

WANG MING TAO



&

Charismatism

Timothy Tow

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Wang Ming Tao & Charismatism

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To
My Grandfather,
Patriarch
of the
Tow Clan

FOREWORD

Having been privileged to read in advance of publication Dr Timothy Tow's translation of Wang Ming Tao's assessment of the Charismatic Movement, I can see how very important it is that this work should have the widest possible circulation. Although this assessment was written in 1934, it struck me as remarkably modern and totally applicable to the practices that have swept through many church fellowships and house groups in our day.

True believers, whether in or out of the Charismatic Movement, possess an inborn desire — implanted by the Spirit — to test all things by the Word of God, and so to remain under the lordship of Christ. This book will meet their need, for it examines various charismatic practices fully and thoroughly in the light of Scripture. No reader can fail to detect that Wang Ming Tao's supreme concern is to be right by God's Word, and not merely to justify some tenaciously held viewpoints.

Dreams, visions, speaking in tongues, spontaneous healings, and dancing in worship are all discussed. The method is patient, careful, and always interesting, reflecting the author's unique charm and skill as an expounder of the Scriptures. No issue is 'ducked', and whether the author is speaking of David dancing before the ark, or about the source of charismatic experiences, his conclusions are crystal clear and replete with the force of Truth.

Wang Ming Tao does not take the 'cessationist' position held by many of us, namely, that the revelatory and sign gifts passed away with the apostles. Nevertheless, his arguments are weighty and powerful, and all the more worthy of attention on account of his own early pentecostal beliefs.

Dr Tow has adorned this vital book with biographical material and a valuable essay of his own which summarizes and updates the issues. For many years now, he has laboured tirelessly to win and

care for souls in Singapore, Malaysia and elsewhere in Asia. He is 'father' of a thriving group of spiritually-alive churches, and this book is so obviously the product of pastoral concern for the well-being of God's people in these confused and perilous times. May God grant that it will be read and deeply considered by many.

DR PETER MASTERS,
Metropolitan Tabernacle (Spurgeon's)
London

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Preface

The tide of Charismatism is coming in so strong today that it has splashed into the Bible-Presbyterian Church of Singapore. At its Annual Pastors and Leaders Conference on Cameron Highlands September 1987, certain younger leaders maintained that while the tongues of Pentecost (Acts 2) had ceased, those mentioned of the Corinthian Church (*I Cor. 12 and 14*) have not. Today they continue in the Church as "meaningful ecstatic utterances." Now, these tongues are required by Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches of their members as evidence of baptism by the Holy Spirit, but are repudiated by Fundamental Churches that hold to the Reformed tradition.

Insofar as the writer is concerned, he and senior colleagues of the B-P Church had gone through the mighty revival meetings led by Dr John Sung in Singapore 1935. The working of the Holy Spirit was so manifest that hundreds came to the Lord, confessing their sins in tears of repentance and restitution. Drunkards and opium-smokers, cigarette chain-smokers, were delivered snap from their iron-clad shackles. Feuding elders and deacons were melted down in mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. The Church Hall at Telok Ayer Street, where John Sung preached, suddenly became a powerhouse of prayer and praise, of hearty singing and joyful release — but there was no speaking in tongues.

As the Almighty Father has favoured the Chinese Church with several such visitations of Holy Spirit Revival, the writer made a thorough search into the ministry of other mighty evangelists beginning from William Chalmers Burns to Jonathan Goforth, to Miss

Dora Yu and to Ting Li Mei, known as the "Moody of China, With One Thousand Souls a Month." In none of their Spirit-filled ministries was there any mention of tongues.

As he further researched into the life and work of Wang Ming Tao, China's greatest saint and living martyr still going strong at 89 today, he was delighted to discover how though Wang Ming Tao was immersed by a Pentecostal preacher, he soon repudiated his teachings, especially visions and tongues. This he has testified in his autobiography, "These Fifty Years," which is recently translated by Arthur Reynolds into English under the title "A Stone Made Smooth," and published by Mayflower.

In making known Wang Ming Tao's deliverance from Charismatism to the English world we have chosen A. Reynolds' translation than making our own. Obviously, such third party witness will add credence to our report.

After Wang Ming Tao's autobiography, we present our translation of his Critique on Charismatism which was first published in his "Spiritual Food Quarterly" in 1934. This translation, we believe, has not appeared anywhere before.

To bring the Charismatic controversy up to date we have appended our message, "The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error" a message which was first delivered in Jakarta, November 1987, before the Second National Conference of the Indonesian Council of Christian Churches.

Wang Ming Tao, the "Iron" Witness for Christ has stood not only against Charismatism, but also against the Communist-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). For opposing the TSPM he was sentenced to life imprisonment but released after twenty-three years. Thus, when Billy Graham visited Shanghai in the Spring of 1988 under the auspices of the TSPM and "imposed" an interview with Wang Ming Tao in his home "there were great searchings of heart."

While making known the "Iron" Witness' stand against Charismaticism, we therefore take this opportunity to unmask the true colours of the TSPM according to this latest report through missionary Worth Worley in *The Battle Cry*, USA, Sept. — Oct. 1988:

"There are a few government-controlled Three-Self churches that are allowed to remain open for window dressing." But in one city of a million people near the Taklimakan Desert there was no church

However, the people readily took Gospel tracts and Worley and another missionary were able to place several Bibles. In another city of 6 million in South China, they gave a tract to a middle school teacher who followed them to their hotel room to learn more about the Gospel

Worley and the others came back to Singapore rejoicing that several dozen Bibles, two thousand tracts and other Bible literature and cassettes had been seeded into this dark nation

Does not this covert experience from behind the "glasnost" of the Three-Self Churches substantiate the need to reprove what is actually "the unfruitful works of darkness" (*Eph. 5:11*)?

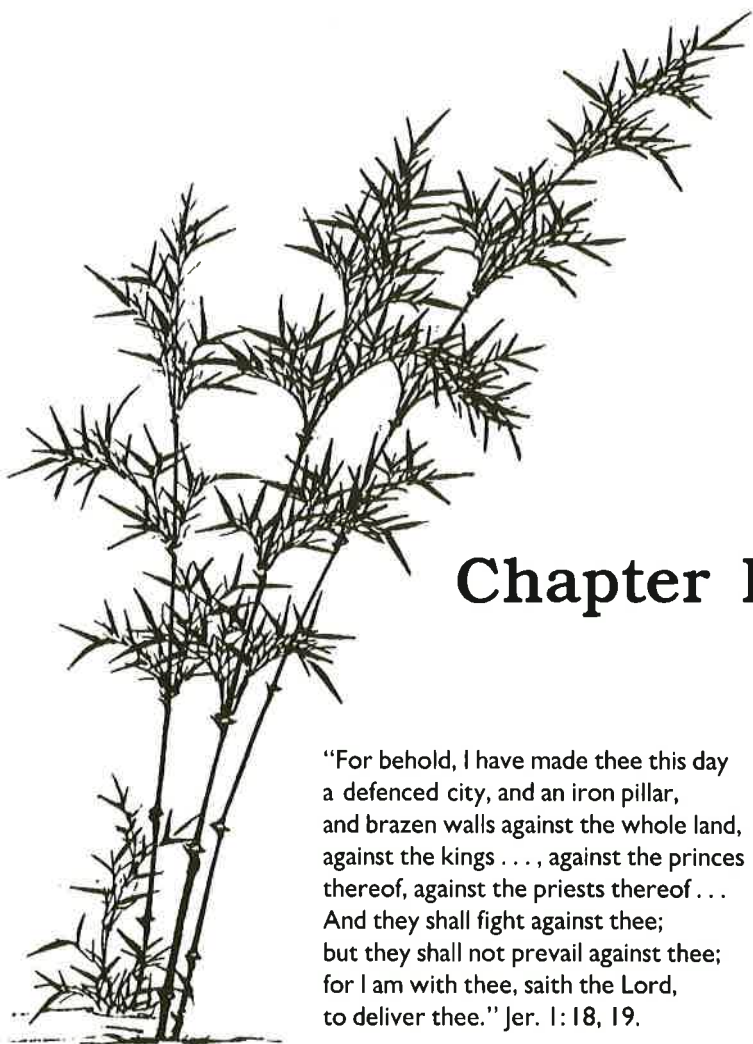
Wang Ming Tao's writings are a Christian classic. The proverbs he has composed are framed up in calligraphy, a treasure we have seen in Chinese Christian homes in Southeast Asia. Twenty sermons from his "Spiritual Food Quaterly" are also translated into English by A. Reynolds and published by Mayflower. By reading his autobiography and his sermons whether in English or Chinese, "no one can doubt that here is a man of God, with the unction of the Holy Spirit, who stands out not only among the outstanding Christian leaders of China but also among the outstanding Christian leaders of the world." (A. Reynolds)

If by our presentation of Wang Ming Tao's case against Charismatism, the Reader will also see the "Iron" qualities of this man of God in his stand for the faith in Communist China, like Daniel and his Three Friends in Babylon, this feeble effort of ours will be doubly rewarded. Hallejulah!

Timothy Tow
Far Eastern Bible College
Singapore
October, 1989.

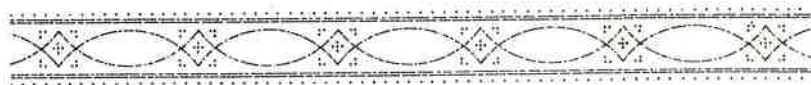
Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to Mayflower Christian Books, the Publishing Branch of Mayflower Christian Bookshops Charitable Trust, 114 Spring Road, Sholing, Southampton, Hants for allowing me to quote liberally from "A Stone Made Smooth, Wang Ming-Dao" a translation by Arthur Reynolds of Wang Ming-Dao's autobiography, "These Fifty Years," which was first published in Peking (Beijing) 39 years ago.



Chapter I

"For behold, I have made thee this day
a defenced city, and an iron pillar,
and brazen walls against the whole land,
against the kings . . . , against the princes
thereof, against the priests thereof . . .
And they shall fight against thee;
but they shall not prevail against thee;
for I am with thee, saith the Lord,
to deliver thee." Jer. I: 18, 19.



Highlights in the Life and Work of Wang Ming Tao

July 25, 1900	Born in Peking (Beijing) during the Boxer Rebellion.
1909	Entered Tsui-Wun Lower Primary School of London Missionary Society. Given school name "Yong-Shung i.e. 'Eternal Abundance'.
1912	Entered Higher Primary Boarding School.
1914	Baptised in the School Chapel. Promoted to Middle School. First felt called to be a preacher.
June 27, 1918	Graduate from Middle School.
September 11, 1919	Left Peking to take up a teaching post in a Primary School at Baoding.
Summer 1920	Adopted new name in answer to God's call to be a preacher. 'Ming Tao' i.e. 'Testify the Way'.
November 21, 1920	Experienced the new life after heartfelt confession of sins.

January 6, 1921	Baptised by immersion by Mr. Ju a Pentecostal preacher. "Spoke in tongues" by inducement on the 9th, "but in fact I was not conscious of any change It had been on Nov. 21 (1920) when I confessed my sins to the Lord, that I was conscious of a change."
1921-23	Shut up to home Bible study and meditation.
Mar 1924	Invited with 30 other preachers to an evangelistic campaign at an army camp
October 18, 1924	Preaching work in Peking begun (in his home). Change of views on law and grace, on the Sabbath and on speaking in tongues.
Spring 1927	Publication of book "The Spiritual Food Quarterly."
September 15, 1927	Second invitation to Manchuria.
February 1, 1928	Invitation to preach at Baoding which he left in shame 7 years before.
August 8, 1928	Married Miss Liu Jing Wun, 9 years his junior, in Hangchow (Hanjo).

1931-1937	Extensive itinerant work.
1936	Church Building Fund launched with \$2000 received.
July 31, 1937	The Christian Tabernacle at 42 Shih-chia Hutung, an auditorium 40 × 70 ft. costing \$6,792 was completed.
December 1941-August 1945	Resisted joining the Japanese-sponsored Peking Christian Preservation Committee and Peking Branch Office, The North China Christian Federation Promotion Committee etc. God kept him from arrest.
August 18, 1944	Preached funeral sermon for Dr John Sung who was taken to glory the same morning at Grace Hall, 51 South Garrison, Fragrant Hill, Peking.
1946	Held meetings in West China.
1947	Death of Mother.
1947 – 1948	Addressed "Peking Fellowship of Christian Students."
1950	Published autobiography "These Fifty Years" now translated by Arthur Reynolds under title "A Stone Made Smooth."

Summer 1954	Accused by Three Self Patriotic Church Movement, but no sentence meted.
August-September 1955	Arrested by the Communist authorities and subjected to intense brain washing.
September 30, 1955	Released from arrest on his confession of "guilty of anti-revolutionary deeds" before a large meeting of "Three-Self Movement" delegates.
1958	Returned to prison when he denied previous statement made under duress. Sentenced to life imprisonment.
1967	Wrote to Sister-in-law in Hong Kong of his happy state in prison.
1970	Moved from Peking to a labour camp in Dadong North Shansi.
January 1980	Released after 23 years imprisonment, "because they couldn't stop my singing which irritated them" – Wang's jocular testimony to FEBC students who visited him in 1988.
April 1988	Gave audience to Billy Graham who visited China, under auspices of the

"Three Self" Church which
he opposed.





*With Mother and Elder Sister in his boyhood,
Peking.*



Four Vignettes of Wang Ming Tao's Life and Work

I

Wang Ming Tao was born in the year of the Boxer Rebellion, on the 29th day of the 6th Moon (July 25, 1900). It was an unusual birth. It took place inside the Legation Quarter in Peking where the Wang family, being Christian, were given shelter with the foreigners during the Boxers' attack. His father, being nurtured by the London Mission (London Missionary Society) as a doctor, was on the Mission staff.

As the Boxers, supported by the Manchu army, were firing into the Legation Compound with guns and rifles, Wang's father climbed a ladder to see the battle. Overawed, he told his wife of the certainty of the enemy's breaking in. This spread fear to the Chinese Christian refugees inside the walled quarters. A few days later, however, it was reported to the family that Father Wang had hanged himself. Thus when Wang Ming Tao was born it was one month and three days after his father's suicide.

As there was no midwife to be found during the days of extreme danger, Grandma helped to deliver the grand-



Wang Ming Tao before his study, a converted green-house, dated 27th April, 1950.

child. Seeing that it was a healthy boy, she gave him the name "Tieh," which being interpreted is, "Iron." Though Wang Ming Tao did not like this name, he realised in later years in his ministry that, like Jeremiah, the Lord had called him to be "an iron pillar . . . against the whole land . . . against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land" (*Jer. 1 : 18*).

Wang Ming Tao grew up in a family only of three. A little boy here he is with beloved Mother and only sister, a closely knit unit.

II

This photograph was taken on April 27, 1950 in the prime of Wang Ming Tao's life. What is more significant insofar as this illustration is concerned is the Converted Greenhouse in the background. This was a part of the property that Mother Wang had bought with the indemnity money she received from the Manchu Government after the Allies' defeat of the Boxers.

For several years after he resigned from teaching at Baoding because of his Pentecostal leanings, he stayed in this Converted Greenhouse to study the Scriptures and to plan for the future. This was where he went through the Wilderness experience of our Lord (*Matt. 4:1-11*), but not being equal to it, he almost wanted to give up and return to the world. It was here that he, by God's grace, finally won the battle against Satan. Here he also changed his views on Pentecostalism and gave up the speaking of tongues. He praised the Lord that he was kept under, a horse pent up in the stall, as the Chinese saying goes, lest heretical doctrines be advanced through his lack of knowledge and experience. It was here that he came to grasp the Calvinistic doctrine of salvation being



The Christian Tabernacle, built 1937.



Wang Ming Tao at The Pulpit, dated 1 August, 1937.

the work of God and not of man. This was the theological college God had prepared for him.

When the Lord finally opened a door of service for him, it was by using this little Converted Greenhouse for the gathering of saints that the seed of the congregation that later made up the Christian Tabernacle was sown. Here members came to pray and study the Bible and worship on the Lord's Day in groups of five and ten. "For who hath despised the day of small things?" (*Zech. 4:10*). "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (*Zech. 4:6*).

III

What began as a Bible Study Group and Prayer Meeting at the Converted Greenhouse in the Wang home January 1925 grew into a Church. By April of that year the Wang house had burst its seams. So the meeting place was shifted to the home of Mrs Yu. Over 70 people attended.

In the Spring of 1933 they rented a hall which had a capacity for 200, with a courtyard that could take in an extra 100. Baptism was carried out in the river outside the western suburbs.

Then came the thought that the growing congregation should have their own property and erect their own building. By 1936 \$2,000 were collected. When the leaders of the congregation went to see a house in Shih-Jia Hutong (Hutong means Lane) Wang Ming Tao felt they had found their Promised Land. So they bought the property and on this they raised up the "Christian Tabernacle" at a cost of \$6792 in a matter of three months. The building measured 40 × 70 feet. It had a slate roof and central heating. The money came spontaneously from members of the congregation without



Miss Liu of West Lake (Hangjo), 1925.

solicitation, as was practised usually by Chinese Churches.

The equipment and furnishings of the "Tabernacle" was one of simplicity and dignity. The Hall inside was painted a snow white. The walls were devoid of any decoration, with neither words nor pictures, not even a Cross. A white stone outside carried an inscription with a date as follows:

He was wounded for our transgressions.

He rose again from among the dead.

He has ascended to heaven.

He will come again to receive us.

In order to economise in space the pulpit was limited to 12 × 7 feet, just enough to place a table and two or three chairs and a blackboard. In front of the pulpit was the baptistry. This arrangement gave maximum accommodation to the pews. This is what is meant by the simplicity and—dignity of the "Christian Tabernacle."

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! . . . Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee" (Ps. 84: 1,4).

IV

For some years young Wang Ming Tao's ideal was to remain a bachelor. This was partly due to the quarrels between couples and strife in families living as tenants in his mother's big compound house.

Since he was Mother's only son, there was this desire not only on her part but also Sister's to see him married. As his mother was a haughty Pekingnese, her wish for a wife for her son was she must be some young woman known to her in Peking.

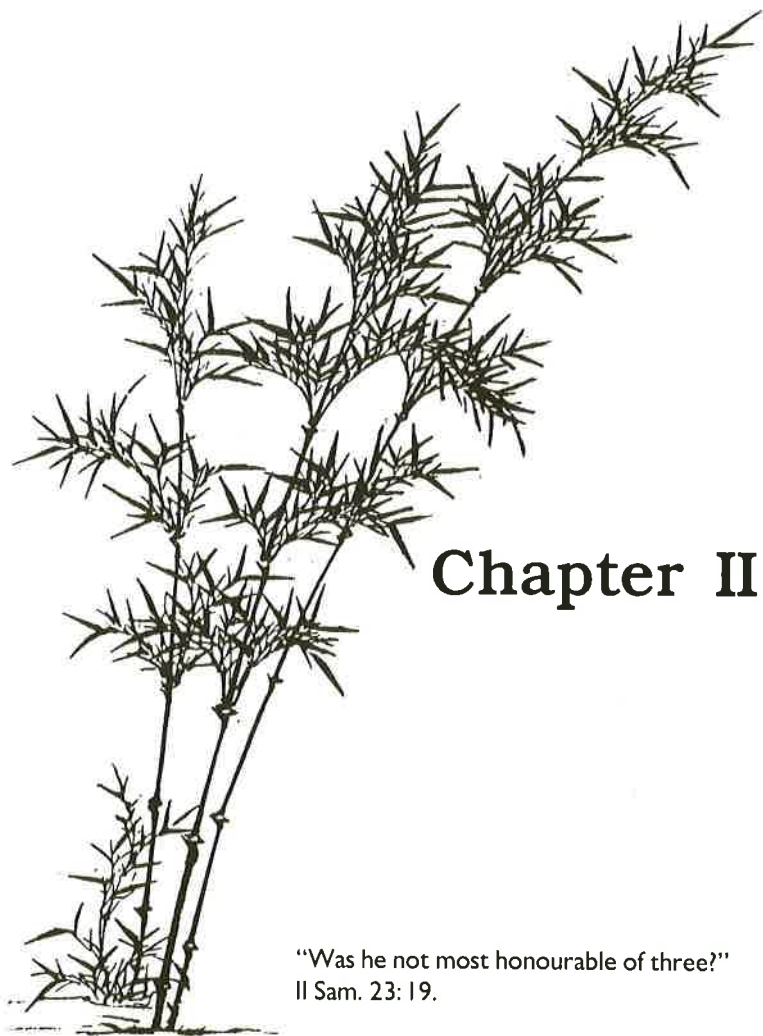
A young lady worshipping at the Christian Tabernacle was interested in the preacher, but this did not click with

him. As the Lord had a higher plan, Wang Ming Tao was to find his life-partner from "southern barbarians" (his mother's description of outlandish women). By the Lord's leading and ordering of circumstances, the young pastor-evangelist was shunted to Hangjo (Hangchow) on scenic West Lake, about four-and-a-half hours' train journey from Shanghai.

The Lord led him to lodge with Pastor Liu Deh-Shun at whose Church he preached on a number of occasions. Pastor and Mrs Liu had a young daughter aged 16 or 17. As Wang Ming Tao was eight or nine years her senior, he paid no attention to her. But on one occasion when she had to play the organ at a convention and was dressed in a long flowing *cheongsam*, he realised she was fully grown. His heart-strings were strummed for Miss Liu Jing-Wun. He writes, "But when I saw her playing the organ, I suddenly realised she was not just a child in her early teens. She was tall; she had a mature hair-style; she was wearing a long lined gown, she was indeed an adult (in fact she was at that time a school-teacher)."

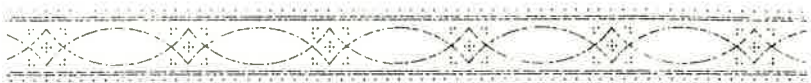
When Wang Ming Tao told her mother and sister about Miss Liu they uttered no word of disapproval despite her being a "southern barbarian." The young man 28, and the young lady 19, were joined in holy matrimony in Hangjo Aug. 8, 1928. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22).





Chapter II

“Was he not most honourable of three?”
II Sam. 23: 19.



“Chief of the Three”

At the turn of the last century, within two or three years of the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion (1900), there were born to the Chinese Church three of her most illustrious sons—Wang Ming Tao (1900), John Sung (1901) and Watchman Nee (1903).

I

John Sung became China's greatest revivalist, having won several hundred souls to Christ both in China and in Southeast Asia. “A Flame for God in the Far East,” his ministry lasted a brief fifteen years from 1928 to 1943. When the Lord took him August 1944 in Beijing (Peking), Wang Ming Tao conducted his funeral service. Today, many of the 50 million Chinese Christians worshipping in house churches are John Sung converts and their descendents and adherents. (See *Sword and Trowel*, 1988 No. 2, page 13.)

II

Watchman Nee was founder of the “Little Flock” Church movement and the author of many devotional

writings which are translated into English by his western friends. When China was "liberated" by Mao Tse Tong in October 1949, he was among the earliest to be put into prison. He was sentenced to twenty years. The Lord took him on the eve of his release in June 1972. He died a martyr's death.

III

As for Wang Ming Tao, he served a full twenty-three year term and his wife fifteen years in a different gaol.

*"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for for a heritage."*

Wang Ming Tao was released in January 1980. Since his coming out from "behind iron windows," he and his wife have made their home in Shanghai. He is 89 years old today. He is acknowledged China's greatest saint and living martyr because no one has stood for the Faith like him, not only under Mao, but also under the Japanese during World War II.

He was sought for an audience by Billy Graham when the latter visited Communist China in the Spring of 1988. As Wang Ming Tao was thrown into prison for standing against the so-called Three-Self (Self-support, Self-government, Self-propagation) Church, his giving audience to Billy Graham, an official guest of the Three-Self Church, was against his will. (The Three-Self Church Movement was started in 1908 by Rev. Ting Li Mei [1871 – 1936], China's first Revivalist, but its good name was usurped by the Communists for their nefarious ends.)

Until his arrest and imprisonment, Wang Ming Tao was pastor of the Christian Tabernacle in Beijing. Six months out of the year he would minister in other parts of China as a Conference speaker. He edited a quarterly magazine

called "Spiritual Food" (靈食季刊) which had an unbroken circulation for almost thirty years. His writings are a treasured Christian classic and are being republished in Hong Kong and Taiwan and translated into English in England and Singapore in recent years. His Autobiography, "These Fifty Years," came off the press just as the Communists were overrunning China. It is now given an English dress by Arthur Reynolds, a retired missionary of the China Inland Mission whom I had the pleasure of meeting in 1986 at Spurgeon's Tabernacle. Its English title, "A Stone Made Smooth," is published by Mayflower Christian Books, the publishing branch of the Mayflower Bookshops Charitable Trust. It should be read by everyone of this generation.

On the subject of Charismatism which had begun to invade North China in the thirties, both Watchman Nee and John Sung had taken a strong stand against its erroneous teachings, particularly tongues and visions. But it is Wang Ming Tao, who found the Lord through a friend and baptism under a Pentecostal preacher (but later repudiated his teachings), that has written at length against its errors.

That Wang Ming Tao was immersed by a Pentecostal preacher and had practised the speaking of tongues for a season is quite unheard of hitherto, even in Chinese circles!

I have with me an old copy of his autobiography "These Fifty Years" (五十年來) which was presented to me by a pastor in 1952. Instead of translating that portion that describes his immersion at the hand of a Pentecostal pastor, and speaking in tongues and its subsequent repudiation; I would rather cull from Arthur Reynolds' with the kind permission of Mayflower Christian Books. The obvious reason has been stated in the *Preface*.

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him"

(Isa. 59: 19). In presenting the Wang Ming Tao testimony and article against the errors of Charismatism, I am but one most insignificant to add to that standard of Truth God has raised up worldwide against a wild Christianity. But the "Iron" witness that Wang Ming Tao had raised began as early as 65 years ago! When asked by our FEBC students who visited him on two occasions, he and his wife reaffirmed their stand as expressed in his critique on Charismatism in "Spiritual Food" Quarterly 1934. Thus his testimony is all the more commanding to this age of nonchalance and compromise. Wang Ming Tao may indeed be called the Father of Orthodoxy against a distorted Christianity in China since the twenties. There is an Athanasius for every age!

Arthur Reynolds' translation in "A Stone Made Smooth," the English title for Wang Ming Tao's autobiography, reads:-

Spiritual Exercises

In the previous chapter I told of my return to teach at the school in Baoding in the autumn of 1920. A few days before I left Peking I was very troubled in my heart because both my mother and my sister were far from the Lord. For a long time I had wanted to help them but it had never come about. On the day before my departure I was in my own room weeping. Just at that moment my sister came in and seeing me weeping she also wept. I said to her, "It is because my mother and my sister are far from the Lord that I am sad at heart." I then exhorted her a little. My sister confessed her sin and told me earnestly that she was willing to repent. Taking my hand she wept for a very long time. This made me indescribably happy.

The next day (September 8th) I took an early train to Baoding. But after only a day or two my ear was so painful and swollen that I had to return to Peking. I stayed there for 16 days. During that time I talked further with my sister. Her response brought me comfort and joy. I

eventually left Peking on October 4th to return to Baoding.

During the previous term I had made preparations to organise a branch of the YMCA and this term I prepared to hold a special inaugural meeting. From the outside it seemed that we made good progress, but my own heart was empty and extremely weak. I was pessimistic and conscious of lack of power. In addition to all this I was troubled by some short-sightedness in both my eyes and the condition seemed to be daily worsening. I feared that deterioration would continue and I couldn't imagine what the future held. I had worn glasses when I was 14; and the lenses had been changed when I was 18. After a year the condition became worse and the lenses were changed three times. It seemed that if the deterioration continued I should soon be little different from a man without sight.

Nevertheless it was my own spiritual poverty that gave me most pain at that time, and the fact that my work was powerless. When I saw the darkness and corruption in the church I became disappointed and melancholy. I was conscious of the importance of God's commission to me and of the heaviness of my responsibility.

On the evening of November 21st I was talking in the school with a newly-arrived colleague. He raised the question of sin. In my heart I became very angry. How could any sin remain in a good Christian like me? My colleague talked of sins like pride. He said, "Some believers are very enthusiastic and they work industriously. But they do this not to glorify God but to glorify themselves." These words pricked my heart for they described exactly the cause of my disease and its symptoms. My attitude changed from anger to humility as I came to agree with him and finally I was deeply moved. I returned to my own room and knelt by my bed confessing my sins.

At that time I had been a believer for more than six years and during that period I had made some spiritual

progress. Every day without fail I would pray and read the Bible. I made myself attend services of worship. I contributed a tenth of my income for the work of the Lord. I watched my lips lest I gave utterance to unclean language. I was not avaricious. I never had any illicit relationship with one of the other sex. I was faithful in carrying out my official duties. I respected and loved my sister. I zealously served the students and had led some of them to join the church. Those who knew me—apart from those who envied me—mostly respected me and had confidence in me. After I had completed one year's teaching the Principal said to me, "If you are not going to undertake further studies you must on no account accept an invitation elsewhere; we greatly need you and you must come back here." All these things gave me a feeling of self-satisfaction and made me regard myself as "the favourite of heaven." I considered myself greatly superior to other believers and leaders and elders and pastors in the church. Apart from my awareness that there were many church leaders whose characters were depraved, I felt that there were not many of my calibre with ideals like mine.

Self-examination

But that evening, when I knelt by my bed to confess my sins, everything was changed. Everybody else faded out and I was left alone with God. I became conscious of the depravity within me. I began to see that the sins committed by other people were paralleled in my own heart. The only difference was that the sins of others were manifest while my own sins were hidden. I began to understand that when God looks on man He sees not as man sees—only the outside—but He sees what is inside. In the presence of God I feared and trembled. The more I prayed the more conscious I became of my unworthiness. I was unclean, vicious, and hateful. I uttered no sound as I knelt by my bed but I was humbled to the dust. My experience taught me one thing. No matter how

good a man is, only let him be illumined by the Spirit of God and he becomes conscious of his own utter depravity. I realised that were it not for the blood of Christ I would have no hope whatever of entering the presence of God. I dedicated myself anew to Him. I was willing to obey Him fully. I was ready to serve Him faithfully all my life. From that day on my life was gradually but wonderfully changed.

In the days when I was a student in the Middle School I entered into the activities of the YMCA. Often I appealed for subscriptions to meet the expenses of the Association. This method of raising money was commonplace and I naturally regarded it as appropriate. And when in November 1920 we held the inaugural meeting for the local branch of the YMCA at the school in Baoding we raised a loan to buy a large quantity of food to entertain the guests as well as the teachers and students in the school. Afterwards I went with several officers in the Association to solicit funds so that we could repay the loan we had incurred. I was at that time suddenly shown by the Holy Spirit that to solicit subscriptions in this way was not fitting. I also realised that in establishing a local branch of the YMCA, although we truly hoped that it would help the students, part of my motive was to add to my own fame. I reproved myself for this, but since we could not break the group up, we found ourselves in a position from which there was no retiring (as we say in China we were unable to get down from the tiger's back).

Baptism by Immersion

At this time the question of baptism arose. One of my colleagues talked to me about his experience of baptism. What he said aroused my intense astonishment. From my earliest days I had regularly attended worship with my mother. Throughout all the years since then I had only known of baptism as a sprinkling of water on the head. I had never heard of anyone being baptised by immersion. When he told me that he had been baptised by

immersion I asked him why. He replied, "The Lord Jesus and His disciples did it this way." I returned to my room and applied myself diligently to searching the Scriptures. As a result of this I concluded that I myself ought to be baptised by immersion. Having come to this conclusion I talked it over with the students. In doing this I aroused opposition from the church authorities. On one occasion, at morning worship, one of the leaders argued against what I had advocated. This is what he said: "Naturally we ought to believe the Bible. But when we read the Bible we must choose what is good and believe it, and what is not good we should not believe. It is like eating fish. We can only eat the flesh; we cannot swallow the bones and sharp pieces." He also said, "It is naturally important to believe doctrine. But we are living in the world and we should regard practical matters as more important than doctrine. In the world no one can be perfect." Another leader when preaching made the following statement: "When Jesus was baptised it was admittedly in the River Jordan. But this does not mean that he was immersed in the water. . . A certain Roman Catholic Church has an ancient picture showing Jesus standing in the water and John using his hands to scoop up water to sprinkle on His head." These leaders were hoping to make me abandon my desire to be baptised by immersion. In the event their inaccurate explanations only strengthened my resolve to go ahead.

The colleague who had talked to me and who had given me not a little guidance through his testimony was eventually expelled from the school. He left Baoding for Peking on December 20th. I escorted him to the station since I particularly respected his readiness to be persecuted for the Truth and his refusal to surrender. I said to him, as I grasped his hand in parting, "I also am prepared to make sacrifices." I asked him if he would introduce me to someone who would baptise me by immersion.

He introduced a teacher named Ju who came on December 29th from Peking to discuss the matter and I

prepared to be baptised before long in the river. On January 2nd 1921, I informed Mr Wong, the responsible officer in the school, of my decision. He then warned me on no account to be deceived. For a moment I weakened, and doubts arose. I also feared that I would lose my position. So it was with a feeling of disappointment that I left his room. I then sought out the three students whom I regarded with respect and I talked and prayed with them. As a result my purpose was again strengthened. That evening at 10 o'clock the school principal and Mr Wong came to see me together. They told me that if I were to be baptised by immersion then I would have to leave the school immediately. Those students who also wanted to be immersed would also have to leave. The Principal added that they were very reluctant to let me go and he urged me to think the matter over very seriously for a couple of days before coming to a final decision. Should I change my mind and decide against being baptised they would welcome my continuing at the school. But otherwise I would have to leave. We talked together until midnight.

Test of Faith

So two possible paths lay before me. One path was to go ahead and to be baptised by immersion. But what would this involve? I faced at least three difficulties. First, I would immediately lose my occupation. Second, my reputation would suffer. Up to that time I had been very concerned about "face," and I had enjoyed fame. If I were obliged to resign in the middle of term it would truly be a matter of shame. Third, my future plans would come to nothing. As mentioned earlier, Mr Thomas Biggin had expressed his hope to raise funds for me to engage in further studies in England. But if I went ahead and were immersed I would be regarded by the London Mission as a rebel and naturally they would be unable to subsidise my studies any longer. If I had to support myself as a student even one year would be beyond my

reach, let alone the 10 years or even 8 years which I had had in view. I dared not think how dark and fearful the future would be if I went ahead with my desire to be baptised by immersion.

The other path was infinitely easier. All I needed to do was to set aside my intention to be immersed and the three difficulties would immediately evaporate. I could continue in the school as a teacher and in the future I could enter university and be supported by the Mission.

The issue for me was whether I would be obedient to God or disobedient. Only recently had I confessed my sins to Him and promised Him that I would dedicate myself wholly and obey Him completely. Now I was faced with a command from God and it would be a test of my obedience. In the face of this dilemma I was like an ant on a hot saucepan, not knowing what to do for the best.

Suddenly a thought came to my mind. "Since being immersed is the pattern in the Bible I must naturally act accordingly. However, it does not matter if I delay several years. After I return from England I can accept a responsible position in the church, and with position, authority and prestige, I can then be immersed without fear of intervention. I not only can be immersed myself but I can also direct other people to be immersed. Is not this a case of having a perfect answer to both questions?" With this thought my heart was temporarily at peace.

Obedience

However, not long afterwards another thought came to me: what God looks for is obedience to His commands. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (*1 Sam. 15:22*). If I delay baptism in order to evade difficulties I am rebelling against God. How can one who rebels against God consider being a student in a Theological College? If I have a duty to perform and fail to do it in order to escape trouble, how can I hope to be used by God? The thought of delay caused unrest, and I

felt that I should go ahead and be baptised immediately. The two ideas struggled in my heart like two wrestlers. But I concluded finally that my own gain or loss was not a factor: I must simply obey God. Even so the battle raged for several days.

On the afternoon of January 4th, as the sun was about to set, the Principal came to my room to enquire how I had made my decision. I explained what I intended to do. He then took a bag of coins to cover my fare to Peking asking me to leave the school that evening. I told him that I could not leave at that moment since the three daily trains from Baoding to Peking had already gone. And even if I were to stay in an inn I needed a little time to collect my belongings and to hand over my responsibilities. He finally gave me permission to stay overnight but asked me not to allow pupils to come to my room that evening. He feared that I would stir up the students and encourage them to seek baptism. I promised that I would not invite students to my room but that I would not hinder anyone who wanted to come and say goodbye.

Personal Witnessing

When the students heard that evening that the Principal had expelled me they came to my room one after another. I preached to them and I exhorted them. I was conscious of being full of power. The few days of fear and anxiety had gone. I read with them the words of Scripture: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (*Matthew 16:25*). I said to them: "Students! What I have today given up for the Lord Jesus is but a small thing; my Lord will compensate me many times over." When I uttered these words I had no idea how He would compensate me, but thanks be to His Name, they were prophetic and the prophecy was perfectly fulfilled. That evening I produced cakes which I had bought from the tea shop several days before, and I divided them up for

the students to eat as a farewell memory. Not until one o'clock in the morning did we go to bed.

The next day, at morning worship, the Principal made an announcement. Since Teacher Wong Ming-dao proposed to be baptized by immersion he had been asked to leave the school. If any students also wished to be immersed they too would be asked to leave. Five students declared without hesitation that they would also be leaving the school. Four of these desired like me to be baptised by immersion. The other one had no thought of being baptised but since for more than a year he had travelled the heavenly road with me, to remain after my expulsion would be giving offence. So in order to comfort me and as a mark of sympathy, he too withdrew from the school. That particular student has had continuous fellowship with me for 29 years, and now, as ever, he is my fellow-servant. He is Mr Shih Tien-min (Tien-min means Heavenly People or Heavenly Citizen).

I do not in any way blame the Presbyterian Church school for expelling me. As representatives of their denomination they calculate that they can do no other than make me give up my position. Apart from the straightforward question of immersion there was another reason. Various preachers belonging to a certain group had on one occasion stirred up considerable disorder and division among the Presbyterian churches in that area, and on account of it the churches had suffered severe losses. Teacher Ju who wanted to baptise me belonged to that particular group and so the school was naturally very cautious. This was another reason why they could do no other than expel me.

Baptised

In the afternoon of the 5th we five took our baggage and left the school. We stayed overnight at an inn. There again arose thoughts of doubt and fear in my heart, and my mind was vacillating and restless; I suffered acutely.

The next day we set out to find a place with water for the baptism. It was the period of 'Little Cold' and a few days earlier it had snowed for two whole days. The ground everywhere was covered with a blanket of pure white snow, and the river was frozen over with thick ice. We went along the city moat, towards the south, looking for a suitable place. We came to a bridge over the river and underneath the bridge was a sluice. The water from above the sluice cascaded down like a small waterfall. Because of the constant movement at this point the water could not solidify into ice and what we saw was like a small pool. There we stopped. After we had prayed, standing on the snow, Mr Ju went down into the water. The four students and I then took off our wadded garments and put on thin garments. We then went down into the water. Shih Tien-min, the student who had left school out of sympathy for me, decided on the spur of the moment to join us. He was also baptized. I still remember how, as I came up out of water, my long hair turned immediately into a stick of ice. As soon as I took off the thin garments they became hard and solid like thin boards.

Pentecostal Teaching

We returned to the inn. Mr Ju then directed us to seek the Holy Spirit. This is the teaching most emphasised by the Pentecostals. The Pentecostal groups in China previously included the Pentecostal Church, the Apostolic Faith Church, and the Church of God. Today they are mostly known as the Assemblies of God. They maintain that speaking in tongues is the one and only sign of receiving the Holy Spirit, so those who have never spoken in tongues are regarded as not having received the Holy Spirit. Mr Ju worked in a small Pentecostal Church in the city of Peking. Originally he was a coal merchant but because of zeal for the Lord he gave up his business to become a preacher. He is a devout and sincere believer, well acquainted with the Bible. But he

did not greatly understand the truths of the Bible and he lacked general knowledge.

On the day after we were baptized, at 10 o'clock in the morning, Mr Ju came again to the inn to pray that we might receive the Holy Spirit. He preached to us the ten commandments in detail. That afternoon after 3 o'clock all five students spoke in "tongues" leaving only me who had not spoken. The next day (the 8th) I prayed earnestly the whole day, but I still had not spoken in tongues. On the 9th, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, we again prayed together in the inn. My tongue produced some incomprehensible sounds and Mr Ju announced that I was speaking in tongues, and that I had received the Holy Spirit. But in fact I was not conscious of any change at that time. It had been on November 21st, when I confessed my sins to the Lord, that I was conscious of a marked change. Rather than the day when I uttered sounds which could not be understood, it was the day when I confessed my sins, and obeyed God's commandments, giving up everything, that I was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Mr Ju had taught us simply to cry "Hallelujah" and to repeat those syllables in succession without stopping. Thus it seemed to be the manufacture of tongues by a man. Naturally we did not regard Mr Ju, who was a sincere and devout man, as having deceived us. Rather he was deceived himself, and through his own lack of common sense it was he himself who suffered loss.

Change of Views

In the spring of 1925 the work [of preaching which began in my home in Peking on October 18th, 1924 opened up tremendously. I will describe this in the next chapter. What I want to do here is to go back a few years and to relate something of the modification in my beliefs between 1921 and 1924. After my expulsion from the school at Baoding and my return to Peking, I attended

the meeting connected with the Mr Ju who had baptised me. Previously known as the Hsin-Hsin Hwei (Faith Church) it had now changed its name to "The Church of God." The leader there was an elderly Norwegian. When we attended the meeting numbered over twenty people. They had no chapel but met in the guest room of a private house. Like other Pentecostal evangelists this elderly person insisted that if a person did not speak in tongues it meant that he or she had not received the Holy Spirit. He also advocated that we keep the seventh day as our Sabbath. But he accepted what was put forward by a believer from New Zealand that the first day in Asia was really the seventh day. Because of this believers in Asian countries should regard Sunday as the seventh-day Sabbath whereas in the countries of Europe and America the Sabbath was on Saturday. He did not believe that those who repented and believed could be saved. He insisted that nothing in the world could be as easy as that. He declared that after a person had believed in the Lord he should pursue holiness until he had got rid of all sin. Only then could he be saved. The method he taught of getting rid of sin was even more ludicrous. He made a list of all the sins recorded in the New Testament, 83 in all, and this he hung up in the room. He made people read through the list everyday. By doing this, he said, people would gradually get rid of the sins and become holy. He also taught other strange doctrines. Those who followed him were mostly lacking in common sense; some were illiterate and some could only read the Bible. When I first attended the meetings there I was somewhat inclined towards this group, but as time went on I became more and more dissatisfied.

Although I was not satisfied with what this elderly person preached, there was one point in which I was still in agreement with him. It was that "Unless you are holy you cannot be saved." From the time when I first believed in the Lord I fiercely hated sin and longed for holiness. When I committed sin I was greatly distressed and greatly chided myself. When I saw other people sin I

was very pained. All kinds of sin were apparent in the church, and I was filled with righteous anger. I could not believe that so-called believers who were in the habit of sinning could be saved. I knew that God hated sin even more than I did. So I decided that those who did not forsake their sin and become holy could not be saved. With this kind of belief, my heart was continually in a state of unrest. I had not yet completely forsaken my sin, I was still not sufficiently holy, so I dared not say that I was saved. I believed that the Lord Jesus could give men eternal life, but when it came to the point, could I be saved? I had no guarantee. At that time if a believer had said in my hearing that he was saved I would certainly have reproved him of being presumptuous. With no assurance of salvation I was constantly in a state of conflict and apprehension, lest after a lifetime of believing the Lord I should end up by being rejected by Him. At the time I did not understand the doctrine of justification by faith, and all I did was to tremble with fear beneath Mount Sinai.

From Law to Grace

Now in the home of that elderly Norwegian there also lived an elderly Swede named Eric Pilquist. What he preached was quite different from what the elderly Norwegian preached. He constantly proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith. He lived in a tiny room and wore extremely untidy clothes; he ate very plain Chinese food. He was very poor and was often ill. Seeing that he was old and had no means of support, I often went to visit him to give him a little comfort. He talked to me of being saved through faith. At first I could not receive his teachings but the passages of Scripture which he quoted at last began to work in my heart. By the spring of 1923 my thinking had begun to change.

When I was fully enlightened by the doctrine of justification by faith there was a great change in my beliefs. It was well that God had not earlier opened a

door of ministry, for in that case I should have preached a distorted version of the truth. And how could I have rectified the results of that? From the time of my illumination I ceased to associate with the elderly gentleman who taught the law, and I associated more with the elderly gentleman who helped me to understand the doctrine of justification by faith. He handed to me some booklets in English explaining these doctrines, and he encouraged me to translate them into Chinese. Moreover the believers who received these small booklets made gifts which enabled me to carry on until the end of April 1925, when I gave this work up. It also happened that in November that year Mr Pilquist became ill and passed away.

The Sabbath

From 1921 for several years I advocated keeping the Sabbath. I then discovered that the apostles nowhere in their letters taught the churches of the Gentiles to keep the Sabbath. Then doubts arose. After making it a matter of prayer and searching the Scriptures over a very long period I realised that God had never instructed the Gentiles to keep the Sabbath and that the practice of calling Sunday the Christian's Sabbath was simply tradition.

Speaking in Tongues

In the matter of tongues I not only received the Pentecostal teaching at the time of my baptism but I also proclaimed it for more than a year. What I preached was this: "When a believer receives the Holy Spirit he must speak in tongues, because speaking in tongues is the sole evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit; it means that all believers who have not spoken in tongues have not yet received the Holy Spirit." Some testified that when they spoke in tongues they also acquired very great strength and that they spoke in tongues because they could not contain themselves, just as if there was a power

controlling the tongue. With me it has never been like that. I uttered sounds which I did not understand by reason of endlessly repeating the word "Hallelujah" as described earlier. At first I had no doubts. But doubts arose because some people simply repeated one sound such as "Ba-ba-ba-ba" or "Da-da-da-da" or "Go-di, go-di, go-di!" for several minutes or even several tens of minutes, always repeating the same sounds. I ask, how can you call this "tongues"? Even when angels speak they cannot use just one or two sounds to express many meanings . . .

Another problem is that the manner of life of many who speak in tongues is particularly bad. During the two years 1921-1922 I knew a young man who had an intensely fierce nature. He ill-treated his wife so cruelly that it was enough to make a man's hair stand on end. He also had many other evil ways and could by no means be called a Christian. But as soon as he sat down he was able to speak in tongues. What he uttered was, moreover, not just a succession of similar sounds but something which sounded like a language. Looking at the question from another point of view I have also seen many sincere believers, devout in their manner of life, and zealously serving the Lord, full of the fragrance of Christ, and others who work for the Lord with power and authority, who have never spoken in tongues. Can it be that they do not possess the Holy Spirit? All these considerations caused me to give up the kind of teaching which I had received on being baptised.

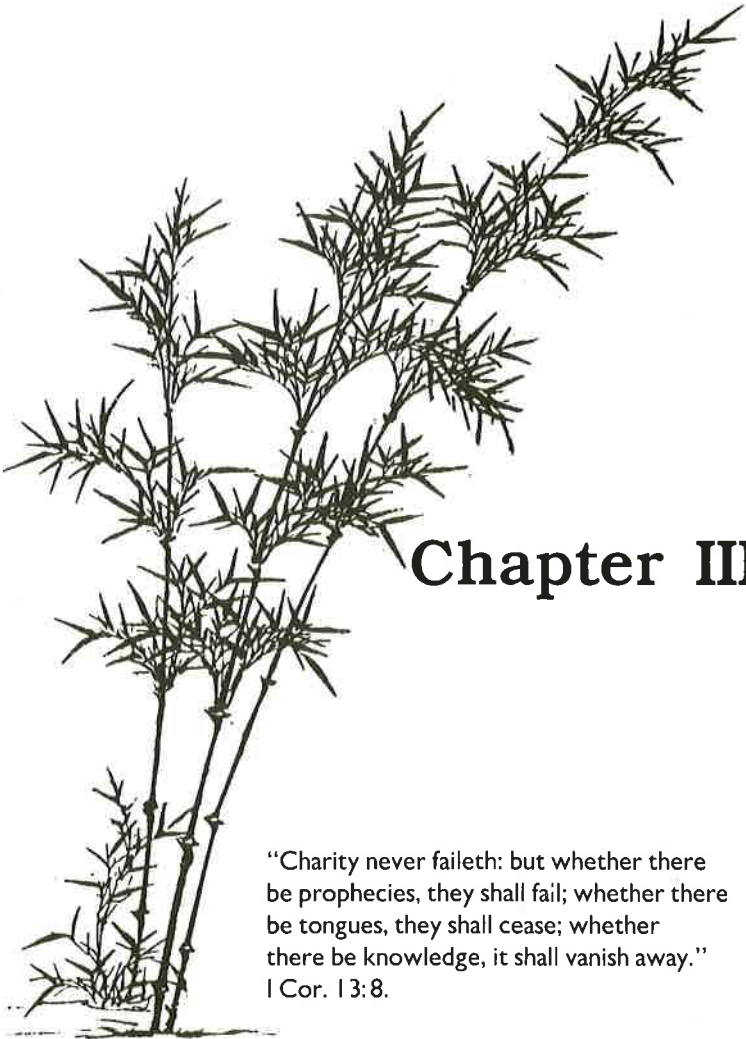
God's Word Alone

The years that I spent at home devoting myself to the study of the Bible determined my subsequent attitudes. It was through this that I had to reject some of the teaching in the church which I had received when I was young. What I found in the Bible I received. What I did not find in the Bible I rejected. The truths of the Bible I believed; doctrines not in the Bible I was not prepared to

believe. I had not read Bible commentaries. That kind of literature did not appeal to me. In my preaching and my teaching today the Bible is my only standard. Church traditions and man-made regulations were not my authority. Even less would I compromise with anything contrary to the truth. To me that was sinful. On no account would I give way to those who oppose God. Because of this I had to leave the church to which I originally belonged. I also had to sever relations with the church referred to above. I still did not know how God would use me. Still less had I any thought of starting a new work. So it was contrary to all expectation that God led me step by step to the position I hold today. I can only stand amazed when I contemplate the wonderful works of God.

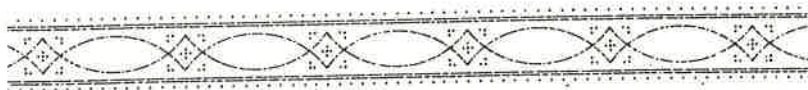
To look back over the experiences of more than 20 years is not a difficult matter. During that period, however, I had to taste the flavour of unlimited misfortunes and to eat all kinds of bitterness. Sometimes a day was like a year; sometimes I suffered so acutely I wished to take my own life. Derision, misunderstanding, scoffing, persecution, grief—I have tasted them again and again. Who would anticipate that all of them would become the gains of today? "We went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us into a wealthy place!" (*Psalms 66:12*). Previously I had only read the words of this Psalm. But now I have experienced them.

Having read what Wang Ming Tao had gone through in the early days of his "conversion" under Pentecostalism and his subsequent repudiation of tongues in the preceding pages, we can understand his position better as we follow his thoughts in his *Critique of Charismatism* in the next chapter. This we have translated from his "Spiritual Food" Quarterly which was first published in 1934 and is being republished today.



Chapter III

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”
I Cor. 13:8.



THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

By Wang Ming-Tao

The Need of Discernment

During the last couple of years many Christians in Shantung Province have been seeking the charismatic gifts. What they say about the charismatic gifts are special experiences, such as dreams and visions, speaking in tongues, prostrating on the ground and getting caught up to heaven, healing by prayer, etc. Many Christians in many places have indeed experienced these phenomena and so are paying more attention to them. Preachers are preaching on these things wherever they go. Many who have experienced these things vie with one another for preeminence. Wherever they go they testify to these supposedly special gifts, and exhort others to seek the same.

Recently, I have been asked by many Christians whether or not to believe such things and to seek such experiences. Hence, this article, briefly, to answer these questions.

The Charismatic movement that has come during these two years is not new to me. But there are those earnest seekers who, upon hearing this kind of doctrine, are taken in without giving a thought. Then there are many who oppose this doctrine, who upon hearing the same would shut up. All they do is stand on the side and criticise. I consider either attitude wrong. I recognise that

among those who seek charismatic gifts there are many sincere and God-loving people, and I really love them. But in regard to these strange experiences that they emphasise in preaching, I must give judgment in the light of Holy Scripture (Note: This charismatic movement took place about 1932 – 33).

Charismatic Gifts in the Light of Holy Scripture

First, let us acknowledge that dreams, visions, speaking in tongues, prostrating on the ground, getting caught up to heaven, healing by prayer are experiences recorded in the Bible of the early Christians. If God sees there is a need of such things today, He can bestow them on Christians, as He did to the ancients. Therefore, if any should say these things are impossible today, I would take exception. Unless God's power has been so reduced as not to match that which was manifested in ancient times, otherwise, who can say God cannot do what He did before?

Thus, shall we seek dreams, visions, speaking in tongues, prostrating on the ground, getting caught up to heaven, healing by prayer and such experiences? Never! Let us take note, the saints mentioned in the Bible had never sought such things. These special experiences were bestowed by God on special occasions, for special reasons. They did not experience these things all the time.

In recent days, those who seek charismatic gifts, whenever they come to a meeting, would stand up to testify. Among the witnesses are many dreamers who after telling their dreams would also interpret, and there are times when others would interpret for them. Sometimes two or three persons would interpret the dream of one person, but with two or three different meanings.

Some of the dreams by these dreamers are totally devoid of meaning, yet they will somehow arrive at some interpretation. For this cause, we seldom hear of preaching, but as to testimonies, there are lots of them. Many dreamers have dreams to tell and interpret, but I couldn't for one moment ask them what their dreams are or what significance they bring. By comparing with the dreams of the saints of old recorded in the Bible, we can see that their frequent dreams and constant interpretation of dreams in their daily meetings, are a mistake.

First of all, let us look at a dream recorded in the Old Testament: Jacob in the desert saw a ladder that reached up to heaven. Here went up and down the angels of God and the Lord also appeared to him (*Gen. 28:10–17*). Joseph had dreamed two wonderful dreams in his home (*Gen. 37:5–11*). When he was cast into prison, he interpreted the dreams of the Butler and the Baker (*Gen. 40:1–23*). After this he gave interpretation to Pharaoh's twin dreams, which raised him to prime minister of Egypt (*Gen. 41*). King Solomon asked God for wisdom in his dream and was commended of the Lord (*1 Kings 3:4–15*). On two occasions the prophet Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (*Dan. 2:4*). As for himself Daniel had also dreamed (*Dan. 7*). Take note that these dreams are God-given on special occasions, for special purposes. Many personages are recorded in the Old Testament, but those who dreamed are limited to a few. As to those few who had dreamed, they did not dream but once or twice in their lifetime. They were quite different from today's seekers of charismatic gifts who include many dreamers among them. And as to these who have dreams all the time, they treat them no more than their home-cooked meals.

Let us now turn again to the New Testament and look at the dreams that are recorded therein: Matthew Chapter 1 and 2 record Mary's husband Joseph having dreamed three times. In the first dream an angel told him to marry Mary his wife. In the second dream the angel

told Joseph to escape with Mary and the Infant Jesus to Egypt. On the third occasion the angel told him to return with them to Judea. Matthew Chapter 2 records how the Wise men were told in a dream not to return to Herod. Let us notice that the dreams recorded here refer to a special time wherein God would do a special work. Moreover these dreams were clearly instructive to the dreamer himself. If I should tell you that Joseph in his carpenter shop had a dream every night, and would tell it to Mary his wife the next morning at the breakfast table, and (if I should tell you) the Wise men from the East came to Bethlehem and upon their return they would each dream a dream every night in the tent they pitched in the desert, and would tell one another their dreams while riding camel-back and interpret one another's dream, would you believe me or not?

Furthermore, let us take a careful look at all the dreams recorded in both Old and New Testaments. We see that these dreams clearly and lucidly reveal some future event or instruct men on some important promise or command. Such dreams are mighty different from our ordinary dreams. We can see this difference at one look. Should we think of an interpretation for every dream and force our interpretation upon it so that it attains to the category of rare dreams, that it is a charismatic gift, then we should not seek after such. Those who dream often in the night have already obtained this sort of charismatic gift, this sort of dream! Those who do not seek after charismatic gifts who dream this sort of dream, should they tell it to others, they would laugh them to scorn, according to the saying, "These are the dreams of fools." They would pay no attention in the least to their dreams. But when those who seek after charismatic gifts dream and would relate their dreams before the Church, people would say they are "giving a testimony." When we turn over their dreams again and again to draw some far-fetched meaning, then these would be declared rare dreams. How ludicrous!

In regard to visions we find not a few recorded in the Old Testament. We have no time to draw upon their testimony. In so far as the New Testament is concerned, there is one Zacharias who saw an angel appear to him in the Temple. The angel told him that his wife Elizabeth, though advanced in years, would conceive and bear a son. Then there is the Virgin Mary who saw an angel appear before her, who told her she would conceive and bear a son and call his name Jesus (*Luke 1*). The Acts of the Apostles records how before Stephen was stoned to death, he saw "the heavens opened" and the Son of Man standing on God's right hand (*Acts 7:55,56*). Saul was dazzled by a great light outside of Damascus City, whereupon he heard Jesus calling him (*Acts 9:3-9*). Ananias was sent by the Lord in a vision to see Saul (*Acts 9:10-16*). In a vision Cornelius saw an angel who told him to invite Peter to preach the Gospel to him (*Acts 10:1-8*). When Peter saw in a vision a certain vessel like a great sheet knit at the four corners descending to the earth wherein were all kinds of animals, he heard a voice calling him to kill and eat (*Acts 9:16*). At Troas Paul saw in a vision a man of Macedonia standing and entreating him to cross over Macedonia to help them (*Acts 16:9,10*). When Paul was labouring in Corinth he was persecuted by unbelievers. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, "Don't be afraid, just preach on. Don't shut your mouth, for I am with you. No one will raise a hand to hurt you, for I have many people in this City" (*Acts 18:9,10*). When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, the Lord stood by his side one night and said, "Be of good cheer. As you have witnessed for Me in Jerusalem so shall you witness for Me in Rome" (*Acts 23:11*). On his way under arrest to Rome, Paul braced the dangers of wind and wave. An angel of the Lord stood by him in the night and said, "Paul, be not afraid. You will surely stand before Caesar, and all who sail with you will be delivered" (*Acts 27:23,24*).

Let us take note that these passages tell us that in a special situation where there was a special need, God

would give a vision to man. Seeing visions is not an usual occurrence. It is an unusual occurrence. Unless there is an unusual situation and a special need, God would not give man a vision. During the days of the Apostles, the Church had just sprouted. The dangers and troubles they had to go through were ten times, yea, a hundred times, more than what we have experienced. They had not the Bible we now have to guide them. In spite of these circumstances, neither did God give them visions and visions. Of the twelve apostles, Peter their leader was used most greatly by the Lord. His acts recorded in the Bible exceeded those of the rest of the apostles. But the Bible records only once his seeing a vision, and that vision was given under special circumstances, to meet a special need. Were it not for this vision, Peter might not under any circumstance be willing to go to Cornelius' house. Had he been willing he could not have avoided the opposition and obstruction of believing Jews. Thus the vision given Peter was not only indispensable to him, but also to the Jewish believers. Paul was specially chosen Apostle to the Gentiles and the miraculous acts of Paul exceeded those of the other Apostles put together, but the visions given him were but a few, and each vision was a special direction from God. He needed these directions at those times, and these visions spelled out clearly what those things were to him.

A Comparision between Man's Will and Bible Truth

Nowadays there are believers of a certain region who seek the charismatic gifts so that they would see bright light or dim light, and there are others who see the cross or the shape of a man. Some see Heaven's door opened and what people have entered and what people could not enter. Some see tables full of good food and rare

dishes. Some see so-and-so carrying a big burden of sin on his back, and so-and so suffering in the flames and all kinds of happenings not recorded in the Bible. Let me ask: Who among the apostles of old and among the Christians of those times ever saw such visions? Let me ask again: What is the meaning of these visions? Let me ask furthermore: Why is there a need for God to give such visions? By comparing these visions with the visions recorded in the Bible, we can differentiate between the two for what they are worth.

Those believers who seek the charismatic gifts often talk about getting caught up to heaven. Sometimes these people prostrate on the ground, a good many times unconscious. When they wake up they claim to have been caught up to heaven. Sometimes they are caught up to heaven when they pray individually, or corporately, at prayer meetings. Then they describe how they saw the glories of heaven, or how they saw the face of the Lord or how they ate the fruits of heaven, or how in heaven they saw so-and-so. Yea, even what wonderful, beautiful things, and what beautiful songs so pleasant to the ear, what rapturous music! Sometimes they state even seeing so-and-so being received by the Lord to enter in, and so-and-so being rejected, and many other astonishing accounts. Many desire to know whether these rapturous happenings are reliable and what after all are these experiences. Let me comment on these things in the light of Holy Scripture.

As to being "caught up to heaven," there is only one instance recorded in the Bible. It is found in II Cor. 12. There Paul writes this passage to the Corinthian Church: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that

he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities" (*II Cor. 12:1–5*). This is the one and only instance of one caught up to heaven recorded in the whole Bible. If we study carefully this passage we can see that such rapturous experience is very, very rare. It is not the experience of any other person; it is worthy of the individual's boast. At the same time, let us notice that Paul did not say explicitly who actually was this person caught up. One thing that deserves our particular attention is that Paul merely refers to "a man in Christ" being caught up to paradise, but he says nothing about what he saw or what he heard, and moves on to say that that man "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Take note that it is not that he did not hear anything, but that "he heard unspeakable words." Further he did not say, these words are what "man cannot say."

Let us compare the experiences of those seeking charismatics with the doctrine in the Bible and see what it is like. The whole Bible relates but once concerning a man who was caught up. But today among these seeking charismatic gifts there are many who get caught up all the time. Now, when Paul mentioned the man who was caught up, he did not name him, but said merely, "a man in Christ," whereas these seeking charismatics today vie with one another to testify: "I was caught up thus and thus to heaven." Paul says, "A man in Christ was caught up to paradise heard unspeakable words, which it is not for a man to speak." But those who seek charismatic gifts vie with each other to tell of what visions they have seen in heaven, what voices they have heard, and some even openly claim to have received certain directives from heaven, yea, even God's Word to be declared to men. If we should slide into this rut, in no time we could write a new appendage to the New Testament. How dangerous is this trend!

These seeking charismatics often prostrate on the ground. No doubt, the Bible also records several prostrations on the ground of saints seeing a vision. The prophet Ezekiel prostrated on the ground when he saw the glory of Jehovah (*Ezekiel 1:26–28*). The prophet Daniel tremblingly prostrated on the ground when he saw Gabriel appear before him (*Dan. 8:15–18*). On another occasion when he had mourned three times seven days and saw a vision he fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground (*Dan. 10:1–9*). On the outskirts of Damascus when Saul saw a great light shine upon him, he also fell to the ground (*Acts 9:1–9*). John on Patmos Island saw the Lord Jesus appear before him, and when he saw Him he fell before His feet like one dead (*Rev. 1:12–18*). Take note that the aforesaid saints of ancient days prostrated on the ground because they saw what human eyes had not seen of the glory of those who appeared to them. They did not prostrate on the ground every now and then with no particular reason, or when in prayer, nor did they fall to the ground all of a sudden without seeing anything. Let me ask those charismatic seekers whether or not they had seen God's glory so that they were prostrated to the ground through fear like these saints of ancient days?

On Tongues

Now we come to the matter of speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is also experienced by disciples of ancient times. The Bible tells us the first time that people had gone through this experience were the apostles and a number of other disciples. It happened on Pentecost Day after Jesus' Ascension to heaven. At that time they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they preached in other languages. As a result several thousand repented and turned to Christ (*Acts 2*). After this when Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, centurion of the

Italian Band, the Holy Spirit fell upon the hearers who were Gentiles, and they "spoke in tongues and magnified God" (*Acts 10*). Apart from these two instances, there is another also recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, i.e., Paul's encounter with the twelve disciples baptised after John the Baptist. When Paul baptised them in the Name of the Lord Jesus and laid his hands upon their heads, the Holy Spirit fell upon their bodies and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (*Acts 19: 1–7*). The Gospel began to be published during the age of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit began to come upon them as the Gentiles first heard the Gospel. The Church was beginning to be established. So God, for the sake of man, had to perform supernatural acts to authenticate His Gospel and promises. In the face of those who disbelieved Him, He wrought by the hands of the Apostles signs and wonders: the lame walked (*Acts 3: 1–10; 14: 8–10*); the paralytic got up (*Acts 9: 32–35*), unclean spirits were cast out (*Acts 5: 16; 16: 16–18*); the sick were healed (*Acts 5: 15, 16*); and to the extent that sinning Christians at the Apostle's rebuke fell down dead (*Acts 5: 1–11*), while dead Christians when they heard the Apostle's voice, rose up immediately (*Acts 9: 36–43*). In order to confirm His promises on believers, He gave them the ability to speak in tongues upon receiving the Holy Spirit, that they might know for sure the Holy Spirit was given them because they believed.

How about the present day? There are many proofs that authenticate the Gospel and there are many events to authenticate the promises of God. These supernatural events, signs and wonders and speaking in tongues, etc., are no more in urgent need today as in the days of the Apostles. If God should bestow them on us, we would logically receive them thankfully. If God would not that we receive them, we should not yearn nor seek after. We believe God's Word and God's Promises. Let us not be like the Jews who sought after miracles, for God's Word is all that we need to believe.

Apart from a few passages on tongues in the Acts of the Apostles, there are Paul's references in I Cor. 12 and 14. He does not forbid tongues, but he exhorts believers to seek after the most important and most useful of gifts – to prophesy and preach. Now the charismatic seekers, after speaking in tongues, have neglected the gifts of prophesying and preaching. They major on minors.

There is a more serious question, and that is those who seek after the charismatic gifts argue that because tongues were present as a sign in the several instances of believers receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts, therefore those who receive the Holy Spirit today must also have tongues for a sign. Those who have never spoken in tongues have not received the Holy Spirit. Such argument is most arbitrary! Whether ancient or modern there have been a great many who are saved, devout and God-loving, and there are a great many dedicated workers mightily used of God who have never spoken in tongues. Does that mean these have not received the Holy Spirit? I would not in the least dare to make such a pronouncement. I would not have such effrontery to sin against God. I have said above that miracles and tongues were greatly and effectually needed in the primitive church, but today it is totally different from that period. If we say Christians who do not speak in tongues as experienced and recorded in the Acts of the Apostles have not received the Holy Spirit, then we can also say that preachers who do not have the power of the Apostles in working miracles as recorded in Acts, have not been used of God to preach the Gospel. For the Acts of the Apostles record that those who preached in the days of the Apostles, whether Peter or John, Stephen or Philip, and whether Paul, they all performed signs and wonders. Also it is recorded in Mark 16:20, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." Do you believe really that preachers today who cannot work miracles like the Apostles are not used of God? If that is your belief of those workers God mightily

used of from ancient days to modern times in both Eastern and Western hemispheres who have taught many believers, who have led many to Christ, who have witnessed a good confession to the Gospel, let me ask, how many of them have done many signs and wonders like the preachers recorded in Acts? You mean to say God has not used these people? Who dare say such things to blaspheme God? If this is true, leaving others aside, let me ask how many of those preachers who advocate tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit are used of the Lord? I think if I should say: "Those preachers who cannot work miracles are not used of God," even those charismatic seekers who stress on tongues would not agree with me. That being the case, why do they say that those who have not spoken in tongues have not received the Holy Spirit?

Now they say that wherever it is recorded in Acts of those who received the Holy Spirit tongues were mentioned. At Pentecost the Apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, and the members of Cornelius' household, having received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues. The twelve disciples at Ephesus having received the Holy Spirit also spoke in tongues. The believers of Samaria received the Holy Spirit. Although the Bible does not record their speaking in tongues, yet they must also have spoken, for it is recorded, "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Since Simon could see the coming down of the Holy Spirit, there must have been certain visible signs. Those visible signs must have been the speaking of tongues. Yes, I also believe that on those several occasions those who received the Holy Spirit had spoken in tongues. But can this therefore prove that those who have not spoken in tongues have not received the Holy Spirit? If this is the case and Acts records that preachers are also miracle workers, why don't they say those who cannot work miracles are not used of God?

They strenuously advocate the former but as to the latter they say not a word. Is this logical? I believe the Holy Spirit today can open men's mouths and cause them to speak in tongues, and I believe also God today can use men's hands to work miracles and wonders, but I do not believe God today must require everyone who receive the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues. Nor do I believe God requires every preacher of the Gospel to work miracles. Can or cannot is one thing. Must or must not is another matter. These two situations must not be confused together.

Seekers of the charismatic gifts often use a verse of Scripture to defend the Word they preach. They say, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever." What we did in ancient times, that we do today as well. Yes, I believe a hundred percent that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, but I do not believe that Jesus does the same thing yesterday, today and forever. There was a time when Jesus Christ was with the Father in the same glory, and there was a time when He humbled Himself to be the Son of Man and became a servant. But now, He is on God's right hand to intercede for us. There is a day when He will descend from heaven to take us back to Himself. Furthermore there is a time when He will judge the living and the dead, and become the King of the World. Let me ask if these facts are in contradiction with "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever?" To believe firmly in the Bible is a very excellent thing, but if Bible-believers interpret the Bible inaccurately, that will be a great danger indeed!

On Healing

Finally, let us discuss healing by prayer. During the days of the Apostles, God manifested His mighty power by the Apostles and by those who preached the Gospel,

to heal many sick people. Of course God can do the same today, but facts tell us God does not do this today. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Bunyan, Whitefield, Moody, Spurgeon, Meyer and thousands and hundreds of well-known and not wellknown Gospel messengers are greatly used of God, both east and west. These have led thousands and ten-thousands of sinners to the Lord and have taught and nurtured many of God's people to fight the good fight of faith. But they have not wrought great miracles like the Apostles, nor have they healed many people. I believe that God has not wrought miracles through them not because God cannot do them, nor is it due to their lack of faith, nor because they are not clean enough, nor because they are not fully obedient, but because there is no such need. I am not arbitrary in so saying, for though they have not wrought miracles nor healed, they have led many to Christ. They have done great works, which should substantiate what I say.

Do we have healing by prayer today? I can reply with an emphatic "yes." I have heard testimonies and I have seen with mine own eyes such events. I believe God can hear men's prayers and heal sicknesses. And I believe God often does. But I do not believe that every Christian will get an answer when he prays for the sick. Nor do I believe every sick person can be healed by prayer. There are those who will say, those who are not healed by prayer have no faith, or not enough of faith. No doubt, there are those who lack faith, so they cannot see the glory of God. But there are others who are not healed by prayer not because they lack faith, but because their prayer is not in God's will. In other words, it is God's will that their sickness should go through its appointed time before they can be healed. Maybe, it is not the Lord's will that they be healed but that their sickness will result firstly in their leaving this world.

Someone might ask, "Is it God's will for His own to get sick for a long time?" My reply is, "Yes." Many times believers get sick and that is exactly according to God's

will. Some Christians love the world and are contaminated. God calls them but they do not heed. God warns them but they do not repent. God cannot help but chastise them with illness in order to turn them back. For they would not repent and confess their sins though their illness was slight and their disease of short duration. Should God listen to their prayer and the intercession of others at this juncture, would not His plan have failed? Should not a little child be shut inside a dark room away from the breakfast table for disobeying his father, before he repents and confesses his sin? No matter how he or others plead for clemency, his father can in no way let him out for breakfast. This chastisement is not due to his father's cruelty, but rather to his love. Oftentimes this is how God also deals with His children. Those who advocate healing by prayer must surely support my words. They advocate that the sick must confess their sins, and they declare that once the sick have confessed their sins they will be healed. Why should there be any prolonged illness? Little do they realise that many sins are not that easy to confess and repent from. Often we hear people confess such sins as lying, anger, assault, hatred, adultery, theft and other sins known to most people and easy to repent from. Such sins are acknowledged and repented from after one has gone through a little pain after two days of serious illness. But there are sins greater and deeper that come not under this category viz., following one's self-will against following God's will, deviating from God's direction, putting up a pious front of loving God but hiding deep within a covetousness for the world, pride and conceit, robbing God's glory, looking to man and not to God. Besides these there are many of this type that are not easily recognised, let alone those that are easily repented from. Before one can recognise such sin and repent from it, one has to go through most severe and most long-drawn chastisement. This cannot be measured in days or months, but sometimes years. Many who have experienced this chastisement can understand these things. They can say

how their spirits are healed after they have suffered for a long time in the flesh.

But when God suffers His children to become ill for a long time, it is not always with the view of chastising them, that they might flee sin. Sometimes, it is for the sake of nurturing them, that they might learn deeper lessons. It is through bitter experiences that they will successfully learn the deeper lessons of patience, waiting, obedience to God's will, sympathy with others. Sometimes God causes His children to go through family trials, sometimes God causes them to suffer loss in their careers, and sometimes God causes them to meet with physical illness. The result of all these trials upon whom God loves is that they be sanctified and perfected to become more like Him and more usable in His hands to his glory. And in His future glory, that they might receive more rewards. If by God's good and perfect will a Christian falls ill, do you think He will hear the prayers of the sufferer and the prayers of those who love Him? Should God answer their prayers, let me ask whether this will be for his good or bad?

Sometimes a Christian has run the course of his life on earth. Seeing his work is done, God sends him sickness to take him from this work to rest from his labours. In such circumstances, would it be in God's will for the sufferer and those who love him to pray for healing?

When Paul was in His service on earth, God wrought many miracles through him whereby many diseases were cured. But among his beloved co-workers there were not a few whose sicknesses he could not heal. In Philippians he tells us of Epaphroditus who "was sick nigh unto death" (*Phil. 2:25-28*). In writing to his beloved son Timothy, he says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (*I Tim. 5:23*). In another epistle he tells Timothy, "But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (*II Tim. 4:20*). According to those who stress on healing by prayer, any

sickness can be healed so long as you have faith. Can they explain the aforesaid passages of Scripture?

According to these healing-by-prayer advocates, sickness is the result of sin, so when a person's sin is removed, his sickness will be healed. Moreover, Jesus not only bore our sins in His death, but also our sicknesses. Therefore all who trust Him can be healed both in spirit and body. True, I believe sickness comes from sin, but have we never realised that death is more fearful than sickness? Is not death due to sin? A person who repents and believes in the Lord has his sin removed. Shall not death be also removed? That being the case why is a believer still bound by death? If we say one who repents and believes in the Lord need not get sick, and when he gets sick he can be healed by prayer, then we should also say one who repents and believes in the Lord cannot die (the death of the body temporarily is called sleep). So, when a believer is breathing his last he will not die if he is prayed for. Can you believe all this kind of doctrine? No doubt, both sickness and death are from sin. Once sin is removed both sickness and death are all removed. But the fact is that the day of the removal of sin and death has not yet come. These will all be removed not until we are taken to meet the Lord with the redemption of our body.

On Misinterpretation of the Bible

What Pentecostalists preach are found in the Bible, but what is wrong is their interpretation. Dreams, visions, tongues, prostration on the ground, getting caught up to heaven, healing by prayer have their places in the Bible, but when man misplaces them, dangers arise! a Christian meets with a difficult problem and not knowing how to go about it, he prays over it a good number of times. Then one day in this dream, he gets a clear answer which tallies with the Bible. He comes to tell me about it and I

am willing to kneel with him to thank the Lord. Should a Christian meeting with grave persecution to the point of losing his fear for the Gospel and failing through fear and despair, should he at this juncture see a vision of the Lord's messenger stand by his side to comfort him so that he is greatly strengthened, when I hear such a thing, I am willing to rejoice with him in thanksgiving. Should a Gospel preacher come to a place with a language barrier but being suddenly led by the Holy Spirit he could speak to these people there in a language he could not speak before and many of his hearers are greatly moved, and should someone tell me about this, I would praise the Lord, hallelujah! Should a Christian get sick and through such sickness he is greatly edified, and clearly knowing the Lord would heal him he rejects his family doctor and any medication and is wonderfully healed, and tells me his testimony, I would be very happy to hear it. But should a believer talk of having dreamed several dreams and seen several visions and was caught up to heaven a number of times and prostrated on the ground, and how he could speak in tongues and heal sicknesses by laying of hands, but when he stands before the Church he does not speak out of the Bible (or at most a few words), taking a long time to give his testimony to pander to the curiosity of his hearers, and draw their admiration for such experiences to the neglect of many important Bible doctrines God has intended for His children, then I would rebuke such an unbiblical practice. I would warn my people against such danger.

Indeed the Apostles had spoken in tongues and seen visions, had healed and worked miracles, but if we carefully study the Acts of the Apostles we will not find in their preaching whether to believers or unbelievers, coupled with the dreams, visions, casting out demons, and healings of the charismatics. Now God has given twenty-one epistles by the hands of the Apostles to guide and instruct the Church. In these epistles the Apostles

taught the Church concerning God's grace, love, mighty power, promises, Christ's completed work on our behalf, and workings through us today, the believers' position, responsibility and work and a host of doctrines the disciples should know. We never see in these epistles the Apostles talk about dreams, visions, and testimonies of the charismatic type, much less instruct believers to seek these kinds of experiences.

In I Corinthians Paul has discoursed not a little on tongues. He says he has spoken with tongues more than others, but he never exhorted to seek tongues-speaking. Rather he exhorts the Church to seek the greatest and most edifying of gifts, viz., to prophesy, to preach. Finally, he says, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order" (*I Cor. 14: 39,40*). If we compare these words of Paul with what Pentecostal preachers have taught that without tongues there is not the Holy Spirit, so believers must speak in tongues, we will see a great difference between the two. Which teaching would you follow?

What sinners need most to hear is the Gospel of saving grace. What believers need most to hear are God's rebuke, teachings, promises, exhortations, and not dreams, visions, tongues which are no substitutes at all. To take lightly many important doctrines in the Bible but stress on these things not only results in depriving the spiritual food the people needs but also leads to many dangers. The flesh would take advantage of the situation to do its work. So could the Spirit of the Devil take advantage of the situation. Many who have no foundation in the Word are led far far astray. The weak are scandalised and thereby the Name of God is put to shame. These are not my imagination. These dangers have occurred in many places already.

A Certain Danger

There is another danger linked with the Charismatic Movement, viz., many seekers for the charismatic gifts are transgressors in speech and walk by their abnormal, unruly and irresponsible conduct. During a meeting some would get up and dance, some would clap and shout, and there are others who behave most unseemly and offensively. When counselled, they would reply they are acting in deference to the Holy Spirit. Should any ask them how the Spirit would cause them do such thing, often one of their group would cite King Saul's prophesying at Naioth and how he stripped off his clothes and lay naked for a day and a night (*1 Sam. 19: 18–24*). They admit that to lie naked is a loss of face. The Holy Spirit could cause Saul to do such a thing. But could He not cause us to do something special? Should the Spirit cause us to lose face, to be a laughing stock, we would be willing to suffer shame for the Lord's sake. Not too long ago I saw how a charismatic leader used this same passage of Scripture about Saul in a magazine to prove that when the Holy Spirit fills a believer he can behave unseemly before other people.

What a monstrous error is this! How they have misinterpreted to such an extreme this Scripture passage! Now, when Saul lay naked, he was not under the blessing of God but rather under His punishment to his shame. We should know that Saul at this time was long rejected for disobeying God. God had meantime anointed David King. God's Spirit had departed from Saul and an evil spirit had come upon him. For envying David, he tried to kill him. David had to run for his life to escape Saul. At last he came to Samuel. When Saul came to know about this, he sent men to take David. But it turned out that three times men were sent to take him, three

times these men prophesied by the Spirit of God when they came to Samuel. They could not lay hands on David. Finally this Saul, monster of monsters, went himself to take David, but who could imagine that before he could get his quarry, he was overturned with disgrace. Not only did the Spirit of God cause him to speak but also meet with what the three messengers did not experience—for a day and a night he lay down naked. Not only should we not seek Saul's experience but rather flee from it. But there was one experience in Saul we should seek after and that happened when the prophet Samuel anointed him king, and Samuel said, "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another" (*1 Sam. 10: 5,6*). Take note that after Saul was anointed and was moved to prophesy, he received "a new heart;" he "became a new man." After Saul was rejected and was moved to prophesy, he "lay down naked all that day and all that night." We should seek his first experience and flee from his second experience. The former was blessing; the latter curse. The former was glory and the latter disgrace. Who would imagine that among these seekers of charismatic gifts there should arise those who regard those fearful and shameful experiences for a pattern? To be teachers of the Bible without understanding is dangerous business.

Let us discuss the matter of dancing. Those seekers of charismatic gifts would often get up and dance during meetings. Sometimes only a few would get up and dance, sometimes a great many. Although this sort of dance is not like that of ballroom dancing when men and women hold one another, but because what people generally talk of dancing connotes that lustful western

type, so when 'dancing' is mentioned, it invariably arouses an adverse reaction of the heart. If, indeed, dancing during a Church service brings great benefit, we need not worry about unbelievers' misunderstanding about us. We should not discard the benefit of dancing. But facts tell us that such dancing dissipates the spirit of the meetings and stirs up reviling from outsiders. Such dancing brings no benefit whatsoever.

The charismatic seekers say that dancing is the work of the Holy Spirit, but if we study the Word we will find no such dancing at all as coming from the Holy Spirit. No, never! The charismatic seekers say David danced before the Ark. No doubt, David did dance before the Ark, but the dance did not come from the Holy Spirit, but from his happiness. Let us read the Bible passages:

1. "And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness. And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet" (*II Sam. 6: 12–15*).

Is there one word about the Holy Spirit causing David to dance? No. David's dance was automatic. David danced before the ark because he was overjoyed beyond measure as he had the honour of welcoming the ark of God to his city. He danced as he did because dancing was part of Israel's culture. When the Israelites had any happy occasion they would make music and dance to celebrate. Let us cite other instances of dancing recorded in the Bible.

2. "For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children

of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" (*Exo. 15: 19,20*).

3. "And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter" (*Judges 11: 34*).

4. "Then they said, Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin" (*Judges 21: 19–21*).

5. "And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (*1 Sam. 18: 6,7*).

After reading these records, we know that Israel had from old times the practice of dancing, but that dancing was not like that of men and women embracing one another, a demoralising practice of Europe and America. Their dance and music was to celebrate an auspicious and a happy occasion. David danced before the ark because he was overjoyed to have the honour of welcoming the ark to his own city. The Bible records so very clearly, but charismatic seekers would cite David's dance before the ark to show their dancing to be a work of the Holy Spirit. What an arbitrary twist!

Should someone ask, from whence are come these wonderful experiences of the charismatic seekers? To such a question I cannot give a blanket answer. I consider these various wonderful experiences to come from four sources. First, they are from God. But an experience from God must tally with the teachings of the Bible.

Second, they are from the evil spirit. The evil spirit can counterfeit the Holy Spirit as the Bible says, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Now, those experiences coming through the evil spirit resemble in some measure the experiences that come from the Holy Spirit. But if we study carefully we can observe the differences between them. This is just like comparing a counterfeit bank note with a genuine one and comparing counterfeit goods with genuine goods, where there are the similarities and dissimilarities.

Third, these experiences are from the flesh. I consider those that are from the flesh most numerous. These stem from erroneous teachings and directions. Many seek the Holy Spirit not according to the teachings of the Bible, so they end up with many notions of the flesh. Thus, when they think they have the Spirit, they in fact are in the flesh.

The fourth category belongs to the pretenders. Some people, are influenced by their friends and colleagues who are under these special influences, but they have not, and seeing themselves being looked down upon as lukewarm or having sin unconfessed, they feel a sense of intolerance. So, for the sake of following the crowd, they chime in with dreams and visions and even tongues. This class of people is most despicable. I would not say more.

Thus, should we strike at those who seek charismatic gifts? By no means. Though within the charismatics there are those who follow blindly out of curiosity, there are also those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. And I believe there are others who love the Lord and have received God's grace. These are our brethren and

we love them. Unfortunately, they have landed on erroneous doctrines and dangerous phenomena by their bias for these strange experiences. Because we love them, it behoves us to point very frankly these portions of their errors. It is hoped that those believers who get entangled by these errors might take precaution, lest they fall into their rut.

I have another word of importance. There are not a few Christians and preachers today who speak bad of charismatism and attack those who seek the gifts, in a spirit of superiority. But under close examination they can little measure to those they criticise. On many an occasion, it is due to these critics that many have strayed into the paths of the charismatics. Though critics do not seek the gifts, in fact, they are void of (spiritual) life. They are Christians(?); they are preachers(?) The fact is they have never repented, nor trusted the Lord. When they first joined the Church they came with certain objectives, or simply joined blindly to become Christians. Their minds store up a little Bible knowledge. They become Church leaders, preachers and pastors, not to serve God, to save souls, but "to eat rice" and for vain glory, or for some other base objective. Because such people hold office in the Church the congregation does not receive proper nurture. They imbibe little of the spiritual food. Now when there comes a preacher who speaks out of some portion of Scripture zealously, these sheep that are on a starvation diet and have no energy or knowledge of discernment naturally vie with one another to take it in. I hear of how many Christians leave their Churches to join the charismatics when they come into a certain neighbourhood. So their pastor warn them from taking their poison. Their reply to the pastor is, "Pastor, though poison is bad, at least we have poison here. Where you are we don't even have poison! To eat poison is better than being starved to death?" "To quench the thirst with poisonous wine" (according to a Chinese proverb) no doubt is foolishness. While these people were dying of thirst, those who were responsible for water supply did

not have even a drop. Could these responsible ones face up to chide those drinking poisonous wine to quench their thirst? Let me ask whose sin is it when death comes on those who drink poisonous wine? Let me plead earnestly with these people not to criticise the charismatic seekers, for you have no qualification to criticise them. Moreover you criticise wrongfully. I urge you first to consider the Lord Jesus' teaching, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (*Matt. 7:3-5*). Repent now quickly and thoroughly of your sins and receive Christ sincerely into your heart. First receive the life, first be humbled and have a docile heart to receive instruction from the Bible by giving time to careful research. Then with a loyal heart to serve God, go and preach the Gospel, go feed the sheep with the Word of God. Only then can you have the capacity to correct the faults of others, to help others get out of their lost wanderings. Thus when you correct the faults of others you must first make careful study what their errors are. Never, never listen carelessly to hearsay and make false accusations. Such action is ignorance par excellence.

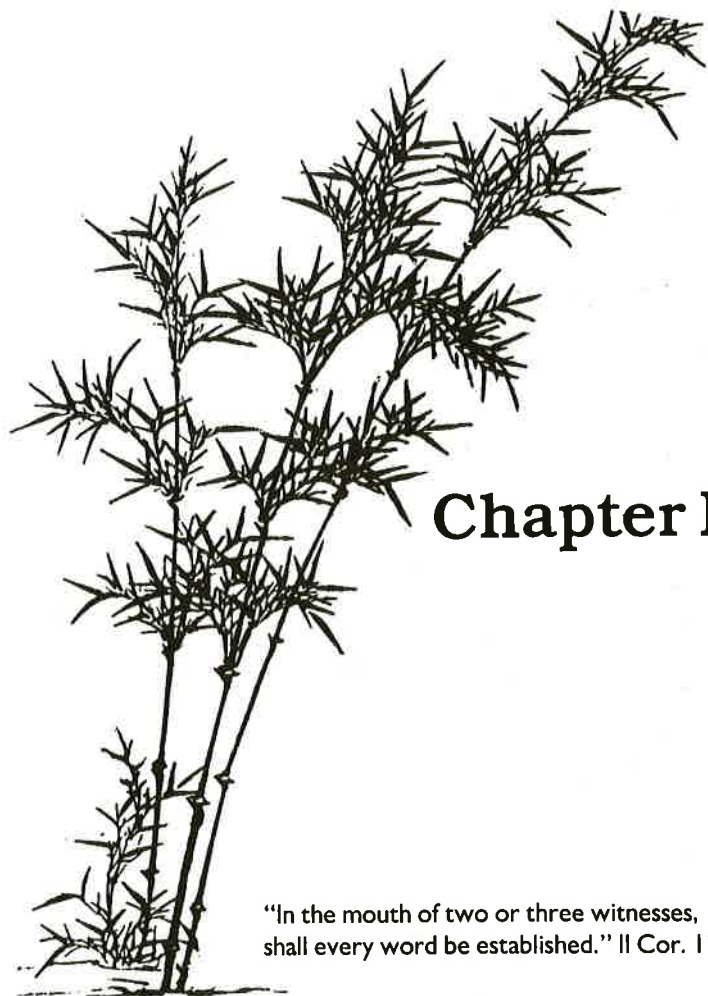
Conclusion

Finally, there is a big number of Christians who lack this most important thing. They lack the experience of repentance and salvation! They lack the fundamental faith, the life of Christ, the knowledge of the Truth, a fervent loving heart, the strength of the heavenlies. Many Christians have seen this lack and felt the need to seek them. But they have not found the True Way and thus fall

by the wayside. They land in many errors and dangers. If leaders of the Church, pastors and all consecrated workers clearly understand the meaning of the saving grace and reject all evil and unrighteousness, and offer themselves into God's hands for His use, and by receiving the heavenly gifts of wisdom and strength in the labour of God, preaching the true gospel and giving spiritual food to all who need it to fill up the needs of the needy, then there will not arise these various dangers.

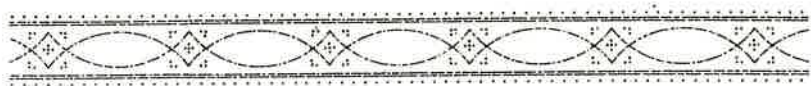
The Church today needs revival, a revival that answers fully to the Bible. But the greatest obstructions to revival are those who do not fully believe God's Word, nor are they fully repentant, nor are Church leaders and preachers fully faithful in the Lord's work. I would urge these to flee those kinds of erroneous doctrine and to repent quickly. Let them serve faithfully as they shepherd the flocks for God.





Chapter IV

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses,
shall every word be established." II Cor. 13: 1



FEBEC TEAM'S INTERVIEW WITH WANG MING TAO (*DEC. 1988*)

During the First Semester, July – November 1988, a course on five great men of the Chinese Church, titled “Five Stars of the Chinese Church,” was offered by the Principal to students of the Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore. The “Five Stars” are William Chalmers Burns (1815-1868), pioneer Scottish missionary of the English Presbyterian Mission; Jonathan Goforth, missionary of the Canadian Presbyterian Church (1859 – 1936); Ting Li Mei (1871 – 1936) known as the “Moody of China with One Thousand Souls a Month”; John Sung (1901 – 1944), China’s greatest revivalist; and Wang Ming Tao, China’s “Iron Witness” and living martyr.

One of the students was so inspired by this course of study on the “Five Stars” that he resolved to make a trip to China to interview Wang Ming Tao. Accordingly, he and another flew to Shanghai where the Wangs are located. The following is a report by the leader of the two-student team on their interview with the Wangs. This took place mid-December, 1988 in their Shanghai home:-

The Interview with the Wangs

During our conversation, Mrs Wang reflected a pure and sincere heart, though careful and incisive in speech. When I asked her if Mr Wang had written about his life the thirty-odd years after publication of his autobiography “These Fifty Years,” Mrs Wang replied, “No.” Lowering her voice she reiterated: “Not good to write,

not good to write about. . . . He had desired to write, and many people wanted to know about this part of his life. . . but now he cannot write."

Then she pointed out that by reading Mr Wang's writings during the first five years of the fifties, one could visualise clearly the imprisonment that followed with all its ramifications. These writings were mostly polemical and directed against the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. In two of his articles, viz., "Truth or Poison" and "We Because of the Faith," he valiantly pinpointed the unscripturalness of the TSPM. Mrs Wang said, "This was his ministry – 'earnestly contending for the Faith.' From these articles you can gather roughly what the situation at that time was."

At 4.00 p.m. Mr Wang got up from his siesta which was necessitated by two years of kidney troubles. His eyesight was greatly dimmed by cataract. He was about ninety percent blind and left with ten percent of his hearing. So he wore a powerful hearing-aid. He had lost practically all his teeth so he wore double dentures. Mrs Wang told us since her husband was almost totally blind and deaf, he was careful not to walk about. His chest seemed to be congested with phlegm so he coughed not a little. Although physically handicapped, he was full of spirit. His voice was strong and clear.

Mrs Wang truly is a wonderful helpmate. To help her husband understand our conversation she would sit close beside him and whisper into his ears what he missed. Many times Mrs Wang would reply on his behalf.

We asked Mr Wang his present opinion about the Charismatics because we had learnt from our "Five Stars of the Chinese Church" course and from "A Stone Made Smooth" (English translation of his autobiography "These Fifty Years") that he was influenced by Pentecostalism in his early years.

Mrs Wang replied, "The one who immersed Mr Wang was Mr Ju, a preacher of the Pentecostal Church in

Peking (Beijing). However, Mr Wang was not converted under Mr Ju. This Mr Ju stressed a great deal on tongues as evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit. After Mr Wang's baptism this Mr Ju began to teach him and his schoolmates in an inn how to seek the spiritual gifts. This he did until they all spoke in tongues, which brought Mr Wang into the fellowship of the Pentecostals.

"Now, Pentecostalism had not started until the close of the last century in America. It spread to Changsha in Hunan Province as early as 1905 and to Hinghwa, Fukien Province, 1909 with the outbreak of a great Pentecostal revival. After 1910 Pentecostal missionaries began to invade Shansi and Yunnan. Outside of the mainstream churches, Pentecostalism grew and multiplied greatly in power and influence, though in certain areas only. By 1930 this movement had penetrated not a few churches in Shantung."

"About one year after Mr Wang was affected by Charismatism (though he did not "formally" speak in tongues), he began to doubt the seeking to speak in tongues. He felt it was too simplistic and mechanical. Why did those who lived unclean lives also speak in tongues, and why had many devout ones, on the contrary, no such experience, he asked himself. Was the speaking of tongues the only criterion of Holy Spirit baptism? An article published in 1934, "The Charismatic Movement in the Light of the Bible" (now translated by Timothy Tow) hit the nail on the head. He pointed out its divergence from the teachings of the Bible."

The following is transcribed from a tape recording of our discussion on various subjects:

Q : What is your view on Charismatism today?

Mrs Wang : There are various shades of Christianity . . . He (Wang Ming Tao) had written an article, "The Charismatic Movement in the Light of the Bible."

Mr Wang : Are you asking about Singapore?

A : Yes. There are many Charismatic churches in Singapore and in western countries. They stress on tongues and baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Mrs Wang : Now, isn't that one in Korea a Charismatic?

A : Are you referring to Cho Yonggi?

Mrs Wang : Yes.

A : He is also a Charismatic My Principal would like to know Mr Wang's view on Charismatism today.

Mrs Wang : Haven't you read that article? That is still his view today.

Q : He takes the same stand as before?

Mrs Wang : Sure, the same. Because we have been shut away from the outside world, we do not know the actual situation with the Charismatics. But, we think it is more or less like what it was before. They stress on the outward They make a lot of noise in their meetings.

Q : So Mr Wang's view of the Charismatics remains the same as what he has written. (Mrs Wang asks Mr Wang: Is it? Is your view on the Charismatics the same as before?)

Mr Wang : (*emphatically*) Yes, as before!

Clarification on Billy Graham's Visit to China.

Billy Graham visited China for the first time, April 12 – 28, 1988. A western "Religious News Service" reports: "After three weeks' visit of China, he has taken a very optimistic attitude to the future of the Christian faith in China."

The special report by Edward E. Plowman in *National and International Religion Report*, May 9, 1988, on Billy Graham's visit is puerile and one-sided: Billy Graham told the hosting China Christian Council (CCC) and leaders of the Foreign Affairs Bureau that the objective of his visit on this occasion was to see the birthplace of his wife, to learn of China, to preach the Gospel, and to help build a bridge of friendship and understanding. . . . The report also underscores the freedom Billy Graham experienced preaching to several thousands in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanking and Canton (Guangzhou). He had also spoken to several hundred preachers and theological students. "As to many Protestant leaders, Billy Graham's visit sees a most cordial relationship between Church and Government since the Communist takeover in 1949."

China specialist Sydney Rittenberg who accompanied Billy Graham said to reporters: "Mr Graham has helped open that great door. This will open many small ones. This will improve the situation of Chinese Christians and other Christians. This is the greatest achievement of the visit." But they did not know that after he had left China, a number of brothers and sisters were arrested and imprisoned. Persecution is still the order of the day against loyal Christians.

Christianity Today, June 17, 1988, has a special report -: "Graham received nationwide coverage by Chinese television and the press, the first such attention given to an American preacher or any evangelist ever." In this report there is a paragraph that refers to Billy's private visit to Wang Ming Tao: "By [Wang's] reception of Billy Graham, the honoured guest of the Chinese Christian Council (CCC), the famed evangelist is now accepted by many leaders of the House-churches. Moreover, according to analysts, this makes the much-travelled evangelist a bridge between the CCC and the independent House-churches and Underground churches."

When we read this report we got the idea that Billy Graham's visit had achieved great things. In order to

ascertain the reliability of this report, we inquired of the Wang couple as follows:

Q : As to Billy Graham's recent visit, did you (Mr Wang) invite them to come?

(Mrs Wang shakes her head emphatically.)

Q : No?

Mr Wang breaks the silence: He wanted to see me, but I did not want to see him.

Q : Why?

Mr Wang : Because his visit seemed to be by invitation of the Three-Self Movement. So I was not willing to speak to him. But he came on his own one day!

Q : He came by himself?

Mr Wang : Mm (Emphatically).

Q : You didn't invite him?

Mrs Wang : No.

Mr Wang : I said I didn't want him to come. Because when I saw him I would have difficulty speaking: He was invited by the Three-Self Movement and I am anti-Three-Self. This would be a difficult situation. But suddenly he came one day, with a Chinese interpreter.

Q : Was it Philip Teng?

Mr Wang : Right. Philip Teng.

Q : It is rumoured overseas, and the rumour is spread by the Three-Self, that it was Wang Ming Tao who invited Billy Graham. (Both Mr and Mrs Wang shook their heads.) Is there such a thing?

Mrs Wang : Hitherto when guests call on us, we let them come. In this case they have given no prior notice. So when we heard he was coming we sent word to them not to come. And when again they said they were coming we sent word further to them not to come. Now he is working for the Lord and Mr Wang is

also a preacher. So, that's how they would get to see one another.

Q : And Mr Wang said this, "If he goes to Three-Self then, don't come here"?

Mrs Wang : No, no. From the beginning he would not want him to come Well, he understood what was meant, so he replied that he would come to us first. But he went to Beijing rather. He came to Shanghai after that.

Q : Is he invited by the Three-Self?

Mrs Wang : No, he was invited by the Government.

Q : It is said that he has come to be a bridge between Three-Self and the House Churches.

Mrs Wang : Ah that I don't know.

Q : So we do not support them. . . .?

Mrs Wang : That's right, that's right. We have been greatly inconvenienced in this matter. We had asked them not to come, once, twice and three times Those pastors, executives and chairmen and closest colleagues who stood with him on the same platform have been disloyal to the Lord we are not happy with these people.

Q : These are compromisers and apostates?

Mrs Wang : He (Billy Graham) said he did not compromise. . . . He had a difficult position because the American Government would also use him.

Q : He was used also by Communist-Marxists, and by the Roman Catholics?

Mrs Wang : Right, right.

Q : And he even blesses the Charismatics at certain meetings. He sent greetings and blessings to them. Billy Graham often compromises like this. He need not stand for the faith as he did before?

Mrs Wang : Ah Ah It is hard for a man to run the whole course. So when they came that time, he (Wang Ming Tao) gave him two Bible verses, *II Cor. 2:1,2*. At this Mrs Graham gave him (Wang Ming Tao) *Rom. 8:33* which says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." This led Mr Wang to present them *Rev. 2:10'* Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Finally, Mrs Wang asked me softly:

Mrs Wang : It is said Billy Graham is coming again next year?

A : Don't know. I've not heard.

Mrs Wang : I won't want him to come again.

A : When he comes he is used by others.

Mrs Wang : He wants to come. He would bring us trouble. Would he come to Shanghai (again), will he?

A : He would surely come.

Mrs Wang : That is to say He had said before and some Christians in our country had heard; had heard this word and not at all good: "Now, O.K! The whole Church is unified!" That word brought no joy to the hearer So I say he hasn't read all that is in our article, "We because of the faith" Probably he could not nor did anyone explain the meaning of the article to him. Other articles have been translated but not this one. If he knows the contents of this article, he would understand. But he hasn't understood even now."

From the conversation here Mr and Mrs Wang Ming Tao have categorically denied their having invited Billy Graham to their home. Wang Ming Tao holds firmly to Biblical Separation from unbelief.

Retrospection of the Imprisonment and Reason for His Release.

Mr Wang : I was imprisoned when our work in Beijing was at its height. I was taken in 1955 and kept for 23 years. I was arrested twice together with my wife. She was sentenced to 15 years rigorous imprisonment, and I was sentenced for life.

Mrs Wang : We got out in 1956 In 1956 he weakened With no alternative, he said, "I'll join!" But he could never do that. He was very strong inside, but his flesh was very weak. This was an impossible situation Afterwards, as he would not join up he went in.

Q : So you went in 1956.

Mrs Wang : No, No. All of us who were taken in 1956 were released. It was hoped he would join the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, so all were released, and even acquitted. But it turned out that he could not, he could not really join. His heart and his body were in tension. His heart was strong but his flesh was weak. So he did not put into practice. So when we entered again there were quite a number of us together.

Q : Could you relate your life experiences during the 30-odd years or the 23 years in gaol?

Mrs Wang : Well, it was weakness. From weakness he returned to strength. He was really scared! In 1958 we went in. It was not until five years later, i.e. 1963, that we were sentenced. At that time he was most miserable, most miserable, as if he lost all hope. He could never get out alive unless he was turned into ashes. Then in 1964, the words of *Micah* 7:7-9 came to his mind.

Mr Wang : "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." At this juncture I saw clearly I had sinned a great sin – I lied. I lied to say that TSPM was proper, but when I got out I could not join them. So we were arrested the second time. She was sentenced to fifteen years and I to life. Then did I realise this was meted to us by God, to punish me for my lying. So I went to deny all that I had stated before. I stated I did not break the law of the Land. I served 23 years entirely for the sake of the Faith. I refused to leave the gaol. The Prison Authorities telegraphed my son in Shanghai to get me out from Shansi. I said (heatedly), I won't leave prison because my case was not cleared up. I did no crime. I was arrested. I was sentenced. I was shut up 20-odd years by mistake. The Government must confess they had done me wrong. Otherwise I won't leave the prison.

. . . . One month and 14 days after, they used a stratagem to make me leave the prison premises. Once outside, I could not get in. That's it! Since I had no place to stay outside, nor could I find "rice to eat," I wrote a postcard to my son to come and take me to Shanghai. This is how I got out. I was not released. I was tricked to come out!

Q : Ah you were a tough nut

Mr Wang : They tried to make me deny my faith. I clung to my faith from beginning to end.

About their Present Livelihood

Q : Do you write at present?

Mrs Wang : He can't write.

Q : How does he prepare his sermons?

Mrs Wang : He prepares in his mind. That is God's special gift to him. When he preaches he need not use an outline. When he was young he similarly had nothing to guide him. You could never find out what his sermon preparation was. Usually he sits there to prepare and that's all.

Q : So he merely relies on his memory?

Mrs Wang : Yes, by memory. There's a Mr Chang who helps read the Bible. He still remembers many Bible chapters and verses. See his hands He cannot hold anything firmly. Neither can he eat by himself. He needs to be fed. He has feet that cannot walk. He has hands that cannot work. (laughter).

His Last Words

Q : What have you to say to us youngsters? (Mrs Wang laughs lustily)

Mr Wang : What? (He did not hear clearly).

Mrs Wang : (leaning to his side): He can recite / *Cor. 16:13*.

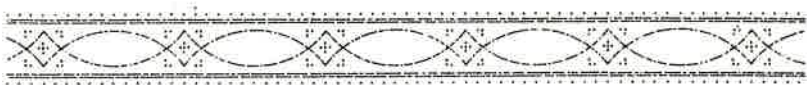
Mr Wang : "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Amen.





Epilogue

"And ye shall know the truth
and the truth shall make you free"
John 8: 32.



The Charismatic Wang Ming Tao had gone through and which he repudiated in the twenties and thirties (yea, even as he reiterates today) was mild compared with what is raging like a prairie fire today. If there was a need in his young days in China to withstand Charismaticism, there is a greater need today to resist this wild Christianity which has now spread throughout the world. According to missiologist David Barrett, editor of *The World Christian Encyclopaedia* (Oxford), the Charismatic Movement has tripled in the past ten years to total 277 million worldwide. Charismatics and Pentecostals account for 17 percent of the world's Christians. Third World Christians are rapidly joining the ranks of the Charismatics, including 29 million in China alone. "There are few parallels like this," Barrett said, "Twenty years ago, we would never dream of this happening." (The above are 1987 statistics).

Not only has Wang Ming Tao stood against the wild teachings and unbridled practices of Charismaticism, but also against Ecumenism, her twin sister. For speaking in tongues, etc., is no more a phenomenon confined to Protestant circles, but is a ball of fire that has leapt over into the Roman Catholic fold since 1967, and set it all ablaze. Today, there is a new bond that binds Protestants and Roman Catholics together more than anything else and, as we must reiterate, it is Charismaticism. This is one proof that tongues-speaking has come from a source anything but holy. "And it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (II Peter 2:22).

To bring Mr Wang Ming Tao's testimony and writing up to date may we append a message that was delivered to

the Second National Conference of the Indonesian Council of Christian Churches in Djakarta, November 1987.

What we want to point out further is the fact that the Charismatic leaders' stress on "signs and wonders" is condemned by our Lord: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (*Matt. 24:24*). In His admonition of doubting Thomas, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," (*John 20:29*) again we see the Charismatic emphasis on "signs and wonders" condemned.

Conversely, historic Christianity that stresses on faith, hope and love as power for Christian service without visible signs are commended. The Apostle Peter supports our Lord in respect of His Word to Thomas, "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (*1 Pet. 1:8*).

While Scripture categorically condemns what the Charismatic leaders are relying upon, such so-called manifestations of the Spirit as tongues-speaking, we point out from recent Church history the total absence of tongues in the revivals of Wesley and Whitefield (18th century) and of Gipsy Smith, D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday in the 19th — 20th century. For the 20th century, insofar as China is concerned, there are the revivals of Dora Yu, Ting Li Mei (China's Moody), Jonathan Goforth (Canadian Presbyterian missionary to North China) and last but not the least John Sung. In the case of John Sung, he even rebuked the tongue-speakers, challenging those who praised the Lord with unintelligible babblings while never having repented from their sins to be due to an unholy spirit.

After long years of prayerful observation, our conclusion in the light of both Scripture and Church history, is that Charismatism is a *Counterfeit Holy Spirit Movement*.

Jesus says, "By the fruit ye shall know the tree" (Matt. 7: 18–20). The colossal Television ministry of those fallen charismatic giants because of money and sex is condemned in itself. Micah says, "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us" (Micah 3: 11). Jeremiah says, "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies (embezzling public funds in one's office is walking in lies): they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah" (Jer. 23: 14).

"Money, sex, pride, these three, are a preacher's greatest temptations," says Wang Ming Tao (now going on to 90). We fundamentalist preachers are also becoming false prophets when we indulge in them! So let us learn a grave lesson from those fallen giants of the TV screen.

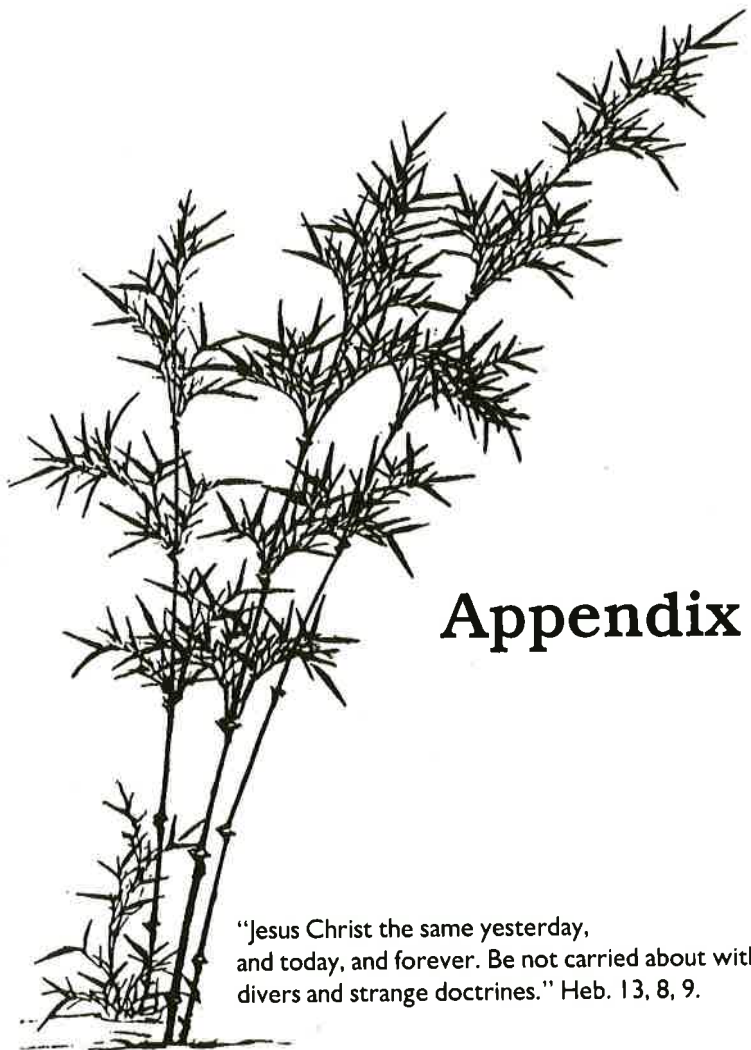
Neither let us fall into the temptation of bigness. Is bigness the criterion of success in our thinking? Isn't Goliath big? How come he fell by one smooth stone from David's sling? To say we have big numbers (which Wang Ming Tao abhors) is also a snare. This we say that we may be fair to others as well as to ourselves. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4: 6).

*But when he, the Spirit of truth is come,
He will guide you into all truth:
For He shall not speak of himself;
But whatsoever he shall hear
That shall he speak:
And he will show you things to come.*

*He shall glorify Me:
For he shall receive of Mine,
And shall show it unto you.*

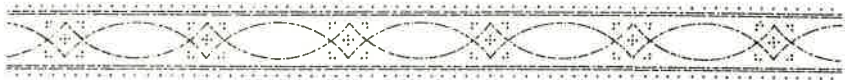
John 16: 13,14





Appendix

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday,
and today, and forever. Be not carried about with
divers and strange doctrines." Heb. 13, 8, 9.



THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR **(With special focus on the Charismatic Movement)**

by Rev. Timothy Tow

(Message delivered at the Second National
Conference of the Indonesian Council of Christian
Churches, Jakarta, Nov. 26, 1987)

Introduction

The text of my message is found in *1 John 4:1*: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." As the Apostle John warns of false spirits and false prophets, more so does our Lord the same, yea, even false Christs "shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (*Matt. 24:24*). Peter adds with "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (*II Peter 2:1*), while Paul rounds up the list with false apostles (*II Cor. 11:13*), false brethren (*11:26*) and false witnesses (*I Cor. 15:15*).

Furthermore, our Lord likens these agents of falsehood in the parable of the Good Shepherd to thieves and robbers, strangers, hirelings and wolves. But His sheep will not follow them. The sheep with keen discernment between the Master's voice and the voice of a stranger will keep out of harm's way. By corollary, the Apostle John concludes, "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby

know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (*1 John 4:6*). Hereby is the test: if you say Amen to the preaching of the Truth you have the Spirit of Truth. If you reject the preaching of the Truth, you have the Spirit of Error!

The Spirit of Error

Now, Jesus says He is the Truth (*John 14:6*). If anyone attacks His Person, like the Docetists in John's day denying His humanity, he is the tool of the Spirit of Error. When Arius, forerunner of today's Jehovah's Witnesses, in the fourth century denied the full Deity of Christ, he was also used by the Spirit of Error. Throughout the long centuries, the Spirit of Error has made the salvation of a man's soul not by the sole grace of God, but by the complicated system of works by Mary, martyrs and saints, etc., etc. Of more recent history there have arisen the modernists and liberals who reject His infallible, inerrant Word, with the latest so-called Neo-Evangelical scholarship that hypocritically speaks of a "limited inerrancy." It is the Spirit of Error that counters the inerrancy of the Bible, yea, even the living Word who is Jesus Christ. But we of the International Council of Christian Churches believe the Word to be infallible and inerrant to the jot and tittle, and hereby reaffirm our faith on this doctrine of doctrines.

The Spirit of Truth

While Jesus is the Truth, the Spirit of Truth is another Comforter whom the Lord, before His departure, promised to send to His Church (*John 14:16*). The Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity (*Matt. 28:19*). He proceeds from the Father (*John 15:26*).

He manifested Himself in power at Pentecost by giving utterance in many languages to the Apostles in order to expedite the Great Commission of the ascended Lord (Acts 2). He is sent to indwell believers and to teach and guide the Church into all truth (*John 14: 17; 16: 13*). The mark of the Spirit of Truth is that He will not speak of Himself, but rather testify of the Son. He shall glorify the Son, for He shall receive of the Son and show it to us (*John 16: 13,14*). The Holy Spirit, being holy, "will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (*John 16: 8*).

The Holy Spirit does not receive our prayers as the Father and the Son. His function rather is to make "intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (*Rom. 8: 27*). As He is sent from the Father by the Son (*John 15: 26*), He is also called the Spirit of Christ (*Rom. 8: 9*).

Pentecostalism a New Phenomenon since 1901

In the light of what we have briefly studied of the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error, and of the various manifestations of the latter in the course of Church history, it is our purpose at this Second Conference of the Indonesian Council of Christian Churches to examine a new phenomenon that has arisen in the Christian Church since the beginning of this century. Whereas in the centuries earlier the Spirit of Error has attacked the Person, Work and Word of Christ, now in the last days, the attack is directed, ironically, against the Spirit of Christ in the name of the Holy Spirit. This is the greatest mischief perpetrated by the Spirit of Error, yea, even Satan himself.

Starting out as Pentecostalism, this seemingly movement of the Spirit has developed into a New-

Pentecostalism which is now known as the Charismatic Movement. Of its beginning, the New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (1978) says, "A number of fundamentalist Protestant sects that emphasise Spirit baptism as an experience different from conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues (*Acts 2: 1-13*) [were the beginnings of Pentecostalism]. They also teach the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by conversion and revival, instantaneous sanctification, divine healing; and claim to be a restoration of original Christianity. Early Pentecostal meetings were characterised by outbursts of ecstatic enthusiasm featuring healings, speaking in tongues and motoric movements.

"Pentecostalism began as an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement. In 1901 a Bible School called Bethel College was started at Topeka, Kansas, by Charles F. Parkam, who using no textbook but the Bible, drilled his students in Spirit Baptism teaching

"One of the converts, William J. Seymour, brought the teaching to Los Angeles in 1906 where he founded the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street. Seymour, a black with only one eye, was described by one who attended his mission as being meek, plain spoken and no orator,' in short, not a very charismatic personality. Despite his unimpressive appearance, the results of the Azusa revival attracted national attention

...

"Pentecostalism became an international movement early in its history"

"Recent developments have excited a lively interest in Pentecostalism. Its impressive growth compared to the decline in the major Protestant churches has caused concern in many circles. The fact that higher social classes are being attracted to its teachings—coupled with the building of attractive modern Church buildings, accredited colleges (such as Oral Roberts University), orphanages and other institutions — has also brought increasing public attention. In the post-World War II

period a spate of new 'independent' Pentecostal groups has appeared, including the New Order of the Latter Rain, Wings of Healing, the World Church, the Gospel Assemblies, and the Full Gospel Fellowship of Ministers and Churches, International. In addition to these, practically every major denomination, including the Episcopal, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches, now has its own charismatic element"

Charismatics and Roman Catholicism since 1967

According to *The World Christian Encyclopaedia* (1982 edition), as of 1980 there were 100 million people in the world who claimed to belong to the charismatic-pentecostal movement (*In the Latter Days*, Vinson Synan, Servant Books, 1984, p. 18). What is more significant is that since 1967 the charismatic experiences have leapt across the fence of Protestantism into the Roman Catholic fold. What began as pockets of tongues-speaking has now spread like a prairie fire, as we will see later in this discussion.

In the early 1970s, the Jesus People Movement, a young people's movement, swept America and parts of Europe. It was about this time that Christian rock music began to be popular among these Charismatic young people. This new Contemporary Christian Music, as it came to be called, has spread to mainstream Christianity.

From Charismatism to Ecumenism

As to the spread of Charismatic practices into the Roman Catholic Church, its strength can be seen in such meetings. In 1975, 10,000 Catholic Charismatics gathered

at the Vatican in Rome and received blessing from the Pope. In 1977 a Charismatic meeting of 45,000 was held in Kansas City and its chairman was a Roman Catholic. At the most recent North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelisation July 22 – 26, 1987, at New Orleans at which 35,000 to 40,000 attended, 50 percent of the conferees were Roman Catholics. Thus, the blossoming of the Charismatic Movement into a full-fledged Ecumenical Movement with an ever-increasing Roman Catholic population has taken place in a matter of two decades. Furthermore David W. Cloud, who was an eye-witness of the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit, says "the Charismatic movement is sweeping Asia and forms one of the most serious challenges to our missionary work and that of other fundamental preachers."

Now, while it is admitted that not a few members, lay people, in the Charismatic movement are born again Christians that love the Lord, it is the leaders of the movement whose doctrines and practices energised by the Spirit of Error that must be refuted. In making our refutation, we would borrow in part the Statement on the Charismatic Movement just issued by the Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, as follows:-

"We see this Charismatic Movement as a counterfeit of the work of the Holy Spirit, being in essence Satan's confidence trick and end-time deception.

"Everywhere denominational distinctives are being dismantled and 'Christians' of every sort, Protestant and Roman Catholic, evangelical and liberal, believers and unbelievers, are drawn together in ecumenical fellowship—all in the name of the Holy Spirit."

"We see in the Charismatic Movement an insidious force aiding the ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT which is fast moving toward the formation of OIKOUMENE or ONE WORLD, Satan's counterfeit of 'the Kingdom of God.'"

A movement that brings Protestantism which was liberated from the darkness of Roman Catholicism through Luther in the 16th Century now back to Rome is undeniably a movement of the Spirit of Error.

The Error of Tongues-speaking

Now this Charismatic Movement makes Tongues-speaking the evidence of Spirit baptism which is required of all Christians. And tongues-speaking is the chief phenomenon that is stressed in the coming together of Protestants and Catholics. We affirm there cannot be such a gathering of those who have the truth of salvation and those who are bound by a false tradition, but by the insidious working of the Spirit of Error.

And inasmuch as the Word of Truth declares that tongues shall cease (*1 Cor. 13:8*) and historical evidences during a thousand and nine hundred years of Church history show that Biblical tongues have ceased, it behoves us to conclude that tongues today are not from the Spirit of Truth but from the Spirit of Error. That Biblical tongues have ceased is in full accord with the great Confessions of Faith of the Protestant Churches, and with the position of the Reformers. Charismatic tongues-speaking is not of the Spirit of Truth but from the Spirit of Error because it is often artificially induced through human agents, being unintelligible, jabbering utterances bringing confusion. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace . . ." (*1 Cor. 14:33*). Even if, for argument's sake, tongues have not ceased, these tongue-rattling ones are silenced by Paul's advice to the confused Corinthian Church: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (*1 Cor. 14:19*). To speak with understanding is to be energised by the Spirit of Truth, to

speaking in a tongue of 10,000 syllables of repetitious unintelligibility is to be energised by the Spirit of Error. I have a new Christian friend who has been sucked into the tongues-speaking section of the Anglican Church. He tells of his taking lessons in tongues-speaking under the tutelage of his pastor. On request he jabbered away in a repetitious monotony of "ecstatic utterance." Several young people from the same church, now delivered, have similar "ecstatic utterances," all learnt from their pastor. Whether this is from the Spirit of Truth or the Spirit of Error, judge ye!

The Error of Divine-Healing

The next phenomenon stressed by the Charismatics is divine healing, miracle-working showing off with "great signs and wonders." Charismatic leaders like German-born Reinhard Bonnke, who has visited Singapore on two occasions, have made wild claims of healing, "causing the blind to see and the lame to walk." To make such claim is not of the Spirit of Truth but of the Spirit of Error. Another young Charismatic star of Singapore, Ronny Tan by name, goes even to the extent of holding "miracle rallies," also "making the blind to see and the lame to walk."

Such bombastic display of pseudo-miracle power cannot come but by the Spirit of Error; inasmuch as our Lord and the Apostle had healed, but never by a miracle rally of the sick. If such faith-healers claim to be followers of the apostolic pattern, let it be known that "signs and wonders" were only those of an apostle (*Acts 5:12*). These were given the apostles to enable them to establish the infant Church (*Mk. 16:20*). When the Church was established, the working of signs and wonders through healing was no longer needed. It therefore passed with the age of the Apostles, though there is a healing ministry by elders according to *James 5*.

We affirm that these Charismatic faith-healers, apart from snatching the glory of Christ for their own megalomaniacal aspirations, are deceivers, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. This blindness to those who claim to open the eyes of the blind is ludicrously published in Bonnke's own after-campaign report, wherein a young lady "testified" how after the Evangelist's prayer, one of her eyes not very successfully operated on had now received a clearer vision. Nevertheless the same young lady also stated she would go for an operation of the other eye. Now, if the faith-healer was of the Spirit of Truth, he should have healed both eyes. Since he did not, he was of the Spirit of Error. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (*Deut. 18:22*).

At the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit, Bonnke boasted how he scared a white salesman to repentance in a music shop in Africa with Jesus coming out of his eyes. This is what our Lord meant when he warned of "false Christs, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (*Matt. 24:24*).

The Error of Prophecy

Let it suffice us to conclude with a third and last analysis on charismatic prophesying. With the closing of the New Testament canon, God's revelation to man was complete. And the Apostle Jude has said, "The faith was once [and for all] delivered unto the saints." No preacher is to add any word as directly received from God to the Sacred Scriptures, nor to take any away from it. But the stress on visions and prophecies by Charismatic leaders has gone so haywire that it encourages some dauntless charismatic suitor to tell the young lady with whom his

heart is inflamed, "The Lord told me last night that I should marry you today." I would advise the harassed young lady: "But the Lord did not tell me, neither last night, nor this morning."

David W. Cloud, who attended the North American congress on the Holy Spirit July this year, nauseated to listen to dozens of prophecies, so-called direct revelations from God, like the prophecies received by Old Testament prophets. The discerning Fundamentalist reporter declared that his own feelings were best described by a man named Neil Babcox, one who served as a pastor of a Pentecostal church in Illinois, until his leaving the Charismatic Movement. Consider the testimony of this man who once gave such prophecies himself and who believed in such things:

"Prophetic messages were quite common at our church. In fact, whenever we assembled to worship, spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, were foremost in our minds. Even though we followed no prescribed liturgy, there was an unwritten order of worship that always included the opportunity for one to prophesy according to the proportion of his faith" (*Romans 12:6*)

"Our prophecies seldom if ever predicted the future. Instead they took the form of fervent exhortations or simple words of comfort. Generally they consisted of various biblical phrases and fragments pieced together like a patch-work quilt. Often they focused upon such theme as the imminent return of Christ or God's forgiving love. Most of the time the prophecies were spoken in the first person as if God Himself were addressing us, but occasionally the phrase 'thus saith the Lord' was used even as it was by the prophets of the Bible"

"There was something distinctly romantic about the notion of prophesying. There you are, standing in succession to the prophets of the Bible. Samuel and

Elijah saw your day coming and were glad. True, your lips are unclean, but they have been touched by a live coal from off the altar. Like Isaiah, you have heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And you responded, 'Here am I. Send me!'

"Yes, it was all very romantic. But gradually, what had started as a romantic venture, an idealistic quest for spiritual gifts, was slowly, imperceptibly changing. Into what, I wasn't sure. **All I knew was that the excitement and romance of prophesying was turning into an uneasy sense that the prophecies I heard, including my own, were hardly worthy of the name. The idea that they were the words of the living God was beginning to seem painfully ludicrous.** Would the romance now become a comedy of errors, or a tragedy, perhaps? At any rate, one thing was certain: this burden of the prophets was becoming a crushing, onerous weight. And I couldn't help wondering if the weight which I was carrying was not the burden of the Lord at all, but some foreign yoke of bondage."

"In my case there were four simple words that played a decisive role in changing my heart: Thus saith the Lord. To me, these were most unsettling words. And the more I comprehended their meaning, the more I understood what the prophets meant when they spoke them and what the Holy Spirit meant when He inspired them, the more unsettling they became"

"Thus saith the Lord." What abuses I had seen of those words! What bitter fruit I had seen born by men and women speaking these words! I have seen people married on the basis of guidance received from personal prophecies only to be divorced a week later because of a terrible scandal. Many lives have been harmed by such prophetic guidance. What actions, what conduct, have been countenanced by a 'thus saith the Lord'"

"The moment of truth came when I heard a prophecy spoken at a charismatic church I was visiting. I was sitting in the church trying to worship God while dreading the

approach of that obligatory moment of silence which signalled that a prophecy was about to be spoken. The silence came, and soon it was broken by a bold and commanding 'Thus saith the Lord!'

"Those words triggered an immediate reaction. Conviction, like water rising against a dam, began to fill my soul. 'Listen my people . . .' [the prophecy commenced]. Until finally, the dam burst: '**This is not my God,**' I cried **within my heart. 'This is not my Lord!'** (*A Search For Charismatic Reality—One Man's Pilgrimage*, pp. 49-59; Neil Babcox, formerly pastor of the Pentecostalist Word of Life Church in Carbondale, Illinois).

"What Babcox cried out in his heart that night about the Charismatic prophecies, reflect exactly the cry of my own heart [reiterated David W. Cloud] as I heard the blasphemous prophecies in New Orleans. This is NOT my Lord and my God speaking! It is NOT the Holy Spirit, but a false spirit. These are hard words to those caught up in this movement, but this is a discernment based on the teaching of the Word of God and the fruit of the Charismatic movement, and should not be taken lightly by anyone."

The Spirit of Truth who would guide us into all truth by His Holy Word the Bible has no part in all the above extra-Biblical prophecy which cannot come but by inspiration of the Spirit of Error. Nor does the Spirit of Truth have any part in miracle rallies of divine healing and in today's tongues-speaking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us hear the prophecy of the Apostle John again: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of

God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error" (*1 Jn. 4:1,6*).

Further, let us conclude with the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord" (*Jeremiah 23:31,32*).

Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (*Matthew 7:15-23*).

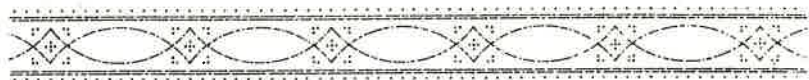


Romanism and Pentecostalism Compared

The most active ecumenical movement today is that which is drawing Rome and the pentecostal-charismatic movement together. This is not really all that shocking. Despite external differences, they maintain many similarities:

1. Both deny Sola Scriptura by recognizing extra-biblical revelation.
2. Both look to some human religious guide; the Romanists to their pope as alleged "vicar of Christ," while pentecostals search frantically for some pastor with "the anointing of the Lord."
3. Both seek pagentry and showmanship in their worship.
4. Both show a fondness for religious trinkets and gadgetry.
5. Both look to "testimonies" from "saints" in order to induce spirituality.
6. Both have a long history of clergy misbehaviour and scandal.
7. Both deny the Biblical doctrine of man's depraved, sin-bound will.
8. Both by their Pelagianism place great emphasis on man's role in their eternal salvation.
9. Both are totally, intrinsically, and irreconcilably opposed to the fundamental principles of the Protestant Reformation.

Christian News, June 13, 1988



PROVERBS FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

By Wang Ming Tao

Fearing God is the foundation of life.
Loving neighbour is the way of living.

Be very sincere in dealing with others.
Be very severe in regulating yourself.

When in poverty do not cringe.
When in prosperity be not proud.

Never harbour a spirit of jealousy.
Rejoice with them in prosperity.

Rejoice not at the misfortunes of others.
When others are down share their troubles.

Don't overtake your neighbour where profit lies ahead.
Don't step backwards in the face of common danger.

When you're indebted to others be ready to confess
and redress.
When others are indebted to you, be indulgent and
forgiving.

When doing good to others regard that your duty.
When others do good to you, recognise it is by their
grace.

Let not any wealth that goes through you,
whether big or small, soil your palm.

In making friends with members of either sex,
be proper and open.

Do not promise easily.
Having promised, be diligent to fulfil.

Do not borrow at random.
Pay back quickly any loan.

Respect your elders, and elders of others.
Love your children and children of another.

Let the strong points in others become a pattern to you.
Let the weak points in others be a warning.

Control your temper: be not easily provoked to anger.
Guard your lips; and be slow to speak.

Do not spread any unfounded report.
Do not do anything that fears exposure.

Do not covet the wealth you see in others.
Do not look on with folded arms when others fall.

Bow not nor fawn before people.
Speak no evil behind others' backs.

Be diligent and loyal in serving others.
True and straightforward in your transactions.

Hate evil like snakes and scorpions.
Love neighbours like rare treasures.

Rather lose money than trustworthiness.
Rather lose your life than self-control.

Do not cover up your mistakes.
Nor boast at all of your virtues.

Be always courteous in speech and conduct.
Be always neat and tidy in apparel.

Do not provoke others to hate you,
Nor speak words that irk your hearers.

Absolutely no smoking, no drinking, no gambling.
Taboo to all seductive make-up.

Think always for the good of others.
Wherever you go seek God's glory.



SPIRITUAL LIFE THERMOMETER *by Wang Ming-Tao*

HEALTHY SPIRITUAL LIFE

Fervent in prayer
Bible-reading tasteful
Fully trusting
Loving God more than everything else
Resisting and hating sin
Giving God the glory in all things
Fully at peace
Giving thanks in all
Always happy and singing
Peaceful and patient in trouble
Much consideration of others
Seeking God's pleasure in all things
Yearning for spiritual things in the heart
Speaking words that edify others
Happy to witness for Christ
Cheerful to give to the Lord's work
Rejoicing in other's good success
A helping hand to those in trouble
Willing to forgive others
Character first
Happy to keep close to devout Christians
Happy to hear faithful admonition
Eagerly hoping for the Lord's return



Lethargic in prayer
Bible-reading insipid
Anxious and doubting
Loving worldly things more than the Lord
Compromising with sin
Seeking self-glory in everything
Much worrying
Much murmuring
Always sad and sighing
Easily provoked to anger
Much consideration of self
Seeking men's pleasure in all things
Coveting earthly things in the heart
Speaking words that criticize others
No power to witness
Stingy and unwilling to give
Jealous of other's good success
Nonchalant at others' misfortune
Not willing to forgive others
Clothing first
Happy in the company of worldly friends
Happy to hear words of flattery
No thought of things touching the Lord's return

UNHEALTHY SPIRITUAL LIFE



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What Others Say of Wang Ming Tao

In "Three of China's Mighty Men" by Leslie Lyall, wherein the author recounts the exploits of Yang Shao-T'ang, Watchman Nee and Wang Ming Tao, he concludes:

"Like David's three chief mighty men, each of 'China's Mighty Men' excelled in his own way. But in strength and nobility of character and in the extent and constructiveness of the influence which he exercised, the 'Man of Iron' (Wang Ming Tao) must be reckoned as 'chief among the three'."

Arthur Reynolds, translator of Wang Ming Tao's Autobiography and messages in Spiritual Food Quarterly says, "Certainly not all readers would find themselves in agreement with all of Mr Wang's policies. But surely, no one can doubt that here is a man of God, with the unction of the Holy Spirit, who stands out not only among the outstanding Christian leaders of China, but also among the outstanding leaders of the world."

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