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THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL -3

We must now give consideration to another all- important aspect of the Christian message, making it a Glorious Message indeed. It is a message, which tells of the Glorious Provision God, has made for His redeemed people, as they make their pilgrimage through this alien world. He does not take us up immediately to our heavenly Home,- but leaves us here as His witnesses (Acts 1 :8), - His ambassadors (2 Cor.5:20). But He said He would not leave us here "un helped", -but He would come to us (John 14:18). He was referring, evidently, to the Blessed Holy Spirit, -God's perfect provision for His pilgrim people, -the Very Spirit of their Exalted Master. And, all through this present church -age, our Ascended Lord has been keeping that promise, -the Superb Provision for every responsibility we carry.

The age in which we live has frequently been called the age of the Holy Spirit. That Heavenly Helper, of whose descent we read in Acts two, has not been withdrawn, but flows on like a mighty river. The Saviour said He, -the Holy Spirit, would abide with us for ever (John 14:16). We believe He is always "hovering" (Cp.Gen.1: 2) near us, and, once the government of Christ is accepted, HE flows in. As soon as we trust from our side, He enters our hearts, and "seals" us as God's own property, (See Eph.1: 13; RV, NIV! etc.), -and, from that moment, He is prepared to "keep on filling us and overflowing us (Eph.5: 18; John 7:37-39). With some of us that first entrance is "quiet as a whisper", -with others of us it is something quite dramatic, -but the Same Spirit .in, both cases. Probably very few of us actually understand what has happened until someone, -Bible in hand, explains it to us; -we are actually "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor.6: 19; 2 Cor.6: 16). All that however is our basic Christian heritage, and it will also be our blessed experience as we maintain right relationships with our Living Lord.

All of us must surely agree that this is, indeed, a GLORIOUS PROVISION. But it is all part of the Christian Gospel, -making the Gospel itself a Glorious Gospel. The world has never heard a message that can compare with it. All else is dull and lifeless, May God help us to preach the true Gospel, and to preach it in its fullness.

That provision of the Holy Spirit is a most important part of the Christian Gospel, and we have not fully preached that Gospel unless and until we tell our hearers of it.

As we said before, the initial experience of the Gift comes to us at the time of our conversion. We may not fully understand it at the time, but someone will explain to us later; -"This is THAT". That was certainly so in my own case. I knew that something deep had happened, -but thought it was some marvelous "feeling of joy", or "sense of peace", a kind of "unprecedented ecstasy", Then someone told me, "This is THAT"! My young body had become a temple of the Holy Ghost; -I had become a container of Deity; -God's Shekinah was shining within!

In these notes, I have been trying to be as concise as possible, but I find my heart "running away with me", Perhaps it may suffice if I now just comment on two aspects of the Great Provision, - and trusting the same Holy Spirit to "fill in" the SO- much -more that could be said.

First, -regarding the ABUNDANCE of the Provision. When Paul wrote to young Titus, and spoke of God's saving mercy, he said, "-. He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost; -which He shed on us ABUNDANTLY through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Tit, 3:5,6). The wording there is very rich and one translator has rendered it, "The Holy Spirit, -which He has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Saviour".

I was reminded of those words when I first stood and watched the Niagara Falls; -what a deluge; -what a torrent; - what a picture of the wonderful Day of Pentecost! when God Himself came down in power and glory, and taking fresh hold on His infant Church. Certainly our God knows nothing of stint, and the Lord Jesus Himself said, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure", -or "with reservations" (John 3:34). He also said that if we also would learn to give, we would receive "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6:38). The Provision we are now thinking of (The Holy Spirit), is always a full provision, and "without measure". If there is any lack, it can only be from our side. Someone has rightly said, "God is a Great Giver; -He only needs great receivers"!

Our second comment must be about the **CONSTANCY** of the Provision of the Holy Spirit, -the never-ending flow of God's River! When Paul wrote to the Philippians from his prison in Rome, he assured them that his difficulties would not spoil, or limit, his witness, because he was continually being helped by what he called, "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil.1: 19). The word he uses for "supply" is again the richer word (**EPICHOREGIA**). It reminds us of the promise made by Moses to Asher, "Let him dip his foot in oil, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:24,25). That promise may be ours too, and it shall be ours, if we will but dip, not only our foot, but our whole being into the Oil of God's Spirit. How sad, indeed, it would be if we had to try to live the Christian life in our own strength, -as if God started us off in the Way, and then left us to fend for ourselves! Thank God the River of Supply flows on, and we may be freshly filled day-by-day, and even moment -by -moment. As an empty cup may be continually filled if held under running water, so may we be continually **FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IF WE WILL KEEP OUR PLACE UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST**. In that way, God will not stop blessing us. In fact, He will daily **LOAD** us with His benefits (Psa.68: 19). The "**SUPPLY**" is both abundant and constant!

As we have been writing these lines our thoughts have gone to Joseph, -alive, and "highly exalted" to the very throne of Egypt. In Genesis 42, we see him sending off his brethren on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. In verse 25 we read, " Joseph commanded to **FILL THEIR SACKS** with corn...and to give them **PROVISION FOR THE WAY**". Thank God, our Greater Joseph has done the same for us, -He has made **PROVISION** for our journey; -He fills our sacks with the Blessed Holy Spirit, and sets us off for "Home".

There, then, we have our third reason why the Christian Gospel is a Glorious Gospel; -it tells us of a Glorious Provision, -"Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3, 18; Luke 11: 13). What a Perfect Provision for the way; -the Very Spirit of Him Who is the Way! May God make us great receivers of His great mercies!

C.R.G.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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July 2, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and even the Father, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Praise be to Him "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Cor.1: 3-5).

"Comfort and consolation aboundeth by Christ, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us", writes Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, drawing from his own deep experiences, in the ministry of the Gospel. Pressed out of measure, despairing even of life, he trusted not in himself, but in God Who raiseth the dead, death working in us, he adds, in 2 Cor .4: 10-12, but ministering life to others.

King David's life and times have many valuable lessons to teach us, when one faces rejection and persecution or even afflictions in the service of the Lord, although it may not be of the same degree and severity as David experienced. David's rejection and affliction were necessary to qualify him for the kingdom. Many centuries later, when the tried believers of Pisidia were comforted in their tribulations by the Apostles who themselves bore the marks of bitter persecution, they were told, "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). WE MUST -for this is the only way. There is nothing less than Kingdom at stake.

It is generally believed that many of David's psalms found expression at this time of rejection and persecution, which have been an inspiration infusing trust and dependence upon the Lord for he generations that followed, even to the present times. Psalm 34 is one such, where we have an account of, or personal commentary on the sufferings of those days. We note that he had been almost overwhelmed by fears, all his troubles, and his many afflictions (vs.4, 6, 19). In 1 Samuel 19: 10 it says, "And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin". The man of God is now a target for murderous hatred. No wonder then, that in Psalm 34, and also in quite a number of other Psalms, we are confronted with the problem of the troubles which come upon the Lord's anointed. These afflictions are quite undeserved; indeed the sufferer is called 'righteous' (Psa.34: 19). This is not self-righteousness, nor does it here refer to the imputed righteousness of the justified -it is simply an affirmation of the fact that David was not wrong, he was right. He was right and yet he was distressed. How can this be? The man of God himself cannot understand this, hence the oft -repeated voice of enquiry, "WHY?", which is found in a number of Psalms. "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" (10:1). Do we claim to know the answer?

This is not just an intellectual problem. The background of these Psalms is genuine human suffering; their words arise not from meditations in the study, but from agony in the battlefield of life, of a soul in deep trial. Why do the righteous suffer? David might well wonder. Here is an upright youngman, called and anointed by God~ tested and approved in faith's conflict, and yet homeless on the run, and found a fugitive. He is found a displaced person forced out into the woods and fields, suspected and hated. It is completely undeserved. Why does not God intervene? Can it be that the Spirit's anointing means nothing? Human reasoning would say that God would not allow such a thing to happen to His anointed. But it did happen and God allowed it. Well might David and we too ask, "WHY?"

The cave of Adullam for David was only the beginning, as he gathered his forces there, and the Lord marvelously helped him as we read. "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Psa.34: 15). The future is veiled from our eyes in His mercy, and the past mercies give us hope and enable us also to affirm that we will bless the Lord at all times. We may also be passing through such be wildering experiences or face similar problems in time to come. From David's case we may suggest three possible reasons as to why God was dealing with him in such strange ways. Firstly, to give him a testimony, "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad"

(v.2). This has a permanent value. How we owe so much to David's Psalms, which have brought comfort, and support to millions of tried believers over the many hundreds of years since David lived. Though it is David's testimony about God, it is indeed God's testimony through David. So the explanation of troubles, then, is, that through them God is writing a testimony in the life of the sufferer. This testimony is meant to instruct others. "Come, ye...I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (v.11).

Secondly, to teach him obedience. If we ask David, "How can you teach us?", he would say, "I have first learned". Where did David learn? Which college did he attend, or what course did he study? He would say, "learned in the school of suffering", As a matter of fact, there is no other school to prepare a man for this kind of ministry and calling. Even the Lord Jesus had to learn through suffering (Heb.5:8). He was qualified and made perfect through suffering to occupy the Throne, and is able to sympathise with us.

Thirdly, to ensure his dependence on the Lord totally, enquiring of the Lord at every step and learn still more valuable lessons, before he could feed his people and be on the throne. The Lord enable us all to face our trials and afflictions with the same trust as David. So David writes in Psalm 34:18 and 22. He had made his blunders but he learned his lesson in the fear of the Lord (v.9). May we be thus learning and doing, experiencing His faithfulness.

With a sense of sorrow and loss we would mention the sudden Home call to Glory of Bro. Ebenezer, in the accident when our Gospel van which went on the ministry towards Bhadrachalam on 22nd June, rammed into a standing vehicle without rear light, enroute. The funeral took place on the 24th at Mangalagiri, his hometown, from whence he had come to serve the Lord at Hebron. Many of our fellow-workers and saints from nearby assemblies were present. He served the Lord for more than four years with gladness (Psa.100:2), in the short span of years the Lord appointed for him. Let us pray for his parents and brothers and sisters to accept the will and way of the Lord, concerning his Home call.

Also pray for speedy and full recovery for Bros. Santhosh and Moses of Hebron, who sustained serious injuries in the accident.

Praying that the abundant grace of our Lord be with us all, that we may be patient in tribulation, rejoicing in hope and continue instant in prayer, fervent in spirit, because our redemption draweth nigh,

I remain, Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Rom. 12: 11,
12 John 16: 33
Acts 20: 24

YE ARE MY WITNESSES -12
BAKHT SINGH

We have to give God's word to all people. But some people want to have special ministries. They want to work only among the students of universities. Others want to work among educated people or people in high positions. Others want to work among the poor. That is how they become limited. If you think only of a special class of people and spend more time on them you will be limited in God's sight. In God's work we cannot make distinctions or difference. We have .to give God's word to all people, whether they are rich or poor, high or low, educated or uneducated. Then we will find uniform growth among the believers.

No doubt, the Gospel was preached by the apostles with power and wisdom, but they were giving it only

to the Jews. That is why the center was shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch. From Antioch the Gospel was taken to Asia and other parts of Europe. "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily" (Acts 13:49; 16:5). Apostles like Peter and Paul, and Barnabas, went from Antioch and other places. If you want your ministry to be effective, you have to serve all people equally with no distinction of caste, education or riches. We should not be governed by education or position. After all, they receive the same salvation. We have to be very careful and not show any partiality in the Lord's work.

In Acts 11: 23 we see that God brought His servant Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch. "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord". Barnabas then went to Tarsus in search of Paul. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (v.26). They preached and the believers were strengthened. That was how God was showing that for spiritual growth we need His servants from different places. He Himself will send His own servants: from various countries. That is how the early believers began to grow and God's servants were sent to different places.

"And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch" (Acts 11: 27). Even though believers in Antioch were multiplied greatly and God's word was preached to them, they could not say that they could manage without the believers at Jerusalem. They depended upon others too. God in a sovereign way sent His servants to minister unto them. Then Agabus, the prophet, prophesied that there would be a famine in Jerusalem. The believers of Antioch felt sad for the believers of Jerusalem. They sent help from Antioch to Jerusalem through Barnabas and Paul (vs.28- 30). That is how believers are supposed to help one another without any worldly organization, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When these men came to Jerusalem they came just in time for the prayer meeting. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). See how in a sovereign way both the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, were brought to Jerusalem. When they returned to Antioch they came with the burden of prayer for Jerusalem. Though the believers at Antioch were taught mightily from God's Word now they were learning to pray for the suffering believers at Jerusalem. In Acts 13: 1-3, we see how they began to pray and as they prayed God separated Barnabas and Paul to take the Gospel to Asia and Europe. As they prayed, God's heavenly plan was shown to them by the Holy Spirit. Unless there is a burden for prayer God cannot show us His plan.

(To be contd.)

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NO. 15

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL - 4

It remains to us, now, to say a little about THE GLORIOUS PROSPECT that lies ahead of God's people, -for that also is part of the Christian Gospel and makes it, indeed, a glorious Gospel.

Here, particularly, we are right out of our depth, and can only hope to "flash something" into the minds and spirits of those who read us.

When the Apostle Peter wrote his first letter to those "strangers scattered abroad", he cheered their hearts by telling them that they had been "called to God's eternal glory" (1 Pet.5: 10), -and that God Himself would "stablish, strengthen, and settle them". He was "the God of all grace", and He would surely do it, "after they had suffered a little while". What a prospect for "scattered strangers", -they were "CALLED TO GOD'S ETERNAL GLORY"! That, surely, is one of the great "unfathomables" of the Bible!

More amazing still, -the word of Christ Himself, when praying to His Father for His people said, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them" (John 17:22). We still feel we can only whisper such a word; -God's Christ SHARING WITH US the glory which the Father gave to Him!

Then again, the last picture we have of the Church in the Bible likens her to "a great city HA VING THE GLORY OF GOD" (Rev .21: 10, 11). It might be well; now, to read quietly the rest of that chapter, but the few verses we quoted will suffice to show us the Glorious Future that lies ahead of God's people. And that, most surely, is part of our Christian Gospel. Glad tidings, indeed! A glorious Gospel! And it is for "all people" (Luke 2:10), - wondrous grace!

As Christians, we love to talk about our "Blessed Hope" (lit. "Happy expectation"). We generally have in mind our Lord's Second Coming, -that wonderful day when our Lord shall come, and we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess.4: 16,17). That truly is a "blessed hope", '- but what of the glorious events that will follow that coming? -Enthronement with the Lord. - Marriage to the Lord. Seeing His face, and being forever with Him? All this is included in the believer's "glorious prospect", and all is part of God's Glorious Gospel. All must be told to all nations, as the Holy Spirit leads and under His powerful anointing.

No doubt, there are countless separate components, which together comprise The Glorious Prospect that lies ahead of us as Christian believers. It may be well for us now to mention just three of them, -all of them extra to that initial meeting with our Lord in the air (1 Thess.4).

First, there is the prospect of ENTHRONEMENT WITH CHRIST. Paul told young Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim.2: 12). Our Lord said to His disciples. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He said the same in Luke 22:29, -"I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me". The following verse actually mentions "sitting on thrones", indicating a real partnership in the administration. Our Lord seems to come still closer when He says to the Laodiceans, "To him that overcometh will grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (Rev.3: 21). Even taking some of these terms as symbolic, we are still left with an amazing picture; -saved sinners, sharing

with their Saviour in the administration of His everlasting Kingdom! This glorious theme runs all through the Bible, but all can be gathered up in the statement of Daniel 7:27, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him". We can only say again, "What a glorious prospect", -reigning with Christ forever!

One important point does need to be mentioned here. We must always realise what is the nature of "dominion" in the eyes of God; -what is its essential character. The Lord made this plain in Matt.20: 25-27, when He said to His disciples, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (Gk. Servant); and whosoever will be CHIEF let him be your (lit.) SLAVE". This is a clear reversing of our own ideas; -the qualification for "reigning" is HUMILITY. We must take the towel before we can take the Throne (John 13:4,5; -also vs. 13, 14). This was the "way" for Christ, and it must be the "way" for us (see Phil.2: 8-11). May the Lord put that "mind" into us, and teach us to be overcomers. That new kind of ruling is part of our Glorious Prospect, -and part of the Glorious Gospel.

We move on now to our second thought. For the Christian believer, there is something still more wonderful, -and, even today, I feel I can only whisper it; -we are appointed to a marriage with Christ. Paul plainly told the Ephesian believers that "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (see Eph. 5:25- 27). Here again is a theme that runs from the beginning of the Bible (see Gen.2: 21-23), to the end (see Rev.19: 9 and 21: 9-11). What stupendous thoughts are these; -the Marriage-supper of the LAMB; -the LAMB's wife; -and notice again the emphasis on humility! Again, I feel quite helpless, and totally unable to develop such a theme, or even to comment upon it. What a prospect! -what a Gospel! -"thy Maker is thine Husband" (Isa.54: 5) This, of course, was something planned and purposed before the foundation of the world. The Father will secure a worthy bride for His all -worthy Son, and sinners, -washed, justified, and glorified, will make up that bride! It was just like Abraham in Genesis twenty-four. He sent his servant, Eliezer, to find, and bring home, a bride for his son Isaac, -beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit working in our age to find, and "bring home" a Rebekah for "the Beloved Son".

To conclude our meditation on this marvelous matter, we suggest that our readers just turn to Psalm 45, and read it through with a prayerful and worshipping heart. The Psalmist's heart is overflowing (v.1), and he sets out to write some-thing about "the glorious King". He gives his beautiful picture, but unavoidably it flows on to an equally beautiful picture of the Queen, standing beside him in gold of Ophir. All of this is very significant, -specially, perhaps, the statement that her raiment was "raiment of needlework" (Cp.Gal.5: 24; 6:14). That, again, is part of our GLORIOUS PROSPECT, -all included in our Glorious Gospel.

We said earlier that we hoped to mention three aspects of the believer's "Glorious PROSPECT". We have now said a little about the prospect of reigning with Christ, and the prospect of marriage to Christ. Our last thought will be the simplest of them all, -but, I think, the dearest of them all.

We again have in mind the word of Paul to the Thessalonians regarding the Second Coming of Christ, and we note that he concludes by saying, "so shall we be ever WITH THE LORD". Is not that the most precious prospect of them all? -just "being with the Lord", -for ever! May God speed the day!

It is interesting to note that the very next chapter tells us that when Christ died, it was with that kind of fellowship in view. The passage reads, -Christ "died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM" (1 Thess.5: 10). Yes, -very simple words, but what a prospect, -living "with Christ" FOREVER! Hallelujah, Hallelujah; -May God speed the day!

The time has now come for us to close off our little series of meditations on God's Glorious Gospel. We

have said that that Gospel is glorious because it tells of A Glorious Person, -a Glorious Plan, -a Glorious Provision, and a Glorious Prospect. ALL this is in the Gospel we are to carry to the nations. May God help us to see it, and to say it; -to see HIM and to speak of HIM... everywhere! Maranatha!

C.R.G.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

C/o International Assembly
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July 2, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prayer answering Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. May He shepherd us along in His prepared paths and predetermined counsels, as we have stepped into the latter half of the year, desirous to follow Him wholly. The Lord grant that He may bear with our unbelief and still encourage us to keep on believing His word of promise, so that it may be true in our experience -"All things are possible to him that believeth" as we read in Mark 9:23 (Isa.28:29; Psa.33:9 -11).

With gratitude and praise unto the Lord, as well as my heartfelt thanks to one and all of you who have been praying for this aged servant, I write these few lines. The Lord granted me a safe and speedy journey to reach Syracuse by July 10th to participate in the forthcoming 21st North America Holy Convocation from 16th to 20th. Do pray that the Lord may anoint His chosen vessels for every ministry among the old, youth, children and sisters, including the ministry of family prayers. Pray that souls may be led to Christ and saints be rooted and built up in Him, established in their most holy faith (Col.2: 7; Jude 20).

Speaking of being "rooted in faith", we may consider an Old Testament reference in Isa. 37:31,32 which reads as follows: "And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again, take root downward, and bear fruit upward: For... the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this". The expression, "shall again take root" implies that in the sovereign government of Jehovah, Judah and Israel were uprooted from their land of fertility and productivity because of all their revolt and rebellion against the Holy One of Israel. They were strengthening themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, trusting in the shadow of Egypt against the repeated warnings of the Lord. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; ...That walk to go down into Egypt...to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt" (Isa.30:1-2).

Whether it was Assyrian or Babylonian captivity, Israel was uprooted from the land of their fullness and fruitfulness and sent forth into a strange land. They humbled themselves and sought the Lord wholly (Jer.29: 11-13), and the Lord's time for their deliverance came and they returned -a remnant according to the prophetic word written, and they in their promise land, again took root downward to bear fruit upward (Isa.37: 31).

In the Colossian Epistle Paul speaks of the supremacy and preeminence of Christ, Who is set, as the Head of the Body, the Church. He exhorts Colossians to "walk...in him: Rooted and built up in him" (Col.2: 6,7), established in faith. He was aware of the danger through false teachers, who could spoil them through

philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men. By responding to them they would be distancing themselves from the Head of the Church, in Whom alone are hid all the riches and treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Thus they would be falling short of their enjoyment of their fullness in the Head, in union with Him.

The epistle to Colossians looks at the believers as risen with Christ, but not as sitting in the heavenly places in Christ as in the Ephesians. Though they had died and risen with Christ, they were not sitting in heavenly places with Him yet. In Colossians some had slipped away and lost the sense and strength of their union with the Head of the Body, -Christ. They were assailed by this danger, coming under the influence of false teachers who were seeking to draw them away from their union with the Head and subject them to the influence of their philosophy, Judaistic traditions, pagan mysticism and asceticism, and the worship of angels which meant putting angels between themselves and Christ. The intervention of the angels would be a denial of their union with Christ, Who is far above all, even angels. Such was the erroneous teaching under the garb of Gnosticism.

This union with our Head cannot itself be lost, thank God, but as a truth in the Church or of realization by individuals. Hence the Spirit of God Who maketh intercession for us is at work to develop all the riches and all the perfections which are found in the Head (the Lord Jesus Christ) and His finished work, to apply the same to recover such members of the Body who have fallen into spiritual feebleness or foulness. Thus the members may be maintained in the practical enjoyment of their union with Christ and their privileges.

In the contemporary history of the Church, the false teachings of Gnostics and their errors may not be so marked or prevalent. However, we must discern and detect those factors and forces, which are at work through the world, the flesh and the evil one, to cut off the reality and intensity of our union with Christ the Head. In Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". In Him "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily". In Him we are "complete" (Col.2: 3,9,10).

In Colossians 2 we read the following expressions. "...enticing words...philosophy and vain deceit...traditions of men...rudiments of the world...body of the sins of the flesh...voluntary humility...worshipping of angels...puffed up fleshly mind...satisfying to the flesh". Fleshly mind, fleshly satisfaction, fleshly honour and fleshly worship and such, could hinder our holding fast the Head from Whom only, nourishment is ministered and the increase of the Body effected.

Having received the Lord Jesus Christ we must walk in Him as rooted in Him, as the roots of the tree going deep down into the soil. We have to know experientially what it means to "take root downward" -downward into the death of Christ. Only our identification by faith in His death and burial can put off the old man so that we may put on the new man (Col.3: 8,10). Thus being crucified to flesh and its affections, we enjoy union with the Head and express the fullness in Him as members of His Body. Also we give Him preeminence in all things. May the Lord write these words upon our hearts.

The 62nd anniversary gathering of the Lord's Testimony raised at Jehovah -Shammah, Chennai, through the instrumentality of late Bro. Bakht Singh and his early co-workers and elders, was held on the 12th of July, the exact day of the occupation of Jehovah -Shammah compound, 62 years ago. The Lord used Brothers Neville Jayasundara and J.C. Rao for the special gatherings from 11th to 13th.

Do pray that the Lord may help us all in the church at Jehovah -Shammah to receive with meekness His engrafted Word, and renounce all that is inconsistent with His truth and holiness, and be renewed and revived to serve Him acceptably for the days ahead.

I remain, Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Col. 3.1 -4
 James 1: 18,21
 Psa: 85: 8, 12,13

YE ARE MY WITNESSES -13 **BAKHT SINGH**

By prayer the early Church began to grow spiritually. That is the secret of the early Church. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness...But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 4:31; 6:4). By perseverance the early believers were able to defeat their enemies.

The enemy's attack on the believers is to make them cut short their prayer time. They are busy with other things and have no time for prayer. They pray but for a short while. That is why the enemy gains ground. The early Church overcame the enemy by prayer.

Acts 12

When Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem there was not only famine in Judea but also persecution. Peter was in prison and James was killed. Believers in Jerusalem began to pray earnestly for Peter. In answer to those prayers God delivered Peter from the prison.

Generally, we want to see God's power in great things. God works in small matters much more than in big matters to strengthen and encourage us. We do not think of small things as God does. No doubt, we see God's power in mighty things but we can also see His power in small things. God's ways are not our ways. Verse four tells us, four quaternions of soldiers kept watch over Peter turn by turn; he was in between two soldiers, bound to them with chains. Yet he was fast asleep. He was not sleeping on dun lop pillow but on the stone floor of the prison, with two very strong chains on each hand. With all that he was able to sleep soundly, because he had no worries or anxiety. He could trust God for every situation. Most of us when we have small worries do not get sleep. We may drink ovaltine or any hot drink, still we do not get sleep. Some take pills to get sleep in the nights. Even that fails and they cannot get sleep. But here we find this man of God sleeping soundly, in spite of all his disadvantages. When we put our trust in the Lord we will not be anxious about any matter, no matter what happens. Peter was having sound sleep. The angel smote him even then he could not get up. Then the angel raised him up, and he got up, and the chains fell off from his hands.

(To be contd.)

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