didn't get down to breakfast. Sometimes we are not ready to say anything to people. By ten o'clock I was ready and asked God to lead me and help me. I went down to where George worked and asked Mr. Cohen if I might speak to him.



When George came he flushed straight to the hair. I asked him if he cared to have lunch with me. We went to Whitney's, a nice place. He liked oysters, fish and ice cream, not a very wholesome meal for a boy; but before we had finished the oysters George told me that he was in trouble.

"It didn't cost much to get drunk," he said, "just twenty cents. I got drunk. Do you still teach that Sunday School class?"

I said very little during the meal. I let him do it all. George became a great help to me. We often try too many warnings. Have you the courage to wait with difficult people?

## VII. "The Sly Foxes"

The fifth chapter of Acts tells of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, his wife. Have you ever seen the physical effect that followed when a man failed to tell the truth? I was in Philadelphia at the time of the Capitol scandal. Five of the principal men most concerned died of heart disease or apoplexy within six months of the discovery of their crime, and they died suddenly. These are the things that sin will work out in the life of a person.

A man is allowed money to travel second class, but travels third class and pockets the difference. I know hundreds of examples of people like that who have allowed some little thing to creep into their lives and rob them of power. There are so many subtle forms of dishonesty.

Find out what business a man is in. What chances are there in his business which are apt to present temptation? Another man is gambling and bitter and refuses to consult a doctor when he knows there is something the matter with him. Purposely obscuring one's handwriting when one does not know how to spell a word; self-expression in pretending to be more than you are or less than you are; taking credit for things you ought not to have credit for; allowing another person to suffer in your place; evasion of taxes; having debts; exaggerated play of words for fancy effects; mixing accounts; sending mail under cheaper rates; disclosing of personal confidences - all these are subtle forms of dishonesty.

Sometimes tact is just another way of telling a lie. I wish sometimes, when people deal with me, that they would be more truthful and less tactful. After a while a person becomes so tactful that he is soon telling lies before he knows it.

A physical result of dishonesty is nervousness due to fear of discovery. We are afraid we are going to be found out. "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."\*

What are the intellectual results? A deceiver soon begins to distrust himself and his own mental judgments. Certain men are fuzzy-minded. Their minds waver. There is no co-ordination. This

\* John 3: 20

kind of man has an eye that wavers. He looks at the floor and cannot look you straight in the eye. When he looks at you there is a small eyeball, a squinting movement of the eye.

Then there are the social results of dishonesty. "Putting away lying, let every man speak truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another."\* You hold that a lie is sometimes justifiable, but it may be that you owe the man the truth. If a man is seriously ill, is it right to keep the truth from him? If he were told of the real situation, it might give him the resistance that would save his life. A lie is a sly fox, and these sly foxes keep us from power. When you have told a lie have the courage to confess. If you give the impression that you know more than you really do, even that is a lie. That is the only honest principle.

The advice given by one of the greatest humans who ever lived was, "Don't read many books; but read many men." The greatest danger of people who have been reared in Christian families and listened to many sermons is that there is polish, but no getting in contact with sinners. The greatest movement I know of is not to be got from books, but from getting in touch with interesting sinners, from getting rebuffed, from finding out that you are absolutely wooden and that there is nothing in you to inspire confidence.

If you are not strong enough you will take your colour from the other man. It is the man who will give colour to lots of other people who is needed.

Why are people in sanatoriums? We can deplete many of them if we meet the needs of men. A theological student was living within the holy walls of a seminary, yet living in the grip of dishonesty. He had a hundred per cent when he preached, but otherwise gave no sign of life. He was to graduate in three months and had lost his faith. He was a sick man and had spent sleepless nights for months.

The faculty telegraphed me to come and see what I could do for him. He sat in the depths of his armchair, sunken in despair and gloom, and so nervous that he said if no one helped him he was going to commit suicide.

After he had had a good breakfast and was feeling better, I talked with him. I looked at him and said, "You're not honest. You've been stealing your sermons." The evidence of dishonesty was hidden in a locked chest. He admitted he was cribbing his sermons from the great preachers of other days. That afternoon he went out into the city to win another man.

#### VIII. Victory in Christ

Many times as Christians we are willing to drink the cup of peace, joy and happiness; but we decide for ourselves just how far we are willing to go. Our service ends just when we begin to suffer.

\* Ephesians 4: 25

When suffering comes we are reluctant to drink from the neglected cup of suffering. "Are ye able to drink the cup I drink of?" Are you willing when scorn and ridicule and persecution come? Or are you doing some nice balancing just to keep everything nice and smooth? Supposing you are in a little group of people where you see sin, do you blush with shame, or do you follow the course of least resistance and like the chameleon take your colour from the group? The line of least resistance is the grave of power. Or have you the courage to stand alone with Christ and be misunderstood and have the persecution, but yet have the company of the One Unseen and the comfort of the words, "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them"?\*

"Jesus drank a bitter cup when He came into the presence of sin. The prevailing sin hurt Him; it crucified His Spirit long before it crucified His body. Here is Jerusalem, wicked, wayward and indifferent, wasting its hallowed treasure in decorated debauchery. And the Master gazes upon its unholy pleasures and shames, and He weeps."\* Have we entered into the fellowship of that suffering? How often have we wept over the sins of Hankow, Wuhu, Shanghai, Peking or Changsha? or have we been so fascinated by the glittering decorations as to be oblivious to the debauchery?

"Sin attracts us, it does not blister us. It interests, it does not burn. We do not feel that there is any haste to remove it. We can enter into His sufferings, and by a complete surrender of ourselves to the service of other men we can help to wipe out this sin."\*\*

Anyone who drinks of the neglected cup, through some crushing sorrow or disappointment, or whatever the test may be, will understand the hearts of men better, and he understands Jesus Christ as he never would have understood Him before. It was fairly easy, perhaps, to make your decision to come to China; but you have had struggles and temptations here which have been far different from any you ever had at home.

In the seventh chapter of Romans we have to come back to this, that we don't understand ourselves. There is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, this dual personality which I see in people. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That plea I have heard here more than once. The great new movement is from death into life: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

The thing we must face is the costly confession. Somehow your life does not match up. Have you the courage to go to the person with whom you have had a misunderstanding and confess your weakness? There may be someone who knows you have done something which you have not righted. Have you the courage to write the letter which will straighten it out?

"All I have, I give to Jesus. I surrender all." True victory is not a growth, it's a gift, "not an attainment but an obtainment", something that God Himself came down to give us. Of course there is all the movement of atheism, even in our prayer life. "We pray for blessings when it is the Blesser we need." The great secret rests there.

\* Psalm 119: 165

\*\* From Jowett's "In the School of Calvary", chapter entitled "The Neglected Cup". Cf Thomas à Kempis, "Imitation of Christ", Book II, ch. XI.

This is what Paul speaks of in Romans 7: 7 - 8: 2. God works through the relaxed life, wholly given to Him. We are on a loose pulley, and God is at the other end.

If we are going to live lives of power we must die daily to sin. That is a joyous experience, to die to sin that I may live in Christ. We ought to be able to go to bed each night with that wonderful assurance that we sleep the sleep of the just because all is well. No restless nights, no sense of duties neglected.

To work with people who are difficult and always have victory in Christ is not easy. When a person says all sorts of things about you and is quietly scheming against you, and God has warned you that he is doing it, have you victory in Christ? No man can do it, only Christ can. At times I haven't the victory for things that are difficult. I just have to go away.

It does not mean, if you are nice to people, that you have the victory. Jesus Christ had no hesitancy in cleaning out people when they desecrated the temple. The scribes and Pharisees felt that fine fire which was in the life of Jesus Christ. It's the kind of courage that makes a man go to another and say, "I'm disappointed in you," or "I'm at war with the things you are doing. I don't condemn you."

The wonderful love of Christ for your enemy becomes your love for him. The Holy Spirit Himself has accomplished this miracle.

Jesus Christ overcomes the sin for you. He takes away the desire to commit that sin, and when you come within reach of the old sights and smells and sounds they will have no hold on you, because you have distanced the chances for sin.

One man travelled a thousand miles in China to confess to another that he had been quarrelsome. He was a critical spirit. He had come to me and criticised a meeting; but I felt that the biggest struggle was within him and said to him, "You go off by yourself for a few hours and then come to see me." He did so and began to review his life. Something in that meeting had stung him. He is living in power today and his whole relationship with his fellow workers is different.

The victory will be complete. Those people who were so difficult to live with will find you so radiant, so natural, so sane and wholesome that you will be like the true Christian salt which has kept its savour. There will be something about your whole manner that will make it less possible for people to get annoyed when you are about, because you have that fine sense of calm and poise.

One thing this conference meant to me is that I have to make a confession: one must make restitution. In Pennsylvania I had the privilege of passes on the railroad to which I was not entitled. It was not until I decided to send a cheque that was adequate that peace came. "It came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, that Satan also came among them."\* The Evil One was there and said, "You can't afford it." The instructions came, "You have enough for that." I made up the sum and I had peace.

\* Job 1: 6

Have you the high courage to meet every issue squarely, every one? The Evil One will be there and will try to ease things a bit. When you go to that person don't put in a second thing first. Say, "I am a sinner. I have not had victory in Christ." If you are willing to do this, you will have it.

With this full result of the Gospel, what comes? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God ... The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession ... for the saints according to the will of God."\* Is that your idea of intercession? Or have you given it up altogether? How many people are too busy to take time with God. They fail to have this experience where God Himself makes intercession for us. He helps us so that just the people we ought to pray for come across our minds.

This takes away the strain in individual work. You find that the people you pray for that day are the people to include in your programme. This normal, wholesome, early morning hour is the time when God Himself can bring to your mind the very things that are to be done that day.

The Holy Spirit brings to your mind the Bible verse, or series of verses, that is to be your guide for that day. These directions give you calm, poise, reserve. "Teach me Thy way, O Lord; and lead me in a plain path because of my enemies."\*\* It works. Have you ever had a great gift given you in a Psalm that just met your heart's need? That Psalm was prepared long ago, but God gave it you as a promise which you can claim day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment. It is a real well-spring.

You have to decide for yourself how much time you will spend in listening to God. Test your lives by four simple principles:

- First, is it honest?
- Second, is it the unselfish thing to do?
- Third, is it the pure thing to do?
- Fourth, is it the loving thing to do?

Apply these questions to motives.

This comes from Henry Wright's book, "The Will of God in a Man's Life".

If you just put yourself in God's hands, the romance of Christian living begins. The habit of listening to God is the beginning of miracles in a person's life; but if you don't live up to your luminous thoughts they don't come again.

I believe in intercession on the principle of this verse: "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even for them who are called according to His purpose.<sup>x</sup> We waste time when we ought to have this confidential relationship with Christ.

\* Romans 8: 14, 26, 27

\*\* Psalm 27: 11

x Romans 8: 28



"The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning He wakens, He wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught."\* Our every thought ought to be in line with God. Every thought of a person ought to be a prayer.

### IX. The only Acceptable Motive

We have been living a very lofty truth together, and I want to put it on a practical plane. The twenty-first chapter of John gives what I have in mind about the principles of lasting victory.

These disciples had lived with Jesus for three years and had wonderful fellowship with the Master, but they had not learned the secret of victory. Simon, that voluble, mercurial individual, said, "Let's go fishing." It would be perfectly all right under other circumstances. They said, "We will go with you," and followed impulse and caught nothing. Suppose on the first day of school there will be no time for God and that day you lose your temper. You go in your own strength and you catch nothing.

"But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." They had not kept the morning watch. Morning had come, and Jesus was there watching and waiting, but the disciples did not know it was He. They knew how to catch fish; they were trained workers, and they caught nothing. Service in self-will, under human leadership.

What happens when our service is Christ-directed? "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." It was the disciple specially known for communion who said, "It is the Lord." He instantly turned to old habits of communion. You must be a pace-maker and no time-server.

Some people are off in a cloud and not where people live. There are a lot of old fishermen around, and they think they know how to do it. Because of them it is difficult to get a new thought worked out. They say, "Run out the tackle this way," or "You put a bobber here." They are very difficult.

Jesus said, "Bring the fish which you have caught." Simon Peter brought the nets to land. They knew exactly how many they had caught. You will know - it won't be hazy - if there have been miracles as a result of your work.

"The net was not broken." You ask, "How am I going to stand the strain? Will it affect my health?" This life is not a strain, it is the relief of strain. Strain is another form of atheism. Some people worry about others and say, "She will wear herself out." In Christ-directed service the net will not break. Jesus Christ will mend the weak places.

\* Isaiah 50: 4

We can just look to God, knowing that this life will flow from God to us in a liquid way.

God sends a man across your track and gives you the strength to take care of him as He directs. That is the miracle of the daily business of life. We think we are giving life - we are really getting life. Personal work is not a strain for me. It gave Christ rest to sit down and talk with the woman at the well.

The Master has enough for the needs of His servants - "My grace is sufficient for thee." Jesus said, "Come and dine" - the human touch. Does He scold them? While they are sitting He reveals Himself in a fuller way. They see the human Christ.

We need these little human touches. People sometimes see us far better at a meal. If we make our dinner party just a natural expression of ourselves it may be the means of winning a man. How naturally we ought to conduct ourselves.

Jesus Himself served them. "This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead." He will continue to show Himself to us if we let Him.

What is the only acceptable motive for service? "When they had dined, Jesus said, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?'" Three times he asked this question and then said, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." If we really love Jesus we will just naturally feed the lambs and the sheep.

Peter was a man of action. Sometimes we see a man who does lots of things, but often it is activity versus reality. Peter was having a wonderful time organizing that fishing party. Some people have a beautiful time organizing, but they catch nothing.

Do not be afraid of launching out into the deep, into the unknown dark, and cast down your net and prepare for a draught, for you will be sure of finding the living God. Some of you are going to try new and untried paths. You will have 153 fishes, but more than that you will find the living God.

45, BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON, W. I.

GROSVENOR 3443.

Easter, 1963

It is the wintertide of civilization. We are in the midst of a world-wide and terrible onslaught on faith, hope and spirit. Ancient virtues are scorned and slashed away. Satan strides forward to inherit the earth.

Behind it all marches the anti-Christ of Communism, hungry for world dominion, the only idea that gains from godlessness, lack of purpose and moral disintegration in the world.

God be praised who has matched us with this hour. For this crisis Moral Re-Armament was conceived and brought to birth. If we stand firm and hold fast to absolute standards of unselfishness, purity and truth, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

God is not mocked. His power is unconquerable, His purpose eternal. But there must be no compromise with the world, with our own desires or with what we learned at Frank Buchman's side.

At the Cross we stand. After wintertide, spring is waiting. After shadows, light. After compromise, conviction. After death, life. We shall see the greatest revolution of all time whereby the Cross of Christ turns back God's enemies and transforms the world.

We must heighten our unity and urgency. Strongholds of heart, doorways long barred, will open if we beat relentlessly upon them in His strength. Strategy comes to the wholehearted.

This is our Easter hour.

Joe and Peter Howard.

