

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOL. 46

June 08, 2008

NO 12

LET US GO ON - 6 (Hebrews Chapter Five) FACTS A B O U T SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD

I. THE NEED OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE (vs. 1-3).

Those who are to function for men need to be able to feel for men, - and to have genuine compassion for those who are out of the way.

II. THE NEED OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT TO THE TASK (VS. 4-5).

As experienced in the case of Aaron (v.4). (See Exo. 28:1).

As experienced, more dramatically, in the case of Christ (v.5) (Psa. 2 : / ; 110:4).

III. THE FACT OF A NEW "ORDER" OF PRIESTHOOD (vs. 6-10).

i.e. The "order" of Melchisedec (vs. 6,10). Christ's appointed priesthood bore certain similarities to that of the mysterious priest who met Abram in Gen . 14 :1 8 -2 1 . This point is developed in detail in chapter seven.

IV. THE GREAT DEEPS OF THE SUBJECT (vs. 11-14).

Requiring a degree of understanding, then lacking in the Hebrews. This was reprehensible in their case; - they had shown "dullness of hearing". (We need to pray against a similar dullness, and that God will speedily open our eyes to behold THIS "wondrous thing" out of His law)(Psa. 119:18).

In the preceding chapters, Christ has been shown as "Greater than the angels" (ch. 1), "Greater than Moses" (ch. 3), and "Greater than Joshua" (ch. 4:8). Now He begins to be shown as "Greater than Aaron", a theme that runs right on into the later chapters, and is central to the message of the letter.

As the Son of Man, Christ certainly possessed this essential qualification of human understanding and compassion; - see Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 20:34; 23:37, etc., also Luke 23:34, and this led on to His divine appointment, - "Priest for ever" (Psa. 110:1,4). We are told that He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (v.8), meaning that He had experiential insight into the full content and beauty of obedience by Himself treading, as Man, that path of "obedience" which led to the awful sufferings of the cross. The disposition of obedience, of course, was always His, but there was also the transition from "disposition" to "deed", and here was something "gained", or "added", through the deep mystery of His incarnation. Now He is the Author of eternal salvation (compare ch. 2:3) to all who obey Him.

Our chapter teaches us that Christ's actual appointment as Priest coincided with His exaltation to the Throne . According to Acts 13:33 the pronouncement of His Sonship was made on the day of resurrection, and Psalm 110:1-4 shows us that His special priesthood for us dated

from the hour of His enthronement, as Man, in the Glory. Indeed, He is qualified to be the perfect Priest, having entered in, with Blood, within the veil. All this, as we said, is fully developed later in the epistle.

The remarks at the end of the chapter regarding the Hebrews' immaturity were both deliberate and salutary, and fully in accord with the overall theme of "going on". It is still a fact that those who revolve around the earthly aspects of religion, even of Christianity, tend towards a prolonged spiritual infancy, and show little relish for the "meat" of God's deeper things. Consequently much of what God would give has to be held back. It is a kindness to point out these facts when necessary, and it can lead right on to eternal and spiritual enrichment for those concerned.

(To be contd.)

C.R.G

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

as from HEBRON, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad – 500020, AP, INDIA,
Telephone No. 27613066, 2222008 Date : 07-05-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

May all glory and honour, praise and power go unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Priest and King on His Throne, ever interceding for us, working all things together for good for us as we set our love upon Him, as those who are called according to His purpose in Himself. As we are about to step into the new month, may we do so with confidence in His promise as the unchanging One, Who abideth faithful, Who having called us into the fellowship of His Son is able to carry us through (Rev. 5:13,14; Rom. 8:28,32; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:24).

Romans 8:28 has another rendering as some Bibles have, - "We know that, to them that love God, God worketh all things with them, for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose". All things do not themselves always work together for good. What the Lord meant by this verse is very far from the ordinary cheery optimism, by which one is prone to say to another, 'Oh! everything is for good'. It is not. As there is a great deal of evil in this world, only our God can make things that in themselves are evil, turn out to be for the good of those who love Him, and who are called according to His purpose. It is not easy to believe that everything that comes to us is especially planned by God as being for our good. There is a sense in which that is true, but we know how hard it is to believe it sometimes. But this we must believe, that the Lord not only permits but lays hold of everything that comes to us, and even though evil it may be of itself, makes it to be for our good. What a God we have! And that is the point of this verse which says, "We know...".

Now, what do we know? If we have been Christians many years, it would be an interesting task to make a list of things that we have found out that we did not know after all. We thought we knew many things, but the more we go on, the less inclined we are to be dogmatic about them; we are not so sure now that we know. But there is one knowledge that surely must be deepening and strengthening in us all the time. We know not so much what is happening, but we know who is in control of what is happening. We know that God works all things for good, and that is the knowledge that is come to us with encouragement, and God knows that the saints need encouragement. For our enheartening let us remember and let us lay hold of this. There are a thousand things that we do not know and that perplex us, and if we are occupied with them they will dispirit us, and dishearten us. They are insoluble problems to us but we can afford to put them on one side and say, "I do not know why this or that is happening but I do

know my God, and I know that He is in control of them all".

There are three relationships with God, that are mentioned in Romans chapter 8 - viz. GOD for US, GOD with US, and GOD in US. These lie as the very foundation of the strength of such a knowledge of God. The first of them as mentioned above is that God is for us even though everything seems to be against us. That was what the Apostle was saying in this chapter when he gave the list of the kind of things that saints were suffering. It is a very complete one and taken on its face value seems very strongly to contradict the fact that God was for them. If God is for me, why tribulation? If God is for me, why anguish, why persecution, why famine, why peril, why this and why that? Well, we do not know why, and we shall only get in muddle if we try to sort it out. We have to come back to what we know. We know that in spite of all that seems to be against us, through all this, God is for us. He is on our side through all this. God is for us. He is on our side.

So the Apostle does not mean to say that because God is for us, we have a smooth time and nothing comes against us. What he says looking round on it all is, - it is against us, bitterly against us, but if God is for us, who can be against us? The ultimate issue is certain because God is for us, even though - and this is the strangest mystery of it all - even though at times God Himself seems to be against us. Take the history of Job. It looked as though God was against him. There are times when God seems to be against us. He does not prosper the way that we wanted to take. He brings disciplinary trials into our lives, and even chastens us. And yet even when God seems to be against us, we have this assurance back of it all, He is for us! He may be against something in us, but He is for us. We would remember how Jacob at the end of his life made this rather petulant and yet very bitter cry. "All these things are against me" (Gen. 42:36) - and they were. That was the history of Jacob's life. Everything that seemed to promise good turned out to his wounding and crippling, and here was a sense in which that was not just happening to him. It was God Who was standing across the path all the time. God in a sense was against him. And yet we know, because we know the end of the story, God had set His love upon Jacob. God was for Jacob and the discipline that came to him was itself the surest proof that God so loved Jacob and had such a plan of love for him that He would never let him go his own way. Thank God when He stands against us, for behind His so doing there is love that is for us.

God is for us. What was true of Jacob was true of Jacob's people, and is true right to this day. How often the Lord seemed to be against them, How often the Lord sent trials and punishments to them and yet God was for them, as He was for no other nation. Today the world looks on and says God is against the Jews (and if they take things at their face value, we can quite understand people saying that God is against us). In a sense, He is against them in their carnal state, against them in their flesh, against them in their earthliness; but "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29), and one day the amazed world would stand and say, 'All the time, after all, God was for this people!' We shall see and the world will see, the amazing fact that in spite of centuries of persecution, anguish, trials and suffering, God was not against them in the ultimate sense. God was really for them and He will prove it. God helping, we will continue in our next issue.

The Youth Camp held at Hebron, Hyderabad, drew a large crowd of about 5,000 young people. Bro. Neville brought the Lord's message during the morning Bible Studies, based on the theme, "A kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12:28). Youth leaders, local elders and responsible brethren shared in the other ministries, Bro. Theodore Reginald also helping. Nearly a thousand have decided for the Lord. Seventy-six young brothers and sisters testified in the waters of baptism.

It has pleased the Lord to promote to Glory His handmaiden, Sis. (Miss) E. Bonner on the 2nd May at Hebron, Hyderabad. She was an inmate of Hebron for more than four decades, helping in

the ministry among sisters, as well as in the Hebron Messenger office. It may be said of her that she name to her "grave in a full age" (Job 5:26) after serving the Lord faithfully.

Please pray for the Lord's handmaiden Dr. (Miss) Sheela Gupta who is hospitalized at CMC Hospital, Vellore, awaiting radiation. Also pray for Sis. (Mrs.)Sanom Rai (wife of Bro. Daniel Rai of Kalimpong) who too is hospitalized at CMC Hospital Vellore for treatment.

Praying that we may face our problems and things that are against us, claiming the working together of all things for good by our sovereign God, Who hath chosen us in Him according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ before the world began, and follow Him wholly,

2 Tim. 1:9,10 Acts. 20 :2 4 Psa. 60 : 1 0 - 1 3

I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH - 2

B A K H T S I N G H

Most of us do not realize what talents God has given to us. That is why we live lives of barrenness. Through prayer we can find out what talents God has given us, and what He expects from us. If He expects me to bear any heavy burden, I must bear it patiently, and not complain that the burden is too heavy, and ask God to make it light. By failing in this way many people lose their rewards and heavenly inheritance. We should pray, "O Lord, give me sufficient grace, and I will bear the burden Thou hast given me".

A time came in the life of the Apostle Paul when he had a burden to bear which appeared too heavy for him. He was a man who never grumbled or complained of his sufferings, of which we have a long list in 2 Corinthians 11. Even such a man winced under the pressure of a painful thorn in his flesh, which God had allowed. We are not told what that thorn was. We only know that it was some- thing extremely painful. He besought the Lord thrice to take away that thorn, but God said, "My grace is sufficient for thee". This meant that whatever burden God wanted Paul to bear, could be borne by His grace.

Usually we ask God to lighten our burdens, and that is why we become less fruitful. God will not force us. He may lighten our burden, but our lives will become less fruitful. If you do not want to bear much burden, then do not expect your life to be fully fruitful. When you know a burden is given you by the Lord, then bear it. Many of us carry burdens which the Lord never required of us to carry, and we refuse the burdens which the Lord in His wisdom does give us.

Every believer has a definite responsibility to bear some burdens for God's glory. God does not want us to be idle in the world and doing nothing. We have a call, and a ministry to fulfill, and we must go on claiming God's grace for all our needs. Ask Him for more and more grace so that you may be faithful in all your responsibilities.

When the master of the house returned he rewarded the two faithful servants (Matt. 25:21,23). One had been given five talents, and brought forth five more. The other had been given two talents, and he brought forth two more. But both were given the same reward and the same commendation. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord". The Lord may save one or two souls through you, or perhaps more: it is up to Him. He will not ask of us things which we cannot do.

Now, for example, I cannot sing. I prayed for a long time after my conversion, "Lord, touch my lips, and let me sing". I sincerely thought that if I were to serve the Lord, I would be able to do it more effectively with singing. I prayed for two years, and very faithfully too. But the Lord said, "No". He knew better. If I do not sing the Lord will not ask me to give an account for it. I do not sing because I cannot sing. But there are some people who can sing. They have a nice voice and a fine throat. But when they feel a bit upset or depressed or discouraged, or perhaps they are angry with one of the elders, they say, "I won't sing, because So-and-So hurt my feelings". Such people will have to give an account to God. Are you using your talent for God's sake or for man's sake? Whatever talent is given to you, it must be used for God's glory and not for human reward or appreciation.

Whatever we have received from God must be used for His glory. We have to give an account to God for all our time and money and energy. In Matthew 12:36,37 we are told that we have to give an account even for every idle word we speak. But how many of us actually waste our time with things which have no value or meaning or connection with the work of God!

Suppose you are traveling in a train and the train is delayed for five or six hours somewhere. How would you use that time? Many people would spend their time laughing and joking, or eating monkey nuts. Some people must have something in their mouths all the time. While traveling, they feel so restless if they do not have something to munch. As believers we ought to use our time profitably. The Lord sometimes gives us extra time for a purpose. Maybe He has given you this time for prayer or meditation, or for winning souls. At such times you should pray, "Lord, teach me how to make the best use of my time". When you lose ten paise you will search the whole compound looking for it. When you go to bazaar for shopping you enquire the price of things in so many shops, and when you have saved ten paise, you are very proud. You think so much of money; what about God's time? How much time do you waste? According to God's Word, you must be very faithful to use the spare time given to you in magnifying Him, so that you may be able to say truthfully that you have made proper use of all that time.

Now the Lord tells us how we should be faithful with money entrusted to us. Please read Luke 16:10,11. I thought, in the beginning of my Christian life, that if I gave one-tenth regularly to God, then I could spend the remaining nine-tenths as I liked. I used to give to the Lord more than one-tenth and I gave it joyfully; but I had not learnt how to spend the remaining nine-tenths. One day I gave some money to a beggar and God said to me, "You have no right to give that money to that man". I had thought I was giving charity, because the Lord has said, "Give to him that asketh thee" (Matt. 5:42). But that morning God spoke to me, "Ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Like a sword these words pierced my heart and God said to me clearly, "Your body is My temple; your time is Mine; your money is also Mine; and you have no right to spend it without My permission". That was a lesson to me. From that time I was not able to spend one paise without the Lord's permission. This was not because I was miserly, but because God had made me His steward.

(To be Contd)

Edited by Bro.K.Phillip, Printed and Published by Bro.G.T.Benjamin for Hebron, Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad - 500 020,
at Chitralipi Printers, 1-1-1/18/1, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad.

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOL. 46

June 22, 2008

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LET US GO ON - 7 (I Hebrews Chapter Six) ADVANCE TO MATURITY

I. THE DIRECT APPEAL FOR SPIRITUAL ADVANCE (VS.1-3)

1. The goal; "perfection". (Same Greek as "full age" 5:14).
2. The danger;- excessive preoccupation with elementary things
3. NB Let us", - even the writer was still "going on". See also v.3, "This will we do" (Compare Phil. 3:13,14).

II. THE SOLEMN WARNING AGAINST RETROGRESSION (vs. 4-0).

- 1) It is evidently possible to "go back" despite much previous progress and blessing (vs. 4,5).
- 2) To do so amounts to a re-crucifying of Christ (v.6).
- 3) While this attitude is maintained , repentance eludes us (v.6).
- 4) Severe divine disciplines will be the only way (vs. 7,8). (Ground which only produces rubbish, and spreads disease, must be "burned off" and cleansed by fire...so that it may produce again).

III THE LOVING ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE HEBREWS (vs. 9-12).

They are addressed as "beloved ones" (v.9). The writer is confident that they will advance to full salvation (v.9). God Himself remembers their good beginnings and sacrificial ministries (v. 10). All they need is a patient maintenance of their earlier diligence (vs. 11,12).

IV. THE SURE PROMISES WE MAY CLAIM (vs. 13-18).

They were originally given to Abraham. (See Gen. 12:2,3; 22:15-18, etc.). ("Believers" are now the true children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7,9), so we inherit those very promises! NB The true "descent" is not physical but spiritual).They were confirmed by divine oath (vs. 16-18). How infallible! They are "obtained" on the basis of patient and enduring trust (v. 15).

V. THE GREAT SECURITY WE MAY ENJOY (vs. 19,20).

Our expectation of God's full salvation need not vacillate, for it is anchored and secured by Christ Himself within the veil. While He is there we may be confident.

"Hebrews" could well be called "The Epistle of the ox-goad", for again and again it urges us to "go on" in our spiritual life and experience. In the earlier chapters we have been seeing how much there is to go on into, such as partnership with our Lord in His Throne (ch. 2:10; 3:1,14 etc.), and even a sharing of God's rest (chapter 4). Now, in chapter 6, we have the direct and definite plea for advance into this inheritance, and, as we saw, the plea is enforced from all angles. There is the very solemn warning against the consequences of going back, and then, in the same breath, the loving personal encouragements for those addressed. Then come the reminders of the great covenant promises, and finally the assurance that our hope is steadfast, seeing that Christ Himself has entered in within the veil. The burden in the heart of the writer is evidently so

deep that he uses all possible arguments to urge us to "go on" and to enter into what he himself has seen, and is beginning to enjoy. The whole plea, of course, originates, in the first place, from God Himself, and it is He Who wants us to enter into what He has prepared for us. Behind it all, no doubt, is the Father's longing that the Son secure a bride or partner worthy of Himself.

Perhaps we should note again that the strong warnings given at the beginning of this chapter (like those in the earlier chapters) relate not to any "lost salvation" but rather to forfeited inheritance, and are mercifully given to us in order to spare us from unnecessary discipline and sufferings in our Christian lives. (See 1 Cor. 3:14,15). How sad if, after all we have received of God's grace, we should only bring forth thorns and briars! Better far to be like that softened earth mentioned in verse 7 which "drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it" and brings forth "herbs" that will be a joy and recompense to the Great Divine Husbandman. Indeed, we would say, "Let us go on" !

(To be contd.)

C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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Telephone No: 27613066, Date: 07-06-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath in His infinite goodness and mercy led us to the sixth month of the year. May the skilful hand of God lead us on to walk in the paths He hath foreordained for us in Himself, as we become His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Psa. 23:1,2,6; 78:72; Eph. 2:10).

Continuing our meditation based on Rom. 8:28 that our God is working all things together for our good, we have been considering the history of Jacob's people, the Jewish nation. For centuries they have been through trials and punishments and persecutions, but will finally emerge, as Paul states in Romans 11:26, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob". And Paul adds in verse 33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!... his ways past finding out!"

Now God can take centuries to do that when He is dealing with a nation. It is a smaller world when we come to our own particular little lives, but blessed be God, the same thing is true for us also. Do lay hold of this that God is for us. When everything is against, God is for us. When it seems as if even He is against you, He is in fact for you. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). God is for us.

Then there is the truth that comes out very clearly in Romans chapter eight - God is with us. Though it does not say that directly, it says a great deal about the impossibility of separating between God and His people, and in positive terms it means just this, that God is with us. There was a man who, in his own eyes, and in fact, was the weakest of the weak among God's people. In a day of great oppression, when everything seemed to suggest that God had deserted His people, the angel of the Lord came to this least member of the least of the tribes and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). Now, if ever there was a man who felt weak, it was Gideon. If ever there was a man, who once stepped forward though weak in faith, and had to go through further process of weakening, it was Gideon. The little that he seemed to have, the Lord took away from him, until humanly speaking, he was left with a pitifully inadequate band. But in that strange encircling of the enemy's camp, when they blew their trumpets and displayed their lights in weakness, it was proved that in the hour of their apparently most futile stand, God was with them (Judges 7:19-23).

The trouble with us is that, may be like Gideon we are all too inclined to say, 'When I feel strong shall know that God is with me. When He has so answered my prayer that I feel adequately sufficient for the situation that confronts me, then I shall know that God is with me'. Well, if we maintain that attitude, we shall never know as Gideon would never have known, if he had waited for that feeling. The angel came to him in his great weakness and said, "Go in this thy might" (Judges 6:14), - and Gideon had to step out with no proofs that God was with him, while everything was increasingly suggesting how hopeless was the task which he was facing. How often it is like that. But this is the assurance that we KNOW God; we KNOW that God is for us. We know as we humbly seek to walk before Him, that God is with us.

It is a very sad thing that so many of God's children do not get the joyful experience of finding almost to their surprise, that God is with them, because they never step out in faith. They are waiting to FEEL that He is with them, and they never will and they never do. They have never had the joy of opening their lips in testimony to some other person as to their Saviour. May be you say, 'I am so weak and so on'. This may be exactly true, but God is with you. You say, 'If God were with me, I could do it'. But God is with you as you humbly walk before Him and you will find that God is with you. Oh! this is the assurance that God will bring to our hearts, that in our greatest weakness and most conscious frailty if we step out, we shall in new ways make the blessed discovery of the fact that God is with us.

This needs further explanation by way of an example. The little story of the New Testament that most carefully guards this assumption, that the Lord is with us, is the following event in the early life of the Lord Jesus. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple at the age of 12. Returning from Jerusalem in a carefree way they resumed their journey, as we read in Luke 2:44. This is something easy and natural we may do. We just go our own way and take it for granted that the Lord is with us.

But at the end of the day they found that the Lord was not with them and they had to go back to the beginning. It took three days for them to find Him. How true to experience this is! Some of us may know it. We have taken our way-our OWN WAY - counting on the fact that the Lord was with us, and then at last we have discovered we were wrong. Thus we have had to go back and it has taken much longer time, then it did to lose Him. This may be treated as a covering, guarding note and it is a very necessary one. But the encouragement is this. However faulty we are, however weak we are, however ignorant we may feel ourselves to be over spiritual things, as in humbleness of heart we walk before Him, we can have this assurance. Whether we feel like it or not, God is with us. Let us praise His Name. God is with us. Oh! to believe and act upon it more, "grant me grace" we pray.

Last but not the least is the truth of 'God in us'. This truth runs through this chapter in Romans 8. God is in us and that is the remedy for every need. As you read this chapter, you find that this is the secret all the time - Christ in you. How blessed is this truth and, how wonderful a fact that God is in us. That is why the Apostle says in such downright words, "...if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9) If you can put yourself into that place of utter separation from the Lord, so that it can be said of you. you are none of His, well you have not the Spirit. But none of us is going to say that about himself. Even the worst may be said, and there is plenty of bad to be said, still we know that we are His. Praise Him for we are His. Thus the Spirit of Christ is in us, an undeniable of unalienable fact. But it is a fact that needs to be reckoned on, that calls for the exercise of faith on our part. God helping, we will continue in our next issue.

The elders, fellow-servants and saints of the church at Jehovah - Shammah, Chennai, would have us to thank and praise the Lord for answered prayers in all that pertained to the small Regional Convocation they were enabled to hold in the premises of Jehovah -shammah from

24th May to 1st June. It has been after a period of 25 years that such a Convocation could be held, so that believers could spend time together in prayers, worship and fellowship, with the Word of God ministered to them. The theme, "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12) was powerfully presented to us all through the ministry of Bro. Neville from Colombo. He spoke of the Prince of the Kingdom Rev. 1:5, besides the principles of this Kingdom, and the price we must be willing to pay to be sharers of the Glory of that Kingdom. There were several decisions, mostly for fresh commitment, and a few willing to serve the Lord full time as the Lord makes things clear and perfect according to His will. There were a few baptisms and a short procession publishing the Gospel, followed by the final love feast. These among other things were the unforgettable features connected with the Convocation ministry when His honored servant Bro. Bakht Singh first began the same soon after he and co workers and the then elders entered this compound naming it Jehovah - Shammah, in the year 1941. From such beginnings the Lord has furthered His Testimony to far North, East and West, to the praise of His glory. So the saints and elders continue to covet your prayers for the effective and enriching ministry amongst them for the future.

Bro. K. John who had been in fellowship and of help in the ministry at Eshcol, Ongole, for the past twenty-five years nearly, was called Home to Glory on 3rd June after a brief hospitalization at Hyderabad. The funeral took place at Ongole on the 4th June. Please pray for the comfort of his wife Sis. Sarah and four children.

Sis. (Mrs.) Katherine Valentine (wife of God's servant late Bro. Valentine) was also called to Glory on 4th June at Ahmedabad. Please pray for the comfort of her children.

Praying that we all may be strengthened by His indwelling Spirit to be effective in our measure, to be joints of supply for the edification of the Church His Body, holding fast the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ,
Eph. 4:1-3, 7 Eph. 4 : 15 , 16 Luke 21:34- 36
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH - 3 BAKHT SINGH

It we spend money under God's direction, that money will bring abundant fruit. But in many cases "we waste money. We think that because we have given one-tenth for the House of God the remaining nine-tenths need not be used properly, and that is why we are barren and unfruitful. Now it is possible to consult God even for every small thing. If under God's guidance you buy your clothes, shoes or other things, they will last longer than otherwise. Others can be blessed through your money.

If God gives you a house, it must be used for His glory, whether by yourself or by others. If you want to be faithful, then examine yourself with these words: "Ye are not your own" . I find so many believers, without any guilt of conscience going to hotels and wasting their money for tea and other refreshments. Though they have plenty to eat at home, when they see nice things in a hotel or smell them from afar, their mouths begin to water. They go in and eat whatever they like. They cannot control their desires. Money which could have been used for the Gospel's sake is wasted. We have to give account to God, so we should be found faithful even in these small things. I have learned this by experience. So I do not waste my money; and when I am in need, He supplies me everything. I have made a promise to Him, "Lord, I will not spend any money, unless I am sure of Your will, even though I may be in urgent need".

In Punjab, in very cold weather, someone stole my chappals. So I asked the Lord if He would give me permission to buy a new pair of chappals. But He did not. I had to go barefooted for one week, and I accepted God's will. But the time came when He gave me a better pair than the old one. Wait for God's time., He will give you His best. If you buy something for yourselves you may get second class quality. But when He gives, He will give you the best. Thus we must be faithful stewards of all the money entrusted to us by the Lord.

Now we shall see how we must be faithful in caring for the House of God. In 2 Kings 12:6, we read of a king who had a great zeal for the House of God. There were many breaches at that time in the temple at Jerusalem and many parts of the walls required repairs. So God raised up this king who said, "You people have sufficient money for your friends and family and for your own needs, but nothing for the House of God. God's need must come first. Then onwards all the money was brought into the House of God. The result was that in a short time they were able to repair the breaches.

God began to deal with His people. They all helped to repair the breaches of the House of God (2 Kings 12:1-15). There was no need for an overseer or a supervisor, nor an auditor to audit the accounts, because everybody worked so faithfully. Usually, unless somebody watches the workmen, they will not work: but when somebody is there to supervise them, they will work well. If you are a worker like that you will have no reward. Many people set everything in order for themselves first. They make sure that they have enough money for milk, rent, bread, baby's milk, and for their wife's saree, and even for the doctor; and then out of that which is left over, they give something to the Lord. When their own stomach is quite full, they will say, "Lord, You also take something; we don't want to leave You out". That is how they are unfaithful.

You must first give to God. Find out by prayer what is the need in the House of God and give joyfully. Then think of your own need. Don't wait for anybody to supervise you and tell you these things. Thus we must be faithful in giving to God.

The Levites should have seen that the walls were in need of repairs, but they did not. Not one of them took any notice. You find the same state in the House of God. Very few people find out what is the need in God's House. They allow these breaches to remain for many years. They don't know what God requires of them. The result is they themselves remain barren in their spiritual lives. When you find out for yourself what is the need and take your share in the House of God then your life will become fruitful. For example, it may be helping those who are poor. By prayer you must find out the need. Ask the Lord, "Are there any poor people in my neighborhood whom I can help?"

Many years ago I was staying with a very godly family. At one time, unexpectedly, The husband was thrown out of employment. They had no income for several weeks Then one day there was no food left in the house: neither bread nor butter not anything else to eat. Even so they did not beg for food; but they prayed: "Lord, You know our condition. Will You please supply our need?" Suddenly we heard a noise outside like a brick falling. We opened the door and there was a big bag with bread, biscuits, potatoes and other nice things. The Lord had spoken to someone about that family and he purchased those things and brought them. Thus you can also help the poor as the Lord guides you.

(To be contd.)

Edited by Bro.K.Phillip, Printed and Published by Bro.G.T.Benjamin for Hebron, Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad - 500 020,
at Chitralipi Printers, 1-1-1/18/1, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad.