

Hebron Messenger

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NO 5

"WHO TOUCHED ME" (Luke 8:43-48)

In this simple story we are given the secret of knowing how the life of the Lord Jesus Christ can come into us and how He can become our life. His coming into the world can be summed up in two verses which He Himself said. In Luke 19:10 He said, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'. Again in John 10:10 He said, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly'. Here we see the purpose for which the Lord Jesus Christ-came into the world. He did not come primarily to perform miracles or show signs. He came into the world to seek and to save sinners or to forgive the sins of sinners, give them eternal life, deliver them from their sinful nature and give them divine nature to live for ever. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Person Who spoke about eternal life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). The gift of God is offered freely and abundantly to all sinners of all ages and of all countries. It does not depend upon human qualifications. Any sinner can receive that life. It is a wonderful gift and the Lord Jesus lovingly offers it, provided you really feel sorry for your sins.

There are many miracles recorded in the Bible which tell us in a simple way how eternal life can be enjoyed. Our Lord went about doing good for three years. Wherever He went great multitudes followed Him either to be healed by Him or to hear Him speak or to see His miracles. Here also we see a great multitude going after Him. In that crowd there was a woman with an issue of blood for twelve years (Luke 8:43). The multitude of people thronged Him, and pressed upon Him from every side. So it was not easy for any person to come near Him. There was no space to push through the crowd to go near Him. Yet this woman managed to push her way and touch His garment (verse 44). She had been suffering for twelve years. So we can imagine her weakness. We do not know how she got strength and boldness to push her way through the crowd and go near Him. Some might have even pushed her back. But she took no notice. Somehow she came near Him.

We are told in verse 48 that the Lord said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace". We find in God's Word that faith is very necessary. It is by faith we see unseen things. It is by faith we receive the gift of God. It is by faith we see heaven open. It is by faith we receive any gift from God. Without faith we cannot see God or come near Him. By faith we learn to pray. By faith we can suffer any hardship. By faith we can see our future. That is why we should have a strong and a living faith. Somehow or the other this woman had faith. We are told that she had been to many physicians (verse 43). Whatever she had earned and whatever she had possessed like land, jewels and cash, was all spent on the physicians. But she did not find the least improvement in her. She had learned by experience that no physician had knowledge or experience to cure her. No amount of money could heal her. Many would have told her, "O woman, your case is hopeless. You may go anywhere, you will never be healed". That is how her eyes had been drawn away completely from physicians. Then she heard about the Lord Jesus Christ Who was going everywhere healing the sick. She was told that He had all power and those who went to Him were blessed by Him. His fame had spread all over that He had all power. Without any exception everybody was healed by Him (Luke 4:40). That is why she went to Him. She knew beforehand that if she went to the Lord Jesus Christ He would be the One to heal her. But there were hindrances for

her. There was a big crowd before Him. Secondly, she being a woman could not push her way. Thirdly, she was so weak, having suffered from this sickness for twelve years. But she overcame all these hindrances.

We find that living faith alone can overcome any barrier or obstacle for those who want to come to Him. The enemy will bring many obstacles. When any one wants to enjoy the world, he whispers in his ears, "Go, I will help you, I will be with you". He encourages you to enjoy worldly music and all kinds of fun. He will be on your side and lead you into sin.

But when you want to come near God you find Satan using your friends, strangers and even parents to prevent you. That is how he deceives people. But thank God, faith has the power to overcome any barrier or obstacle. There is a promise in Jer. 29:13, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart". That is God's promise for those who want to find Him with all their hearts. Whatever their condition may be as sinners, it makes no difference. There should be a sincere longing in the heart to find Him. There are many cases like this woman how by faith they came near Him and received what they wanted.

We read of a wealthy man named Simon who had invited our Lord Jesus to his house (Luke 7:36,37). A certain woman had a strong desire and faith to come near the Lord Jesus. But this time we see that this woman wanted her sins to be forgiven. She knew she would have a big obstacle to come to Jesus. She was a great sinner, everyone knew who she was and the kind of life she lived. She was hated and despised by all. Secondly, she was not invited to that home and so she had no right to go there. Thus she had a big obstacle yet her faith was strong. She pressed her way and went to Him. She knew how to find the way and what to do. She found her way to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord said to her, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace". It was faith again. In the same way we read in Luke 19:3 that a certain man also had a desire to come near the Lord Jesus and see Him. He also had many obstacles. First of all, there was a huge crowd going after the Lord Jesus. Secondly, he was a man of short stature. He would have been pushed by the crowd. Thirdly, everybody hated him because he was taking bribes and nobody would have wanted him. Even if he had offered money and asked somebody to carry him on their shoulders and take him to the Lord Jesus, they would have refused because of their hatred for him. But he was determined to see Jesus. So he ran and climbed upon a tree. The Lord Jesus Himself went to the tree and said, "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house". Whatever your condition may be, you may be like Zacchaeus or like that sinful woman in Simon's house, or like the woman with the issue of blood, you may have any handicap, physical or moral, through faith you can come to Him and say, "Lord, have mercy upon me". With one touch you can be healed by Him. When the woman touched the hem of His garment, the Lord Jesus Christ stopped and asked, "Who touched me?" All were surprised. The disciples said to Him, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee and sayest thou, Who touched me?" (v. 45). But the Lord said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (v. 46). He meant that nothing happened when others touched Him. On hearing this, the woman came forward trembling and said, "I touched You. This is my story. I spent all my living on physicians. I went to well-known doctors to get the best medicine one can think of but I became only worse. But now I touched Your garment and I am healed". The Lord said to her, "Thy faith hath made thee whole". She was made whole. Divine virtue came into her body from the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know how it happened. But she was healed immediately.

That is how when we are born again we must be conscious of some life being poured into us and the touch of the Lord Jesus. Just by saying, "I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and I am born again", you* are not qualified for the Kingdom of God. You have to prove that divine life has come into you, on such and such a day or month or year. You must be able to say, "Something was given to me and I was changed". The result in the case of this woman was, she was healed. She became

strong. She came with weakness but great strength came into her and she became a healthy person. She went back to give her testimony saying boldly, "I am the woman who suffered for twelve years and I was healed immediately". Those who are born again receive divine life and that life changes them. That is why we find the word "life" coming again and again in the Gospel of John. In John 5:24 we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life". Mark the words. "Hath everlasting life". It does not say you will have, or shall have everlasting life, but right now if you feel sorry for your sins and believe from the heart that the Lord Jesus Christ took your place and died on the cross in your stead, you have everlasting life. He knew no sin and did no sin. He had all power over death, sickness, nature and demons. He had power over all elements and yet He gave Himself for us. His hands and feet and side were pierced. He took upon Himself willingly the judgment of our sins. When we believe that He died in our stead and rose again to live in us, and thank Him for dying for us straightway we are forgiven. At the same time our sins are washed away in His precious blood and life from heaven is poured into us. By that life we are changed. Whosoever you may be, there will be a definite change in you. God's Word says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"(2 Cor. 5:17). I have seen men change in a moment. He changed my life also. This is not man's word but God's Word. Do you want that life? He is a loving and living Saviour. He has all power to pour His life into you. He will not only forgive your sins, but will also transform your life. We are born in sin (Psa. 51:5). Because of our sinful birth and sinful nature we do things of shame. But when the Lord Jesus takes over our life, then and there He changes us completely.
B.S.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER
as from HEBRON, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad – 500020, AP, INDIA,
Telephone No. 27613066, 2222008
Date : 22-02-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, exalted by the right hand of God our Father, "To be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins... and the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:31,32).

The Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, as we mentioned before, a long awaited climax, and realization. He came that God might not be remote, but within us - that we should not pray to a remote deity, but have the divine life of God within us. For He hath said,"... I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor.6:16). God is not a God governing from a distant throne, but a God indwelling, and Whose very nature, as such, must be throbbing in our hearts. What a glorious thing, that the Spirit came! When the Spirit came, God came. Let us learn to face the fact that God is here. In writing to the Corinthians who were not exemplary Christians, Paul says that anyone coming into their midst, ought to fall down and say, "God is in you" (1 Cor. 14:25). People ought to be up against God when they meet us, and not only up against Him, but find Him very desirable.

As God is here, because the Spirit has come, a question would arise in our hearts. Do we know it and recognize it? This is a very important matter for every child of God, because the Holy Spirit is dwelling in him. When you believe on the Lord Jesus, when you take Him as your Saviour, something happens inside. You find that there is an inward life there, that was not there before. You find that the Spirit of God from within begins to change you. Every new birth is a miracle, in which this other 'nature' takes up residence and begins to operate in its own amazing way in our life. It is wonderful to see the Lord at work from within in a life.

A real event was mentioned by a minister of God as follows. "Sometime ago I met some

students who were playing in a jazz band and then they were saved. However they kept on going off with all their trombones and other instruments, and of course I did not say anything. But was talking to one of them later, and asked him, "What about your musical instruments"? He just laughed and said, "I have sold them". Well, I did not discuss the matter, and I do not want to suggest that you must have musical instruments either. My point is this, that in this case there was a worldly link - it was a very worldly one, involving more than I can say, but the Lord quietly showed him; and oh the joy that was on that young fellow's face! Now he is just going on from strength to strength. But this is the other 'nature' that is doing it. It is not that the people are telling him what to do. It is the Holy Spirit; it is the new life, something of the very life of heaven within him that is rejecting the old creation. If you have Christ in you, you have the Holy Spirit too in you. And the Holy Spirit wants to be trusted and obeyed much more. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you... and you are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19,20)".

The above instance is something very revealing and hence a rectifying factor for life application for our growth in Christ because the Spirit is not just here in the atmosphere. He is in you if you are a child of God. This is something worth meditating upon. It is something very important that you and I should take it to the Lord and say, "Lord, I am glad that You have come to dwell in me. How holy I ought to be! How different I ought to be! Lord, how I dislike this outward man, this self. I am glad that You are here". All the credit and all the glory in any of our lives is just due to His dwelling within. It is not how keen or clever we are - nothing of that - but just the measure of Christ in us, by the Holy Spirit. How thankful we ought to be that there is something of the pure gold, of the new creation, of the New Jerusalem in this earthen vessel!

We may say that the third aspect of the Spirit's coming is this. It is God's committal of Himself. That is why we read those passages about fire. When Elijah prepared the altar on Mount Carmel and put the sacrifice upon it, he made them pour water over it, twelve barrels of water until everything was drenched and the trenches round about were brimming over with water, so that it just could not ignite. Then he said or rather prayed, "Show that You are God". And the fire came down and consumed not only the sacrifice, but also the stones, and the water, and everything! When God comes in everything else has to go.

That was God committing Himself. It was God saying, "Yes, I am with this". Oh! that we knew more of the committal of God, more of God saying "Yes, I am with you. Yes, I am with this people". We may stop here for the present, praying earnestly for such an ordering of our lives in obedience and holiness, that such a visitation from heaven may turn us wholly and solely to Him, even our exalted Lord, to serve Him with reverence and fear.

With a sense of loss we mention the Home - call to Glory of God's servant Bro.M.Paul, on 16th February after a period of hospitalization and treatment in various hospitals at Kadapa, Kurnool, and finally at Hyderabad. After a short service at Hebron around the mortal remains, the body was brought to Badvel, the last place of his ministry. Hundreds of servants and saints flocked to bid farewell and sympathize with the family members at the funeral service on 18th February. It is very significant that during the six decades of his association with His honored servant late Bro. Bakht Singh, he willingly assumed responsibility and ministry in the churches in nearly sixteen centers or more. He was a man of humble origin and simplicity and the Lord used him to bring about harmony, accord and peaceful functioning of the leaders and responsible brethren and saints together particularly in various parts of Rayalseema area in A.P.. He had a large family of eight children. Besides the testimonies of fellow - workers regarding his exemplary life and walk, the little note he wrote in his diary to his children was very moving as we heard it. It read like this- "My children, I brought you all up in the fear of the Lord, teaching you to honour His Word and settled you in life as the Lord enabled me. Now most of you are in His service. I could not provide much

more for you, but you see that your children also follow this example, and the Lord will reward you and compensate at His coming that which you seem to lack". I think it is a challenge for us all fellow - servants concerning the upbringing of our families, a new generation for the Lord. It was at the funeral service of Sis.(Mrs.)Beatrice Joseph that I met him last, when he reminded me that he had spent sufficient time at Badvel and that he would like to move. I could not say anything, but the Lord's time had come for His promotion to Glory. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints". He finished his course with joy. Let us pray for his aged wife Sis. Marthamma and for her children.

Thank the Lord for enabling Bro.T. E. Koshy to be in India for prayer, fellowship and ministry and sharing of matters related to the Lord's Testimony and work in the land and regions beyond.

He shared with us that our dear Bro. Paul Wolf of Strasbourg, France, has been ailing for some time. He was hospitalized but doctors decided not to do any surgery on him. So please pray for him that the Lord may touch him and restore him. Please also remember his wife Lilly, other family members and the local assembly in Strasbourg, France.

Bro. Koshy covets our prayers as he will be ministering in Singapore, from March 1-3, Auckland, New Zealand, March 7-9, Wellington, March 10 and 11 and in various parts of Sydney, Australia, March 12-23. Please pray for the Australia Holy Convocation scheduled for March 21-23. He will return to Syracuse on 28th March.

Praying that the God of Jacob may hear us and send us help from His sanctuary, that we may serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear,

Isaiah 41:8,14, Isaiah 44:2,21, Deuteronomy 32:9
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

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NO 6

ARE YOU A PRIEST?

The word "priest" has, most probably, an equivalent in almost every major language of the world. However different people have different ideas as to who a priest is. Generally speaking, priests are found in places of worship and they are supposed to give teaching to the people.

In the very first book of the Bible, Genesis, we are told that Abraham the Patriarch, was met by Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God" (Genesis 14:18). This event occurred about 2000 years before Christ, or about 4000 years before the present day. So you can see that the idea of a "Priest" is very old indeed. This idea is of Divine origin, and God's thought about a priest is very great and noble.

Threefold Duties

According to the Word of God, that is the Bible, a priest is, first, one who comes FROM GOD TO THE PEOPLE to give them God's message. He commands them in God's Name to repent and he shows them the way of salvation.

Secondly, the priest is one who goes FROM THE PEOPLE TO GOD to pray for their needs, their welfare and their happiness. He pleads with God on their behalf, and obtains God's favor for them.

Thirdly, the priest is one who OFFERS SACRIFICES TO GOD, bringing Him joy and satisfaction.

A Mediator

Thus you will see that a priest is a mediator between God and man. You may ask, "Why do I need a mediator? Why should I not go to God directly?" No doubt, if you knew how to go to God directly you would not need a priest, and in fact, then you would be a priest yourself. But the hard fact is that at present you do not know anything about the way to God, and the services of a priest are, to you, indispensable.

Man's Need

To begin with, all of us are sinners, and are quite ignorant of the way to God. Sometimes we have even doubted, "Is there a God?" "Is there a Heaven?" "Is there a hell?" "Is salvation possible?" As the Scripture says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" Isaiah 53:6. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:11-18).

Seeing this our miserable condition, the Lord Jesus came into the world, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). Now "we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the

Son of God" (Heb. 4:14).

Christ's High Priestly Ministry

Christ fulfils to perfection the ministry of a priest. First of all, He came from God to man with the message of salvation saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Secondly, He takes all our needs to the Heavenly Father. He intercedes for us and obtains both forgiveness for our sins, and also grace to overcome all our temptations. He saves to the uttermost all who come to God by Him.

Thirdly, the Lord Jesus has offered the supreme sacrifice. Other priests have offered animal sacrifices or even human sacrifice. But the Lord Jesus surpasses them all in as great a measure as the heavens are higher than the earth. He offered Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, as a sin offering, and took away all our sins. He offered Himself upon the cross unto God the Father in perfect obedience as a burnt offering of the sweetest savor. Indeed the sweetness of the savor of His unique sacrifice has filled the world and the universe!

Dear Reader, can you find a better priest to help you in your need? The Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world, the Great High Priest for all sinners, will save you with a great and wonderful salvation, - if you will only put your faith in Him and accept Him as your Saviour today.

You Also Are A Priest!

When you accept this great salvation the Lord Jesus will make you also a priest to fulfill this threefold ministry. First, you will become His messenger to take His message of salvation to your friends and relations and to others whom you meet. Second, He will give you the privilege to pray for people in their need: for their spiritual need to help them to obtain salvation; for their mental need, to help them to receive peace; for their physical need, to help them to get healing. He will answer your prayers to bring blessing, joy and peace to many. Third, He will make your life so full of heavenly joy that your life of gratitude and devotion will be like a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God, which will bring great satisfaction to Him.

You may be an open sinner or a secret sinner, or you may be the greatest sinner upon the earth. But if you repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, your sins will be forgiven and forgotten; you will be made a priest of God. Will you not come to Christ today?

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron, Golconda Crossroads Hyderabad – 500020, A.P., India
Telephone No: 27613066, Date: 07-03-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prevailing Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath been exalted far above all, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high in heavens, a Minister of the true sanctuary which the Lord pitched and not man. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, based on the one offering of His body once for all, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. We are in the dispensation of the Spirit of God from Pentecost, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. We may consider profitably concerning the ministry of the Spirit, the Spirit of truth, from what the Lord Himself spoke to His disciples before His death on the cross (Heb. 8:1,2; 10:10,15; Rom. 8:16; John 16:12).

In His talk to His disciples the Lord said, "I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). We have to ask ourselves if this is still true of us. He had previously told the Jews, that He had many things to speak and to judge concerning them (John 8:26), but to the disciples He did not speak of judging but revealing. Yet He had to say that He could not do that immediately. They would not be able to bear them. We might have expected Him to say, "But you cannot understand them now". But He Who is the truth knows that in our lives the question of understanding is not the decisive problem, for our real difficulty lies in 'obeying'. The more He says to us, the greater is the test as to whether we will obey. Often to obey is the same as to bear something - to bear His reproach, His cross, His Name.

The Lord went on to say that the Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. Here again we might have expected Him to have said, "When the Spirit of truth is come, He will teach you about the truth". But it is not enough to be taught about the truth. Step by step we must be guided to Him Who is the TRUTH, and each step involves obedience. Since He Himself is the truth (John 14:6) and since God's Word is truth (John 17:17), what the Lord was saying was that the Spirit of truth would guide them into the full knowledge of Him, His nature, His way, His work. Teaching can easily make us puffed up, as knowledge puffs up. Guidance however makes us humble, the more so, since we can hardly avoid stumbling in the way and being exposed in our follies.

When the Lord Jesus walked down here, He directed His disciples' attention away from Himself to the Father. "...As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28); and "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16); and again, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (12:49). In a similar way the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, "shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come" (16:13). Here then we have a test as to whether it is the Holy Spirit Who speaks, or whether it is a person, who presents himself in the Name of Jesus, and is a preacher of His Word, yet speaks of himself. The test is a very delicate one, but the sensitive conscience with a sensitive ear can hear the difference. Moreover the test does not apply as to how the person speaks, but also what he speaks about. The Lord said that the Spirit of truth would teach His disciples "things that are to come". What did He mean? Well, we find the answer when we accompany Him into the garden of Gethsemane. We find that when men came with lanterns and weapons, Jesus knew all things that were coming upon Him (18:4). This is first and foremost, that the Spirit of truth declares to us, namely, our Saviour's self-sacrifice in the death of the cross, and all that was entailed - the disgrace He went through for our sake.

We accept that the Spirit of truth has never worked more powerfully than through the Apostle Paul. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). The Spirit taught him that "the things that were to come", actually came in those dreadful hours after Jesus had spoken those words to His disciples. And they were never to come again. Thus the Holy Spirit lays great stress on the completed work of salvation. Salvation thus is a finished work.

The Spirit of truth is not occupied with sensations, but with the glad tidings of Christ's sacrifice. The consequences of those things which came upon Him have not yet been realized in their fullness. That is what we still look forward to. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). Since the Spirit of truth always concentrates attention on our suffering and crucified Saviour, He always makes known to us what has not yet come, but what will soon come as the fruit of His finished work. Christ alone is the subject of the Spirit of Truth, the One Who was, and is, and is to come, Christ the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

The Lord told His disciples that the Spirit of Truth would glorify Him (John 16:14). Just as the Son glorified the Father, revealing by words and deeds the holiness and love and truth of the Father, so does the Holy Spirit glorify Jesus by revealing to us His nature, His love, His retreats for nights of prayer, His simple yet deep talk, and His purity. In this way the Spirit guides us into all the truth, for the truth is indeed Jesus - not always as we imagine Him, but as He really is. His glory is the greatest on the cross. That was the time for Him "to be lifted up", but only the Holy Spirit can show that, for it contradicts all our ideas of exaltation and glory. The Lord helping we may continue in our next issue.

The following five servants of God who have been under training and serving in fellowship with the Lord's Testimony and work at Hebron, were united in marriage with five handmaidens of the Lord, on 29th February. Bro. T.E. Koshy gave the message drawing our attention to the marriage at Cana of Galilee. He emphasized that as Jesus was called we must readily call Him and be willing to give Him honour and obedience as our Lord in married life. Brothers G.T Benjamin and Joseph Kurien solemnized the marriages. We would covet your prayers for Bro. Shalem Raju united with Sis. Zipporah, Bro. Samson with Sis. Jayanthi, Bro. Daniel with Sis. Joy Mary, Bro. Jeremiah with Sis. Salome, and Bro. Ephraim with Sis. Persis. May the Lord be pleased to send them into His harvest as He taught us to pray in Matt. 9:38.

It pleased the Lord to promote to Glory Bro. D. Abraham of Kotagiri, on 2nd February after being hospitalized for more than a month. He labored as the Lord's full time servant and minister of the Word in the Nilgiri Hills for more than three decades.

He was instrumental in establishing testimonies not only in the Nilgiri Hills but also in the plains in places like Mettupalayam, Coimbatore, Erode, etc. He rests from his labors (Rev. 14:13). Please pray for the comfort of his wife and children.

Praying that the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father may lead us into all truth and make us indeed free to glorify and serve the Lord Jesus, and the Father through Him,

Rom.8:1,2, Gal. 5:1,5,6, Psalms. 146:5,7,8
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB BAKHT SINGH

In Genesis 25:21-26 we read of the birth of Jacob and Esau. Before their birth God had promised Rebekah that "the elder shall serve the younger" (v. 23). Jacob was a simple man who stayed in the tents. Esau was a clever hunter and cooked excellent venison. We read in Gen. 25:28, "Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison". God had promised the birthright to Jacob, though by law it belonged to Esau. Jacob wanted to get his brother to acknowledge that the birthright was his, so he cunningly took advantage of his brother's hunger and weakness. Esau asked for some of Jacob's red pottage because he was faint. "And Jacob said: Sell me this day thy birthright". And Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for "bread and pottage of lentil's... thus Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:27-34).

Because Esau despised his birthright, he is called a fornicator or profane person (Heb. 12:16-17). He lost his blessing because, when his father Isaac became old, he was being deceived by his appetite. Because of his love for his son's venison, he wanted to give the firstborn's portion to him. Genesis chapters 26 and 27 reveal the true character of Isaac. Though Esau was going against his parents' wishes (Gen. 26:34-35), Isaac was trying to give him the blessing (Gen. 27:19),

simply because of his lust for the venison his son Esau was bringing to him. As a contrast, Jacob, when he became old and was blessing his grandsons, blessed them by God's wisdom and not by appearance (Gen. 48:14). Going contrary to the order of birth, he laid his right hand upon Ephraim the younger son and his left hand on Manasseh the elder. Joseph thought that because of his father's age and bad eyesight he might have made a mistake, but Jacob was rightly led by the Spirit of God. Because of Isaac's love for venison he made a mistake. To day also how many in old age, because of love for children, or love for money and property, make mistakes in God's plan. Their children want to marry in God's will but the parents do not allow them to do so, because they want worldly gain for their children. Seek God's help and never think of the future of your children in that way.

Isaac was controlled by his love for venison and not by God's order. He knew fully well how Esau had first of all, despised his birthright, and how secondly, he married against his parents' choice and it was a grief to them. It was for this reason that Rebecca interfered and instructed Jacob what to do in order to get the blessing (vs. 8,12,13). She remembered also what God had told her even before the birth of the children. She remembered too, how Esau had despised the birthright. But she did not believe fully that God would surely fulfill His promise, so she took things into her own hands and interfered, (vs. 26-28).

God confirmed to Jacob the blessing He had promised to Abraham and his seed. Though the enemy may seek by many things to deceive us, God intervenes somehow and enables us to get the portion He has planned for us. Esau was so full of hatred that he wanted to kill Jacob (v. 41). He had sold his birthright, so he should have expected that the blessing belonged to Jacob. He could see how things had been planned by Rebecca and how God had blessed Jacob. If he had accepted the same, Esau would surely have had his blessing. Perhaps Esau was told how because he had despised his birthright the Lord had allowed this to happen and rather than admit his mistake he planned to kill Jacob. That thought reveals what was in the heart of Esau. Before Esau's birth God knew his character, and that is why he did not give him the blessing.

In Genesis 28:1, Isaac blessed Jacob and charged him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. This was because, Esau had brought grief to both Isaac and Rebecca because of his marriages (Gen. 27:26 and 26:34,35). Jacob however was obedient to his parents (Gen. 28:7). While Jacob was doing things to obey his parents, Esau was doing things to bring grief to his parents, and by bitter experiences Isaac learned that lesson. There are some lessons we learn only after bitter experiences. We learn not to depend upon our own judgment. Isaac learned that lesson and sent Jacob away (Gen. 28:2).

Abraham had sent his servant to bring a bride for Isaac, after giving him all instructions. In this case Isaac told Jacob to go to Laban's house and choose his daughter for a wife. It is quite possible that the Lord must have revealed this matter to the mother first. Rebecca knew how to enquire from the Lord for different matters because from the birth of the twins she had done so. "She went to enquire of the Lord" (Gen. 25:22). Evidently she knew how to go to the Lord and enquire about the problems (To be contd.)

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LET US GO ON

(Chapter by chapter through Hebrews)

The Epistle to the Hebrews touches what is perhaps the greatest problem and temptation that assails the Christian Church, - retrogression to externalism . And , thank God , it consistently stresses the only valid answer , "Advance" , "Advance with God" , and "Advance by faith".

As any navigator knows, drift is always a danger, and it is amazing how imperceptible this drift can be. Without our realizing that anything at all is happening, we can suddenly discover that we have been silently carried to a very different position, - it could be towards dangerous rocks. The greatest safeguard in such situations is not mere vigilance but plain and positive advance. We must start the motor and go forward, and keep going forward; - that alone will be our salvation.

All this certainly applies to spiritual matters, and to the whole issue of God's Church, and of His true testimony in the nations. Because of hidden currents and prevailing breezes, the ever-present tendency is to drift, and the only safeguard is advance, spiritual advance . And that is what Hebrews is all about!

In the case of the Hebrews themselves, the temptations had been to revert again towards Judaism with its impressive forms and soul - satisfying ceremonies. This was something deeply ingrained within them, and indeed, it had become part of them. Even after they had made their stand for Christ it still pursued them, and somehow pulled at them, perpetually threatening to erode their experience of "the glorious liberty of the sons of God". Try as they would, they found it increasingly hard to turn over "the whole new leaf", and to treat as shadow that which, at its best, was only intended to be shadow. Their inward make-up seemed to tell them that at least some place would have to be left in their outlook for such a revered and revealed system as Judaism, and for its required rituals. Indeed , they felt it would only be right and "Christian" to make certain limited concessions to it. The drift, in fact, was on.

The writer to the Hebrews clearly discerns the situation, and faithfully and fearlessly exposes the incoming tendencies and warns the Hebrews of them. Then, best of all, he provides them with the clear solution, "Let us go on" (Ch. 6:1). While showing all due appreciation of the Jewish types and ceremonies, he nevertheless warns them of the continuing "earth-touch", and patiently sets before them the all-inclusive Antitype - a new creation in Christ. With all his heart he would have them go on with Him to their fuller and more glorious and spiritual inheritance, and he abundantly supplies to them the needed motivation for so doing. In the first chapter , for instance , he speaks of the all - surpassing excellency of God's Son, and then, in the next chapter, unfolds to them the undreamed- of greatness of God's salvation. Throughout the epistle, he consistently shows them the Christian's far better spiritual inheritance in Christ, and presents Him as the One True Substance that answers to, and far excels, all the earlier shadows.

That is the picture, then, and that is the call that "Hebrews" sets before us. Perhaps, in some cases, even amongst the Hebrews, it was not altogether a matter of reverting to the actual forms and ceremonies of Judaism, but rather to what we may call the Judaistic "mind", or, shall we say, the inborn habit of externalistic thinking in religious things. In such cases it would be the "Christian" procedures, traditions, organizations that began to be to them the all-important things rather than the essentially spiritual. Whichever kind it was, it certainly evidenced a dangerous drift, and it cried out for recognition and correction.

All this, of course, has equal application to us. We do not hesitate to say that born-again believers in our day are still subject to the same subtle temptation, and may become victims of a similar imperceptible drift. Praise God, the New Birth itself launches us out into the Spirit, and into the great wonder-realm of spiritual things. Once we have had that experience, our lives begin to be centered in the heavenlies, hid with Christ in God, and we are possessed of a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, - certainly not of this world. At that point, however, the temptation (and indeed the tendency within our own natural being) is to try to crystallize our discoveries, and to press them into certain religious moulds and procedures which we fondly hope may extend their permanence or aid in the propagation of them. With the best of intentions, perhaps, certain systems of procedure are evolved and set in motion, and all unconsciously, we begin to handle everything, with less and less actual dependence on the Spirit of God. Thus, without our immediately knowing it, we too have brought in the "earth touch" and the glory has departed. Human hands have seized the sacred ark, and the inevitable "death" has followed. To say the least, the drift has set in. All unconsciously, we have created another form of Judaism, shall we call it "Christian" Judaism, and have become the servants of another soul-based ritual. Life in the Spirit has somehow seeped away, and we discover all too late, (or do we?), that we only have a shell, or, at best, a poor caricature of true vital testimony. The world, of course, looks on and makes its surprisingly shrewd assessment of the thing we have created, and of what we are devoted to, and it is not impressed. "What do these feeble Jews", they say, and, in this case, rightly so. Perhaps we should point out, right here that whenever we copy the world, and use its devices, we actually lose our power with the world, and have no effective purchase on it. It is right to say that we can only bless the world when we mystify it, and bring in an element, Very Real Element, - God Himself, for which they are not equal.

The great purpose of Hebrews, then is to prevent, or correct, that ever-threatening drift in spiritual things. And the answer in every chapter is "Go on", "Go on with God", and, very importantly, "Go on by faith".

We should perhaps be quick to add that wherever True Life is present, and really allowed to govern, it will surely have its own appropriate and spontaneous "order", but that, too will be something living and from above. And, to a right degree, it will always be flexible as the hour may require, for in that matter too, "the wind bloweth where it listeth", it is beyond human control.

Leaving aside, however, for the moment, this more explicit matter of a backward drift to religious externalism, it is beyond question that "Hebrews" still has a very clear and wide application to us all, for it deals very fully, and very powerfully, with this whole matter of GOING ON. Even if we are not, for the present, showing any retrogressive tendencies of the particular kind that we have mentioned, the question still stands, - are we as PROGRESSIVE as we ought to be? Are we staying too long in the shallows when the Lord would have us "Launch out into the deep"? Or, to use Paul's phrase, are we "pressing toward the mark" as we should? Are we truly entering into the spiritual, and leaving behind the natural and the carnal? Putting it still more simply, are we "growing in grace" as we should be, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"? (2 Pet. 3:18). In this respect also, "Hebrews" cries out to us, and says, "Let us GO ON". May the Lord help us, then, to GO FORWARD as we should, for indeed, the days are short.

What we have said in this introduction should be carefully kept in mind in our now contemplated chapter-by-chapter perusal of the letter, for it helps us to perceive the basic object of the letter, and to see its tremendous application to us all today. But our special aim in these pages has been to achieve some essential brevity and simplicity, so that even the youngest searcher can be helped to find his way through this epistle, and get a lasting blessing from it. Hence the brief outlines of each chapter, and the prayerfully selected "Key-comments". In the latter, we have sought to trace, in sequence, the true substance of the unfolding theme. Prayer will again be needed in the study, and we plead for it. And may we all be saved from that drift to the merely outward which so persistently and insidiously threatens God's testimony in this world.

And may we all GO ON !
(To be contd.) C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron, Golconda Crossroads Hyderabad – 500020, A.P., India
Telephone No: 27613066, Date: 20-03-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

All glory and honour, wisdom and power, be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who being in the form of God...made himself of no reputation... and was made in the likeness of men... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Rev. 5:12,13; Phil. 2:6-8).

The cross of Christ is the central truth of the Christian Gospel and faith, as Apostle Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15 : 1 - 4; "...the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received... By which also ye are saved... that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures". It is indeed a profound mystery and the most glorious revelation, unveiling the heart of God, declaring a full and free forgiveness of sins to all who truly believe.

The season ahead, known as Easter in Christendom, is marked with special gatherings, and ministries throughout the world, focusing on the sufferings of Christ, which culminated in His obedience unto death, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). Let us pray that God the Holy Spirit may move through all such preaching and presentation of Christ and Him crucified, to reach sin-stricken souls in every nation, tongue and kindred and raise them to newness of life and liberty, through their faith in the crucified Christ. Also the saved may be sanctified unto holiness by the power of the cross, to become an expression of His sanctuary, as His workmanship and new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10).

Paul's boundless glorying in the cross, at least on the purely human side springs from the fact that it meets absolutely every aspect of man's fallen state, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Man desperately needs to be forgiven, cleansed and restored to God's favor, in a word, redeemed. One may make a holy resolve to do good, embracing the teachings of and maxims of philosophers and religious scholars of repute. But the stain of sin remains and guilt continues to burden the soul until faith fastens his gaze on Calvary, whence came the first words of the Saviour, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Though the crime be ever so great, the shame ever so deep, and the sin ever so heinous, at Calvary where the Son of man was lifted, two thousand years ago, there is deliverance that will satisfy for both time and eternity, leaving nothing to be desired.

We are not only forgiven as we embrace the crucified risen Lord as our Saviour and

sacrifice, but we are declared righteous, "justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" as seen in Rom. 5:1. The sinner who believes and receives Christ is acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing before God. It leaves one gasping with amazement, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" as he comes to realize that such was the work of redemption consummated on Calvary's cross, that by reason of its infinite efficacy God can consistently declare the one who believes as righteous, free from all guilt. This is God's offer to all who by faith avail themselves of "this unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

"Good Friday" is followed by Easter Sunday, the third day- "he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4). Thus the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the public display of the triumph of the crucified One, Who died on the cross and was taken down and buried. The triumphant cry of Jesus on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30) declares that the victory itself is complete, conquering sin and death and Satan. As His worshippers, witnesses and workers, engaged in spiritual warfare, we must affirm as well as appropriate, the infallibility and invincibility of this glorious message of the cross committed to us. In Apostle Paul's closing words in 1 Corinthians 15, which begins with the Gospel of our salvation, and leads on to the glorious victory of resurrection, he exhorts, "... be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (1 Cor. 15:58).

The resurrection day, the first day of the week, marks a new era. It was the Lord's Day, and was to be the Holy Day, rather than the seventh day as before. It is the day set apart for worship, and remembrance of the Lord, with such exhortations and teachings from the Scriptures, as the Spirit appoints for the edification of all true believers, who assemble together in His Name (Acts 20:7). The seventh day is the "rest of creation" (Exo. 20:8) but the Lord's day symbolizes the "rest of redemption" and the new creation (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

"His resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead is the fundamental doctrine of Christian faith (Rom. 10:6-10). It is God's guarantee that His power is available to us, to enable us to live day by day in a manner pleasing to Him (Rom. 6:4,5; 8:11-13; Col. 3:1). It is God's token to us for the future, that we too shall one day rise from the dead (John 11:25,26; 1 Cor. 15:12-16). By the resurrection of Jesus God proved to all the deity of His Son, His beloved one (Rom. 1:4).

Though we have touched the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of Calvary Who hung on the cross, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities as we read in Isa 53:5, it is good to recall the first word the Saviour spoke from the cross. He used the cross in the midst of excruciating pain and agony, as a pulpit, so to say, to appeal to the Father pleading forgiveness for all who were responsible for the murderous deed of putting Him to death. The words "Father, forgive them" are applicable, so to say, to the millions coming down the centuries, who have yet to hear the message of the cross and be brought out of their ignorance unto repentance, realizing their sinfulness before the holiness of God. We may recall the reference in Isa. 53:12, "... he made intercession for the transgressors", as He poured out His soul unto death.

It is good for us to point out a few Bible verses and facts about God's forgiveness, for it is certainly a prominent subject of the Bible and the most prominent need of every man born of a woman. "...the Lord ... forgiveth all thine iniquities" (Psa. 103:2,3). "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" (Psa. 32:1). "...there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" (Psa. 130:4). What a beautiful word forgiveness is! Even a small child can know its sweetness - particularly when some personal misdemeanor has been discovered and tearfully confessed. How comforting then is the parents' assurance that everything now is forgiven and all is well! We can say that Christians are first and foremost, "a forgiven people", and with them everything begins by experiencing God's mercy. They all sing, "The song of a sinner forgiven" and then also, "The song of a pilgrim to heaven". It is indeed a great wonder that the Almighty Creator of the universe is a God

Who forgives. Reader, are you in the assurance and enjoyment of this full and free forgiveness to be received by faith in the crucified Man of Calvary?

Let us pray for all the special gatherings of the Easter week in our assemblies throughout-, i& I and, that many may come into the joy of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, as well as the restoration of those who have backslidden into the ways of the world.

1 John 1: 7,9 Isaiah: 43:1,2,25 Heb:8:10-12
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB - 2 **BAKHT SINGH**

Rebecca went to the Lord about Jacob's future, and He must have revealed to her that Jacob should go to Laban's house and take his daughter for himself. On the way God appeared to Jacob in a dream, and this in itself shows that he was sent with much prayer. God uses many situations to bring us into His perfect plan. Even though Isaac had made a very big mistake in trying to bless Esau, the Lord used the same mistake to bring Jacob into His heavenly plan. But for that, Jacob would not have left the place and gone away from there. In the same way when Joseph's brothers wanted to kill Joseph the Lord took him to Egypt. God does rule over our follies and mistakes to bring us into His heavenly plan. At the same time, by our failure we learn to trust God more fully and to take hold of Him completely. Thus Jacob had to leave his home. He was then in a better position to hear the voice of God clearly. When we are in difficulty and things go wrong, we do not hear the voice of God clearly. But in our difficulties when we pray much we can hear the voice of God speaking with us. With a heavy and sad heart Jacob was going away from home. God appeared to him in a dream to comfort him and tell him His purpose. Though Jacob could not understand what God was saying at that time, he received divine strength. The message which the Lord gave him became clear to him only after twenty-eight years. It was only when God appeared to him and he returned to Bethel that he began to realize and understand the real purpose and meaning of the dream (Gen. 35:1,9,15).

God wanted Jacob to be a prince and a king and a father of many nations. For that purpose God had to train him and it took twenty-eight years to teach him this lesson. In the eyes of God he was a king and not an ordinary person. Even though God had made him a king it was only after many years of suffering that he began to see what God had revealed to him, that he was not going to be an ordinary king but was going to have angels to minister unto him. In Gen . 28:12, God had shown Jacob that he had angels to serve him and watch over him. Jacob saw a ladder in the dream and the angels ascending and descending. God was saying to Jacob, "I have commanded the angels to be at your service and unseen by you they are working on your behalf, that my promise for you may be fulfilled and that you may receive your full inheritance later on".

(To be contd.)

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