

Hebron Messenger

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January 12, 2003

NO. 1

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY OR: ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

"As the body is one...so also is Christ" (1Cor.12: 12).

"By One Spirit are we all baptized (plunged) into One Body" (1Cor.12: 13).

"The church...His Body, -the fullness (completing) of Him" (Eph.1: 22,23).

"The fellowship of The MYSTERY"(Eph.3: 9AV).

In the above verses, we are confronted with what the New Testament calls God's Mystery; -a "secret" previously hidden but now revealed (See Eph.3: 3-6). In eternity past, God planned that His SON become incarnate and then extended into a corporate form-Saviour and saints ONE ORGANISM TOGETHER in the power and splendour of His resurrection; -a mystery indeed, -beyond all comprehension.

In what follows in these pages, we shall have that Great Mystery constantly before us, but it is particularly on our hearts to say something about the accompanying horrors of man-made DIVISIONS. We ask for our readers' patience as we touch upon the negative, -but such is necessary if we are to enjoy fully the glorious positive. Let us first consider:

1. THE RELENTLESS WARFARE AGAINSTCHRISTIAN UNITY

This, of course, is a tremendous subject, one which we shall not try to deal with in any detail, our main concern now being with some recent subtle forms of that warfare. If God has a plan (or a "secret") such as we referred to, above!-we may be sure it will be bitterly opposed by God's enemy. Thus, while we read with great joy of those early wonderful days of the church's history, when "all that believed were together", and when "they continued with one accord" -(see Acts 2:42-46), it is not surprising that, soon after, we also read, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because..."(Acts 6:1). That, of course, was just according to pattern; -Satan hates any heaven-made unity! Ever since then, the same battle has gone on, and, today, new Christian converts are often confused to know "which KIND of Christianity" they should "join" ! -and they tell us the various factions, persuasions, denominations, and groupings they have heard of. As I said, we shall not now go into the sad details, but most will be well aware of the tragic situation, -a veritable fragmentation of God's ONE church. (Even any sincere attempt to recover lost ground becomes "suspect" itself, and is often decried as "just another splinter group". In such cases, we can thank God that He is well able to discern the true governing motive, and to allot His mercies accordingly). Indeed, indeed, -what a battle for UNITY!

We earlier mentioned that there has arisen in recent times, a particular and very subtle form of division about which we feel we should say something. We refer to "gaps "that are appearing, -and being widely accepted, -between older Christians and younger ones. While such Christians have been brought together by the Lord into the same local church, as far as practical and loving fellowship is concerned, -it is virtually non-existent. Instead, we find a distinct "grouping up", -a separating, -a division, -a "rift"; -something that is bringing great spiritual loss to all concerned.

Let me say immediately, that we are not referring here to normal and understandable (and right) "distinguishing". Different age -groups will (hopefully) be present in any local church, with appropriate

provisions being made according to the needs. When such is really present and operating, we can only praise the Lord, -and we do! But something more than that is now being accepted, and is becoming fairly well established. We hear of "Young Peoples' Churches" existing alongside the normal gathering. The gaps are growing, and the normal inter -flow of Christian Fellowship is being limited, -to say the least. It may begin with "Children's Church", -perhaps just another term for "Sunday School", but beware; the enemy is subtle, and very clever. The battle of Genesis three is still going on!

This is all related, of course, to a world trend, where everything that is "old", (say. twenty years, -or ten!), is "out"! In most of its affairs, the whole, world is now saying, "We want the NEW" (-itself,-basically, just another mimicry (unconsciously) of God's own language and determination, -all things "new" IN CHRIST!).

The "new generation", in fact, now seems to have its own vocabulary, -often quite confusing to the non -initiated, and, in that way, an inconsiderate offence, when used in a varied company, such as the church. And there are similar demands for a "new" kind of music, and a "new" art -form! All these we say, are accepted world trends; something that cannot be avoided, -and perhaps, of an inevitable evolution of the species, -or its "devolution"!

Be all that as it may, the church, and the churches, must always beware of anything that tends to bring division or separation. Amongst those who are called to live as undivided and indivisible members of the One Body of Christ. Variety, -yes, but variance, NEVER! Diversity, - yes. but "NO DIVISIONS amongst you" (1 Cor.1:10). We cannot be too careful, or too watchful, regarding 19oming "gaps" appearing amongst God's people.

I often think well of the great loss that has come to "our own contemporary generation", in the realm of Christian literature for instance, and because we have succumbed to pressures to "cut off" from anything that is, they say, "old". In past centuries, God has anointed gifted Bible teachers, whose choice ministry has been mercifully preserved through precious printed books. We think of men like Martin Luther, John Bunyan, C.H. Spurgeon, F.B. Meyer and others, who have left with us, veritable gold -mines of spiritual truth. Some of them of course, may have used "forbidden" words like "thee" or "thou", but the food they have to offer is incomparable. But less and less of it is being enjoyed by today's believers, because of a prevailing antipathy, -or bias against anything from the past (Thank God for the exceptions, -and they are not few, -perhaps even growing in number; -younger brethren who because of being spiritually hungry for so long, have jumped back over the wall, and are now being greatly enlightened, and deeply satisfied, with "earlier servings" of -heavenly food so much so, that some feel themselves compelled to republish such priceless treasures). But how sad to think of the great losses already sustained by so many of our brethren! Thank God, He has His own way of making good the damage! Summing up, let us say that one generation of Christians must not allow itself to be isolated (in heart and spirit) from other generations of the same. And, most certainly, no single generation should accept "gaps" within itself, because of ever -changing "fashions" or powerful culture -trends. With all regenerated people WE ARE "One Body", and we must ever cultivate the art of "keeping the Unity of the Spirit" in every way possible. This we shall do if we but "cleave unto THE LORD", and do so "with purpose of heart" (Acts11: 23). Barnabas was the good brother who gave us that advice, and he knew that those who "cleave to the Lord" in that way, will inevitably find themselves cleaving to ALL Christ's members, whatever generation, and whatever "age -group". "All are yours" (1Cor.3: 22). (We know there are difficulties here, but those with open minds and hearts will surely get the practical point we have in view). We might mention that rich word of Paul to the Colossians, assuring us that when we HOLDFAST to our (mutual) Head, we shall find nourishment from Him being ministered to us ALL, and we shall all "increase with the increase of God" (Col.2: 19; -also Eph.4: 15, 16). Blessed "increase" indeed!

(To be contd.)

C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron
Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad -500 020,
A.P. India.
Telephone No: 7613066

December 24, 2002

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who is the same, Whose years shall not fail, even He Who is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens. May we be led on safely and steadily in His prepared paths of grace and goodness, under the all wise government of that Throne, from the beginning of 2003, as we seek to honour, love and serve Him (Heb.1: 12, 13; Heb.8: 1; Eph.2: 10; Jude 24,25).

As we are on the threshold of the New Year 2003, we should remind ourselves of the exhortation, "Looking unto Jesus "(Heb.12:2). "...let us run with patience the race that is set before us..."(v.1). Looking unto Jesus means to lay hold upon His precious promises with faith, believing on Him Who hath said, "...all things are possible to him that believeth" the first promise in the Motto Cards (Mark 9:23). "...for he that cometh to God must believe that HE IS, and that HE IS a REWARDER of them that diligently seek him" (Heb.11 :6).

This race, in the path of faith, is no new thing compared to the witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 11. It is the history of men and women who trod a path in which there were difficulties and dangers of every kind, and who in different ways gave up the world as those who "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb.11 :16), for in the words of Heb.3:1, they were "partakers of the heavenly calling...". They accepted strangership, reproach, suffering and death in this world, because they "looked for a better country". All this is brought out as an encouragement to the Hebrew believers then, and to us too. It is as much as to say, to them as well as to us in this age of grace, "You see, you are on the right road, and now go on".

When you are sure you are on the right road, the more difficulties there are in it, the more anxious you are to shorten the journey. So you RUN. The Spirit of God calls upon us to, "RUN with ENDURANCE the race that is set before us". It has often been said that the first question with a soul is, Heaven or Hell. John Bunyan's story of the pilgrim is portrayed as running to the wicket gate, with his fingers in his ears, lest any voice should persuade him to turn back. It was heaven or hell with him -his eternal weal or woe was at stake. We might say that some of us did really run fast at that stage of our experience. Continuing the story, further on in his journey the pilgrim comes to the hill DIFFICULTY and found an arbors, settled down and went to sleep. Thus the second question with the soul is, HEAVEN or EARTH. Many are glad to escape hell, but are not at all anxious to get away from the earth. They settle down and go to sleep instead of running.

This race is not as some suppose, a race of life, but a moral journey from earth to heaven. As such we turn our faces to heaven, wanting to get morally away from the earth and nearer to heaven. The first indication that one has entered upon this race is the discovery that certain things are hindrances to us; we begin to feel WEIGHTS. Some believers do not seem to have any WEIGHTS. You never see them laying anything aside. The fact is that they have never made a start in the race. A man who is sitting still might have a heavy weight in his pocket, without being conscious of it, but if he began to run he would soon feel it and want to lay it aside. The longer and faster you run, the more sensitive you become to

WEIGHTS.

There is a close affinity between "weights" and "sin", but there are things, which we could hardly speak of as "sin", which may be serious "weights". For example, we cannot say that to be on friendly terms with half-hearted or worldly believers is sin, but it might become a heavy weight to anyone who really wants to get on. Even companionship with undecided and half-hearted Christians is as spiritually injurious as friendship with unconverted people. Many believers have discovered that tobacco and such habits, literature, newspaper and T.V. screen are weights which are downward and earthward.

An earthly system of religion is a great "weight". Though Judaism had all the sanction of a divine origin, and the splendour of an imposing ritual, sacrifices and ceremonies, yet for those who turned to Christ from such a background, all this was a weight to be laid aside. Christianity in many lands has been perverted into a modified kind of Judaism and people are held or hindered by religious things on earth rather than running the race to heaven. May the Lord help us all to keep our hearts from the influence of religious things on earth. God helping we shall continue our thoughts on this "race of faith".

The saints, servants, elders and helpers of the church at EI-Shaddai, Kalimpong, are very thankful for your prayers, for the Convocation held in their midst from 14th to 22nd December, for the supply of all their needs, spiritual and temporal, particularly for food, accommodation and other necessities of nearly 3800 participants mostly from Kalimpong, Siliguri and other places in Darjeeling district as well as Assam, Nepal, Sikkim etc. The ministry based on the theme "The Chief Corner Stone" (Eph.2: 20) was clearly expounded by God's servant Bro. Lazar Sen, highlighting the preciousness and uniqueness of Christ, as the true foundation of security, stability and beauty, to the believer as well as His glorious sanctuary. Bro. Theodore Reginald was sharing thoughts on the building of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time. The service and sacrifice of many redounded to His glory amidst His people.

Bro. Victor Pradhan and saints at Mount Hermon, Siliguri, covet our earnest prayers for the Lord's plan and provision for the soon completion of their new large House of Worship. Pray for our, aged brother and family, in their faithful service for the Lord.

Pray for young brother Joshua, the eldest' son of God's servant Bro. Anand of Pallavaram, Chennai, as he has undergone a major surgery of the intestines, and is still in a very serious condition cc , in the General Hospital, Chennai.

Bro. Theodore Reginald would be minister-Icing in the Special Meetings at Bethany, Rourkela, God willing, from 1 st to 4th February 2003, after his visit to Kuwait, God willing from the yearend to 6th January 2003.

Pray also for Bro. Paul Sudhakar for the special meetings at Vallabharh (near Delhi) from 4th to 8th January 2003. Bro. John Stewart is in Bombay for the yearend, also for a few days at Surat. Bro. K. Aravindam would be at Hebron, Hyderabad for the same period.

Praying that our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, may work in us and in all His own, throughout the land and regions beyond and give His Church an abundant entrance into 2003, to fulfill His plan and purposes and prepare her for His coming,

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP

2 Pet. 1: 10-11

Heb. 13: 20-21

Rom. 15: 13, 33

YE ARE MY WITNESSES
BAKHT SINGH

(Messages given in family prayers during the Holy Convocation held at Hyderabad in 1970)
Scripture Reading: Acts 3

We see in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Apostles preached Christ again and again. "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). That was the main message, which they gave with power, authority and boldness. When they preached about the Lord Jesus Christ and His miracles nothing happened, but when they spoke about the power of resurrection, there was much opposition. Mohammedans believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His miracles and crucifixion, but they do not believe in His resurrection. They say that Jesus came down from the cross alive and went to heaven. They do not believe in His death, burial and resurrection. That is why they remain blind spiritually. Make sure that you have a clear spiritual experience of the risen Lord Jesus. Then you will have authority to talk about Him and pray in His Name.

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; ...In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"(v .6). With authority, Peter healed the lame man, because he had a personal experience of the power of resurrection. They were witnesses of His resurrection. No one will be offended if you emphasise the miracles and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, but many will be offended if you preach about His resurrection. The power of resurrection is the great secret of a triumphant life.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"(v .19). By having real faith that the Lord Jesus rose again to give us divine life, we will have liberty in prayer and boldness in witnessing.

Acts - 4

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all"(v.33). This power of resurrection is the highest power of God available to man. There is no other power greater than the power of resurrection. There was opposition because the apostles preached this message (vs.2, 3). The priests, leading people and Pharisees became very very angry when they heard the apostles speak about the resurrection and they put them in prison. At the same time, many believed in the Lord Jesus because of the same message (v.4). On the one hand there was persecution and opposition. On the other hand, when the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ was preached many believed on Him. The Apostles went on giving the same message in spite of the opposition they had to face.

(To be contd.)

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NO. 2

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY OR: ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS—2

We may now go on to discuss.

II. THE GREAT SERIOUSNESS OF DIVISIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS

We have in mind, of course, divisions that now exist amongst Christians worldwide, divisions already well established, and very seldom questioned in our times, and also divisions that, sad to say, are frequently found in local churches or fellowships. To say the least, these, too, are beginning to be viewed as "something inevitable", and something we have to learn to live with. More frequently, perhaps, there can be bitter, and long-lasting "feuds" between two individual Christians, as in the case of Euodias and Syntyche at Philippi (Phil.4:2). All these forms of divisions are grievous indeed, and send forth a wrong "savour" from the ointment of the church (See Eccles.1 0: 1 ; 2 Cor.2:14, 15). May the Lord have mercy on us!

Let us now present three simple reasons why such divisions are so serious, and let us face up squarely to the challenge:

1. Such divisions violate the basic doctrine of the ONE BODY OF CHRIST.

We have already said much about this, so little needs to be added. God planned this "Mystery" in a past eternity, and He wants (and works) to see His blood-bought people enjoying and exemplifying that oneness, under the gracious Headship of their Risen Lord.

2. Such divisions run counter to the constant pleadings of the Apostle Paul.

How fearlessly he rebuked the follies of the disintegrating Corinthians, and pleaded most intensely for restored unity among them. One verse must here suffice, -and we do well to notice the comprehending phrasing of his heartfelt plea:

"I beseech you" (What an intensity of longing and concern!)

"Brethren" (What personal love for the failing ones)

"by the NAME of the LORD JESUS" (appealing to the very highest power)

"that there be NO DIVISIONS among you"(straight to the point; -no exceptions)

"but that ye be PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER" (A positive emphasis)

"in the same mind" (the REAL answer; -the MIND OF CHRIST; -see Phil.2:5).

Surely that one verse (1 Cor.1 : 10) will be enough to make us all see the tremendous seriousness of this

matter.

3. Our third reason is based on that illuminating and heart -moving PRAYER OF CHRIST HIMSELF, -given to us in John seventeen. We shall not be able to say much about it here, except that the chapter shows that Christian Unity is the uppermost concern in our Lord's present prayer ministry (See Heb. 7:25). We notice that the prayer itself (John17) is made up of a number of different petitions; -most of them mentioned only once - and then left. But this petition for His people's ONENESS is repeated five times, -like a refrain running throughout the prayer (See vs.11, 21, 21,22,23). And we can say that if THAT was true in John 17; it is also true today as our Lord prays for us within the veil. The cry heard in Gethsemane still re-echoes in heaven, -THAT THEY MAYBE ONE!

Much more cries out to be said, but, for the present, we must leave it at that. The three reasons we have given will underline again the deep seriousness of ANY KIND of division amongst God's redeemed people.

We now approach a section of our study, which may positively alarm many of us. Even the very title we shall use may seem greatly exaggerated, but we know that is not so, and we feel sure that honest and prayerful readers will soon be in agreement with us. Our appeal will simply be to God's True Word, and the Word itself will do its work. Let us be quiet, and allow that Word to speak to us. We shall be considering:

III. THE ESSENTIALLY CRIMINAL NATURE OF DIVISIONS IN GOD'S CHURCH.

Let me say that we, too, hesitated much about the usage of such strong words, but, after further prayerful thought, we were inwardly assured that our terms were quite appropriate in this case; -in fact our subject revolves around what can only be regarded as the ultimate in all crimes. We tremble to say it, but we are dealing with something, which could be called a repeat of Calvary! - as we shall now be showing.

The Bible makes it very plain that any dividing -up, or sectionalising, of His Church is, in effect, a dividing -up of Christ Himself, -and not only dividing -up Christ personal, but dividing -up Christ corporate, or; shall we say, attempting so to do. This, of course, is a crime unthinkable, - something beyond all telling. We shall discuss this awful possibility in the coming paragraphs, and we do ask for earnest and open -minded consideration of the matter, -and a humble and prayerful approach. May God prevent anyone of us from committing, or even sanctioning, such a crime!

The most basic verse on this subject is 1 Cor.1: 13. We note that, in the preceding verse (v.12) Paul had been rebuking the Corinthians for forming themselves into distinct and separate "groups", according to which particular leader they followed, or which preacher they preferred to listen to! Paul shows real shock and alarm that anything like that should be taking place, and exclaims, "IS CHRIST DIVIDED?" We must carefully note the wording here. Quite obviously, Paul is telling them that their sectarianism is tantamount to dividing the Saviour Himself up into parts! - truly a very startling thought! The perceptive Greek scholar, and translator of many of the old classics, Dr. A.S. Way, renders the verse, "What, -has Messiah been parted into fragments?" Again very startling, -but they tell me the rendering does bring out the true force of the word, -a fragmentation of THE CHRIST OF GOD!

It is well to remember, here, that Paul himself had been asked a very similar question at the time of his conversion on the Damascus road. The shining Lord from heaven had said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" The fact is that, while Paul thought he was dealing with the few Christians at Damascus, he was actually dealing with Christ Himself. Touching the members of Christ's Body was touching the HEAD OF THE BODY! He was virtually mishandling the whole organism; -Christ and His people were one great Resurrection Life together. That we believe was the beginning of the whole revelation that Paul had

been chosen to share with the then -emerging church, -and with us all. We say it again. -Christ and His

born -again Christians ARE one Living Organism! This IS God's glorious "Mystery"! O, - praise His Name!

Returning now to that grave matter of the divisions at Corinth, and to the question with which the same Paul confronted them, -what do we have? Paul is just showing them that, by their smug partisan behaviour, they were virtually ' - dividing Christ". We must carefully mark this. Paul does not say, "Is the church divided", but, right to the point, -"IS (the corporate) CHRIST DIVIDED?", -or to use again Dr. Way's rendering, -"What, has Messiah been PARTED INTO FRAGMENTS?". That, indeed, was the unimaginable tragedy that was unfolding at Corinth, as they allowed them- selves to be parted into separate groupings. In its inmost essence, that is what it amounted to. They were dismembering the Christ of God. We may need to modify the dark picture to some extent, but, even in its mildest form, we are left with a picture of deep criminality, and, if we have ever encouraged divisions amongst God's incorporated people, we have pierced the inmost feelings of the heart of God.

There is a similar verse in the epistle to the Hebrews, -something which sends a similar shudder through the heart of any sensitive Christian. The writer speaks of those who, (in quite a different way) were "crucifying in themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame" (Heb.6:6). It is not our task, right now, to discuss the details of that situation, -but we would say that we all need to take into serious consideration what our own simple actions and attitudes, and decisions, amount to when viewed from a more spiritual viewpoint, or seen by the eye of God, -or felt in the heart of God.

An interesting Bible -Fact may now be an appropriate way of "closing off" this section of our study. The original word, which Paul uses for "divided" in 1Cor .1: 13 ("Is Christ divided?") is a derivative of the word used in the Gospels for the cruel "parting" of our Saviour's garments at Calvary. Luke, for instance, tells' us that, "they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34'. It would therefore be quite right to say that, what those rough Roman soldiers were doing on that Hill, is what those divisive Christians were doing at Corinth, when they maintained their various allegiances and preferences, -not so very long after Calvary. They were "dividing" the very person of Christ Himself! May God ever spare us from such an unspeakable crime! As we said before, God sees the Saviour and the saints as ONE UNIT; -let us ever maintain that unity, and not even appear to fragment it. To secure such a "testimony" will involve some cost, but the Lord will help us through.

As a final observation on this point, may I say the following? There could be some who insist that you CANNOT divide the Body of Christ, -so why be so concerned? While we also greatly rejoice in the indivisibility of the Actual Reality, we most certainly CAN DIVIDE that which is called of God to represent that Reality, -here in this world, -and to depict it! (See 1 Cor.12: 27). Paul rejoiced in the Heavenly Reality, but no one was more grieved than he by the divisions he was witnessing on earth! We could say, too, that if that "present perfection in Heaven" were intended to be our SOLE CONCERN, -why so many Bible exhortations regarding a corresponding witness here below? The Holy Spirit is clearly concerned with BOTH aspects of the Truth; -and so should we be! We do trust that this further observation may be a help.

(To be contd.)

C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron
Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad -500 020,
A.P. India.

Telephone No: 7613066

January 11, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the mighty and matchless Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Forerunner for us, the One Who hath entered within the veil, an anchor of our souls, sure and steadfast -the High priest forever, able to save us to the uttermost. May His High priestly prayer sanctify and strengthen us as His holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling and hence the inheritance, reserved in heaven for us (Heb.6: 18, 19; 3:1, 2; 1 Pet.1: 3-5).

Continuing our thoughts in relation to weights and hindrances that would impede our progress from pressing on unto perfection, we may consider the following relevant realities. As believers we are tempted to complain about the opposition we meet with at home or office, and such trials connected with our daily work and so on. We fancy that we could get on much better if our circumstances were altered. These things are not WEIGHTS to be laid aside but are a part of God's helpful discipline, and it would be a spiritual loss to be without them. We have known Christians fret and chafe under their circumstances, and seek to change them until God has given them their request, and as a result it has brought leanness into their souls.

Sin is to be laid aside. It is represented as a garment that is ever ready to entangle our feet. Sin is that which is contrary to the will of God, and if we allow it, our feet are entangled and we cannot run. This is a very solemn and practical thing. There must be a decision to Part Company with that which is not according to the will of God. It is sometimes said that things will "drop off" and this is made an excuse for a good deal of self -indulgence. They have to be LAID ASIDE. Let us make this exhortation plain and point to our younger brethren, so that they may remain uncompromising and unchanging in this vital matter.

Jacob's preparation for Bethel is a fine illustration of all this (Gen.35:1-4). There were "earrings" and "garments", which might have been all right in Mesopotamia, but they would not do for Bethel. These things answer to the WEIGHTS. There were also found with them "strange gods" -things positively contrary to God -answering to sin. And both earrings and idols had to be hidden under the oak which was by Shechem", before Jacob and his family were ready for the House of God.

Believers may go on a long time cherishing many fragments of worldliness, and often having in the background that which is known to be contrary to God. But there comes a moment in the history of the soul, where the attractiveness of God's calling lays hold upon it, and it (soul) shakes itself free from its entanglements, and clears itself of its unholy links with the world, in order to enjoy the divine privileges. Shechem is the place of, uncompromising decision. It is there, Joshua said; to the people, "...choose you this day whom ye will; serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Josh.24: 15,23).

It is at Shechem, morally speaking, that the soul sets itself and strips itself for the race. And the tree mentioned in Gen. 35:4 and again in Joshua 24:26 is very suggestive of the Cross. The man who has been at Shechem, and has laid aside every WEIGHT and SIN can say, "...God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal.6:14). Beloved of the Lord, can we say that we have reached that point? To what extent are we really set for Christ and heaven?

The motive power of all this lies in "looking unto Jesus". If a believer surrenders or lays aside anything without an adequate divine motive, he will either secretly hanker after it, and probably, before long return to it, or he will take credit toll himself for having given it up and thus become self-righteous and

spiritually proud. A divine motive and attraction is needed if souls are to be drawn into the race and prepared to surrender things in a truly spiritual way, and this divine motive and attraction is an object outside ourselves altogether. It is CHRIST in Glory.

The Blessed One Who is presented to us as "the author and finisher of our faith", could say, I have set the Lord always before me. (Psalm 16:8). He ever found His motive and object in God. He was here altogether for God, moving in absolute divine perfection over the whole course of faith, and this at all cost to Himself. For not only did He endure the "contradiction of sinners against himself", all through His course, but He did actually resist "unto blood, striving against sin". Nothing could move Him from that path, which "uncheered by earthly smiles, led only to the cross". He would give up His life, He would give up the earth, but He would not give up the will of God. For the "path of life," and "pleasures for evermore" lay through death. They were set before Him in resurrection. He gave up the earth where Jehovah had nothing. His heart was set on that bright and blessed scene, where everything reflected the glory of God. In view of this He endured the Cross, and despised the shame, and is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God". Lord help us all to follow on.

Pray for the five days Youth Camp and evening meetings arranged at Anantapur, from the 11 th January. God's servant Bro. Victor there and Bro. R.S. Kuruvilla would be sharing the ministry. Please also pray for similar Youth Camp at Pormamilla where Bros. Purna Chandra Rao, and Bro. Devadanam of Begumpet, Hyderabad would be ministering the Word.

Pray for the Special Meetings, God willing to be held at Mt.Hermon, Shyamnagar, Hyderabad, from 8th to 12th January, God willing, when Bro. J.C. Rao would be sharing the word, based on the theme, "Throne of God". Pray also for a two days Youth Retreat, God willing to be held at Jehovah- Shammah, Chennai, on the 15th and 16th January, preceded by an evening on 14th. Bro.John Stewart would be ministering the word on the theme, "Looking unto Jesus".

Pray for the recovery and health of Bro. I. Selvaraj, one amongst the responsible brothers at Hermon, Bangalore, as he had to undergo bypass surgery a few days ago. Pray also for Bro. Mohan Menon, now functioning as a responsible brother in the Ephesus Church Fellowship at Botswana, as he was undergoing Chemotherapy at Vellore, and returned to Botswana.

Pray for the proper printing of late Bro. Bakht Singh's biography, by the O.M. Hyderabad, God willing to begin within two weeks, with the arrival of Bro. T.E. Koshy from Syracuse by 17th January.

Praying that we all be enabled to look unto Him, the Author and Finisher of our faith, even our Lord Jesus, Who is seated at the right hand of the majesty on High,

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP

Psa. 16: 8, 11

Titus 2: 12 -14

Psa. 34: 5, 15

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