

Hebron Messenger

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NO 23

HOW LOVELY IS YOUR TABERNACLE! – 3

We have seen from Psalm 84 that the Lord's sovereignty i.e. His Preeminence, the Praises of His people and their Pilgrim character contribute to the incomparable beauty of God's Dwelling Place. Fourthly and finally, the loveliness of His tabernacle also lies in the fact that those who dwell in His tabernacle are a people who PROGRESS. They are surely a progressing people. They are not stagnant on their past experience of salvation, nor are they a people receding into their old un-regenerated life of darkness and sin. They are a people ever longing for a new experience of Christ. They do not look back in their hearts towards what they have left; they are going forward. This is what is implied in Psa.84:7, "They go from strength to strength". They have to move forward in several areas of their spiritual life, so that their progress may be complete. Let us briefly consider them.

Firstly, they have to progress in their faith life, going from faith to faith like Abraham, who is called the father of faith. We read about the exemplary life of this man of faith in Hebrews 11. By faith he obeyed God implicitly though he was an idolater. The God of Glory appeared to him. He heard His voice commanding him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house" (Gen. 12:1). Without asking any question regarding the nature of the country or its inhabitants or its location, he obeyed implicitly. Then, by faith he lived as a sojourner along with his family in the land where the Lord had placed him. He viewed all things in the light of eternity. He looked for a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God. And that should be the life of every believer. He lives on this earth but his citizenship is in heaven. Abraham went further in his faith. He climbed the peaks of Mt. Moriah in obedience to God's command to surrender and sacrifice his beloved and only son Isaac, the child of promise, through whom God was to fulfill the great promise: "So shall thy seed be" after showing him the stars in the sky (Gen. 15:5). When God saw the willing obedience of Abraham, he saw in him His own image. Several centuries later, He Himself would offer His own and only begotten Son on Calvary as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Such progressive faith beautifies God's tabernacle. Believer, ask the Lord for the faith of Abraham and grow in it from implicit submission, to live by faith as a sojourner and by faith to fully surrender yourself and be ready to offer yourself as a living sacrifice on the altar. This kind of faith will make you a blessing to others.

Secondly, the indweller of God's House must progress from light to light. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). The pathway of the believer becomes brighter and brighter as he grows in the knowledge of the Lord. Let us take an example of this. In John 9 we see a man blind from birth, whose eyes were opened by the Lord Jesus. See how his pathway of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus becomes brighter and brighter. When asked as to who healed him he said, "a man called a prophet" (v.11). His pathway has been lighted. Then to further questioning he says, "he is a prophet". (v.17; Deut. 18:15). The pathway is brighter now. To still further questioning he testifies, "If this man were not from God (v.33). How much brighter is his pathway! Finally, his pathway has been brightened unto the perfect day of the Lord's return, when He will appear as the Sun of righteousness, when he confessed: "Lord, I believe (that thou art the Son of God) (vs. 35-38) and he worshipped Him. Our spiritual eyes are opened to its brightest revelation and understanding when we, in our hearts, come to know the Lord Jesus as the very Son of God and worship Him. Believer, let our

pathway not; regress from light to darkness. This kind of regress will mar the loveliness of God's tabernacle. Let us go on to perfection and beautify His House.

Thirdly, we have to progress from strength to strength (Psa. 84:7), to beautify the Lord's tabernacle. In the context of this Psalm it alludes to their pilgrimage to God's House and the difficulties they face like "the valley of Baca". But we wish to remind the reader of Paul, the apostle. After his baptism, it is recorded that he took meat and was strengthened (Acts 9:19). That was the beginning of his strength. But later on Paul could say "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (Phil. 4:13). Nearing the end of his life he wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim. 4:7).

Look at the Lord Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, He went from strength to strength. He needed strength to say in the garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will, but thine be done". Look at Him before Pilate. He needed strength to say: "My kingdom is not of this world". Finally, we see Him at Calvary. Oh, how great a strength He needed to resist all the powers of darkness, mocking Him to come down to save Himself! He refused to do so and great was His triumph. He went from strength to strength. May the Lord help us then to go on progressing in that strength.

Of God's House it should never be said, for this cause many are weak among you" (1 Cor. 11:30). Instead it should be said, "and there was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Psa. 105:37). May the Lord keep us strong as Himself, as Paul and even as David, "who waxed stronger and stronger" (To be contd.) E.W.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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28/10/2006.

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the faithful and merciful name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who hath helped us and upheld us hitherto to honour and obey Him, and serve Him, and may His gracious hand continue to lead us, our families, and the fellowship and ministry we have with His saints in His House for the up-building of His Church, the Body of Christ. (Heb. 2:17,18; Isa. 41:10,13,14; Isa. 42:16).

Apostle John was found in the Isle of Patmos alone in his old age, bereft of the joy of fellowship and the ministry of the saints or fellow Apostles. He could have felt it grievously, humanly speaking, as to why these things have befallen him, almost putting an end to His service for the Lord whom he loved. But the Lord appears to him, in such glory and majesty. Seeing Him in the greatness of His unspeakable holiness and glory he fell at His feet dead. Our Lord, laying His right hand upon him, sayeth... "I am alive for evermore..." (Rev. 1:17,18) and this promise we have taken from the beginning of the year as one of the Motto Texts. The Apostle writes in verse 9, "... I ... also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ ... in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9). What seemed to the Apostle as the curtailing and closing of his faithful service for the Lord, indeed opened up a new chapter in his life to receive a revelation of things the Apostle has hitherto not seen or heard yet, things which are and the things which shall be hereafter (Rev. 1:19,20). John was a servant, bond servant to receive such heavenly vision of the Son of Man, and His deep communications, and he writes the same to the seven Churches. Thus His ways are past finding out in His dealings with His servants, who are prepared to pay the full

price for the Word of God and for the furtherance of the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

Amidst all that seems strange and contrary, or discouraging and dismaying in the path of life and ministry, let us have grace to press on in pursuit of Him, Who says... "Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold I am alive forevermore," - seeking the 'Living One', surrendered and submissive to His ways, which are above our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth, and come into the good of His precious thoughts. "He is not here, but risen," said the angel messengers to the women who went to the Tomb. When the women went back to the ... disciples to tell them that He was risen, they disbelieved them and said it was "idle talk". And so it is often "idle talk" to us until the Risen one Himself draws near. Later we read that the disciples were gathered in an upper room, and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. They had been to Calvary, and surely they had passed through the spiritual Calvary in the blasting of all their hopes. But they did not become witnesses, full of the power and strength of God, until they knew Jesus as the Living One. Death is negative; it is life that brings the positive power. We may continue in our next.

The following matters regarding Prayer House dedications, Special meetings and marriages are mentioned that we may join the saints and servants and Elders of the respective Churches mentioned, in praise and thanksgiving for answered prayer, for those occasions.

The newly constructed Prayer House, named "Horeb" was dedicated on 18th Oct. at Bhimavaram village about 50 kms. from Ongole. Bro. Sunderraj (Now Asst. Commissioner Customs, Bombay) and other members of his family resident there, would have us to thank the Lord, for the same. Many servants from Prakasam Dist. also participated, together with John Subba Reddy and others helping in the ministry. Bro. Anandam and Elders at Chirala would have us to thank the Lord for the dedication service of the Beracha Prayer House, First floor for Sunday class. The same evening the Servants' quarters constructed with rooms for guests was also dedicated.

Pray for the following God's servants who were united with the respective hand maidens on 18th Oct. at Eshcol Prayer House, Ongole. God's servants Bros. John Stewart and Isaac gave the vows for the four different couples for their wedding. Let us therefore pray for the united life and ministry of the following ones. Bro. Solomon Raj with Syamala Beulah - Bro. Yohan with Sis. Dhanamani.

- Bro. Joshua with sister Esther Syamala, and Bro. Ephraim with Esther. The Lord blessed the ministry of Bros. Jayaraj, and Poornachandra Rao together with Bro. Glen, God's servant at Jehovah Jireh, St. Thomas Mt., Chennai from 20th to 25th Oct, about five hundred Participating. Besides those who responded to the invitation for salvation, about 12 brothers and sisters came forward to be prepared and trained for serving the Lord in full time ministry. They require our prayer to be taught and brought into their vocation.

The Lord's servant Bro. Phillip and the brethren in responsibility at Jehovah Rohi Prayer House, Jammalamadugu, together with the saints would have us to thank the Lord for the special meetings held in their midst. Bro. John Stewart enjoyed liberty in sharing the Word for those days, when nearly 500 participated. Fifty brothers and sisters from the main as well as branch assemblies testified in Baptism with the laying on of hands.

The Annual Convocation at Beersheba Ahmedabad, was a blessing to all who gathered from the city and suburban assemblies numbering about 500. Bros. Lazar Sen, J.C. Rao, Theodore Reginald including myself shared in the ministry based on the theme, Joel 2:25 "I will restore the years ... hath eaten ..." There were 12 baptisms. God's servant Bro. Lazar Sen and elders, Bro. Solomon, and Bro. Robert covet our prayers for the follow up work. Joseph Canara and Hanoch Sen have been specially prayed for and confirmed to continue as servants in full time ministry, in fellowship of the church at Beersheba.

Captain Simon, who has been functioning as an elder and minister all these decades, in Hebron Fellowship at Byculla, Mumbai, together with the family would have us to thank and praise the Lord for the marriage of their younger son John, with sister Chaitali on 27th Oct. amidst a company of nearly three hundred believers drawn from various parts of the city, besides the bride's family members. Though they belong to a non Christian background, they appreciated the beauty and reality of a Christian wedding based, on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. They covet our prayers. Bro. D.B. Rao, Bro. Yesuratanam together with Bro. Simon and saints were glad that Bro. John Stewart and myself were enabled to stay on for a few days, in the special meetings that followed the marriage, and that we could enjoy the fellowship of the saints from the various assemblies of Mumbai.

Dr. Balu David of Chennai, Head of the Cancer Dept. G.H. suddenly had a heart attack. The Lord granted him recovery after Cardiac treatment in Madras Medical mission. Pray for Bro. Benjamin Williams of Byculla, as he is suffering from serious hepatitis, hindering any food intake. Pray for Bro. D.S. Christopher's mother Mrs. Devavaram, in CMC, Vellore, for severe infection.

Praying that the Lord may sustain and strengthen us to serve and glorify Him, loving His appearing.

John 20 : 20,29, Phil 3:10, Col 3:1-4,

I remain,

Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

FAMINE AND HARVEST BAKHT SINGH

"There was famine in the land ... of Bethlehem-Judah" Ruth 1:1

Those were days of spiritual darkness in the land of Israel. If you compare the opening words of Ruth Chapter 1 with the closing words in the Book of Judges, you can understand something of the conditions prevailing in the land at that time. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

They were a people who had the unique privilege of having God as their king. God Himself was dwelling in the midst of them, leading them and guiding them. The glory of His presence was always in evidence over the Tabernacle of the Testimony - in the cloud by day, and the appearance of fire by night. Whenever they were in any difficulty, God spoke to them from out of His Sanctuary. Besides this, the High Priest had in his garments two mysterious stones called Urim and Thummim, with the help of which he was able to find the will of God concerning any matter for anyone, in any need. Anyone could go to the High Priest and request him to find the will of God for him. Yet, when they came into the wealthy and fertile land of Caanan, they forgot these privileges, and did as they liked. Instead of seeking the will of God and being guided by the Lord, they were being governed by their own sinful desires. How true is this in many cases even today' When people become materially prosperous, they ignore and neglect the Word of God.

The conditions recorded here had come upon this people only a few years after the triumphant victories recorded in the Book of Joshua. During the time of Joshua, it was a chain of glorious victories; on the contrary, in the Book of Judges, we come across shameful failures. Such disgrace and defeat had come upon the people of God as a natural result of being governed by what seemed right in their own eyes; and thus the land of Bethlehem - Judah was gripped by famine.

Naomi and her family thought that by running away from these troubles and going to the land of Moab, all their problems would be over. In common with all the other people around them, they had no thought of seeking the will of God. They were being governed only by 'That which was right in their own eyes.' As we mentioned earlier, Naomi's kind is found all around us even today. For the sake of money and worldly prosperity, they neglect the fellowship of God's children.

For a time, everything went well with Naomi and her family. They had more food than they had in Bethlehem. But soon death came into the family; and the two sons went and married women of Moab, against the will of God. In Deut. 7:3,4 and Deut. 23:3a God had clearly commanded that His people should not marry the heathen people around them. This command was given at the time when the people were about to enter the promised land. Now that they were away from Bethlehem, away from the land of promise, and away from the people of God, and surrounded with so much temptation and stress in their new environment, these young men found it easy to disobey God's Word and marry women of Moab.

One can easily see that the cause of all the failures in Naomi's family was that they had despised the fellowship of God's people, and had gone away from them. First Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died. Naomi thus became a widow, and she had no control over her sons. There was no one to guide the two young men in the proper path; and being subject to the many temptations around them in the land of Moab, it was easy for them both to yield. Thus they fell and married women of Moab.

We are more exposed to temptations when we are alone, than when we are in the company of other children of God. When we are with other believers, we are strengthened by their prayer and fellowship, and thus better equipped to face the devices of a clever enemy. So, never underestimate the value of Christian fellowship.

Disobedience to the Word of God and to divine principles invariably brings us into loss and this, in turn, leads to sorrow and anguish.

This was true in the experience of Naomi also. She had gone away from the people of God, and as a result, she had to bear the consequences of her choice. Not only did she lose her husband, but her two sons also died. She was left destitute in a strange land. Her soul was full of sorrow, bitterness and anguish. See Ruth 1:20,21.

It was only then that she began to think of Bethlehem - Judah. It dawned on her that she would be better off in Bethlehem than in this strange country. She realised that her place was Bethlehem and that she had done wrong in coming away from the land of God's promise. Filled with sorrow, she decided to return to Bethlehem, and to her kindred.

Whatever be the failures in our lives, when we truly repent of them, and are willing to put things right, we find God working on our behalf, turning our failures into triumphs. (Contd.)

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NO 24

HOW LOVELY IS YOUR TABERNACLE! – 4

There are four things among God's people, which contribute to the loveliness of God's Tabernacle, as seen from Psalm 84. Firstly, the Preeminence of the Lord, secondly, their praises, thirdly, their pilgrim character, and fourthly, their progress in spiritual life. As we have already seen, they progress from faith to faith, from one degree of light to another higher degree of light, and from strength to strength. Finally, they progress from glory to glory as seen in 2 Cor. 3:18.

The Gospel of John is all about the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to give us His glory and that of the highest degree. We can experience it step by step. The beginning of that glory in our lives is found in the miracle that the Lord performed in the marriage at Cana of Galilee, where He turned water into wine. As His beloved servant Bro. Bakht Singh so often used to reveal, our natural lives are like ordinary water, without any colour, taste and fragrance. By the intervention of the Lord they can become like wine; red (under the blood of the cross and its power), tasty with the sweetness of the Lord Jesus, and fragrant with His nature, living for the joy of God and of men too (Judges 9:13). How true is the Scripture which says, "... if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). By the power of the cross, His blood and His love, the old selfish nature is changed. It is then poured out in love for Him and enables us to live unto Him (2 Cor. 5:15). "This beginning of miracles did Jesus (truly the changes Jesus brings into our Adamic nature is indeed an amazing miracle)... and manifested his glory" (John 2:11).

The second revelation of His glory is given in John 11. Lazarus is dead and the Lord Jesus comes to his sepulcher after four days. He commands the stone to be taken away. Martha says, "Lord, by this time he stinketh". The Lord replies, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (v.40). They took away the stone. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go" (vs. 43,44). Paul writing to Galatians says, Jerusalem which is above is free" (Gal. 4:26). The life that the Lord Jesus gives must be free from the bondage of the old life. It must be like the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus, Who Himself came out of His grave, leaving the linen clothes lying inside (John 20:6-8). What glory is it when we confess that we are born again but our testimony denies it and we live as before we met the Lord! Believer, throw away the grave clothes of your old life and walk in the newness of life.

Thirdly, our experience of glory should be in the cross. Andrew and Philip came and told the Lord Jesus that certain Greeks wanted to see Him; to them He said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). The Lord was referring to the hour of His death when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die..." .The cross was to be the hour of glory for Him, not His shame. He would destroy death through His death on the cross, because He would rise again from the grave. And there would be those whose number

can never be counted, who would also rise again from their graves following Him. What a victory!! That is why Paul was never ashamed of the cross. Indeed he went so far as to say, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Believer, we also must be ready to suffer for the cross, so that one day we may inherit His glory.

Finally, we read of the Lord Jesus referring to the glory of oneness in His high priestly prayer in John 17. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be ONE, even as we are one" (v.22). His desire is that we may be lifted up from earthly oneness (which may spring up and grow from friendship, social togetherness, caste, background, national and regional interests, etc.) to heavenly oneness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Before He prayed for this kind of oneness, He gave testimony that the disciples were not of this world even as He was not of this world (vs. 14,16). The spirit of the world in us will bring strife, friction and discord which are the sure fruits of personal desires to further our ambitions for fame and position. The Lord was free from such earthly desires and so He could humble Himself to go to Calvary and be crucified for us. O may the Lord give us, His children, this oneness so that we may throughout eternity share in the Glory which the Father has given Him from the foundation of the world. (Concluded) E.W.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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14-11-2006.**

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who is the resurrection and life, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on High, a Priest after the order of Melchisedec by the power of an endless life. By His resurrection He was lifted above the powers of darkness and entered into a new sphere, a sphere where He ceased to live on the earthward side of Calvary and lived only unto God, on the Godward side of the cross. In Romans 6:3-6, we see that the resurrection of Christ is the pattern for our spiritual resurrection (John 11:25; Heb. 7:16, 17; Rom. 6:10,11).

Here we are made to see, how we are to share the power of this resurrection — if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, or in other words, if we have been brought by the Holy Spirit into the vital knowledge of His cross. Another rendering of this verse appears to be "if we have shared the reality of His death whereof we have undergone the likeness". This means something more than a mental assent, or even an attitude of faith. The Scripture speaks of a vital planting into His death - an assimilation of His death and a fellowship with Him in His cross in a very real way.

If we have thus shared the reality of His death, we may be perfectly sure that the union with Him in life will follow. We are to share His life as well as His death. We have this fact repeated in Rom. 6:8, "But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him". The death is a means to an end, so to speak. We must learn to cast ourselves upon the power of His resurrection for our daily life.

We should not forget that life is to spring out of death. It is true that we must be vitally planted into Him, in His death. But we must also be joined to Him in His resurrection. When you are brought to know His death, you will need to cast yourself upon Him for His energizing life, or you will be powerless in your practical walk. Let us thank God for the light He has given us about the cross of Jesus and for the light He has given us about the way He will confirm us to His death. However, let us see to it that we know the power of His resurrection, and the life of living union with Him.

In the darkest hour of conflict, in the hardest testing time that you may ever be put to, if you are joined to Him you will be able to say, "I am with my Risen Lord above this; I refuse to go under this; for I stand with Him in the place of victory. I believe in the God that raiseth the dead". Only in this way can faith be matured until it becomes a faith that can live and triumph in impossibilities.

We have seen in Christ's resurrection that death has no more dominion over Him. Spiritually this too will be true of us. In the midst of the deathly atmosphere that is around us on every side, we can be affected by it. In the power of His resurrection it would not be able to chill us. We are joined to Him as the living One; therefore nothing around us shall have dominion over us, or have power to drag us down. The deadness around us shall not chill us, but we shall in union with the risen Lord, overpower by His life the atmosphere of death, and be His messengers of life to dying souls.

Let us look briefly at the practical way of proving the power of resurrection, shown us in 2 Cor. 13:3,4, from the experience of Apostle Paul. seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me, who to you-ward is not weak, but is powerful in you; for He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak with Him, but we shall live with Him through the power of God toward you". Practically we are always to be weak in ourselves, and know that His power is working through us simply by seeing it work in others. It is as if Paul said, "I know I am weak, but I know I am living with Him, in His life, because I see Him working in you Corinthians".

There are therefore, these three things in practical experience. First, in ourselves we are always handed over to death and weakness that life may pour out to others. Secondly, it is always death to ourselves so that we might not trust in ourselves, but cast ourselves in our weakness upon the God Who raiseth the dead. Thirdly, we can only recognise God's power by the effect it produces, not always by our consciousness.

In Heb. 11:17,19 we see another aspect of the power of resurrection. "By faith Abraham being tried, offered up Isaac... Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead!" This is a further stage in the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and indicates the way in which God matures our faith. In practical life the attitude over everything is to be, "Father, I lay it down in faith that Thou canst raise it up". Everything can go then to His altar without any hesitation. This is the power of resurrection as regards all our possessions, even the very gifts of God. Faith laying them down, believing that God can raise it up', even from the dead. Let us close with the assurance and affirmation that the Lord Jesus Christ is the living One within the veil, interceding for us every moment and we with Him, "accepted in the beloved".

The Lord enabled us to participate in the servants' gathering held at Zion, Godavarikhani, on 9th November. God's servants Bros. John Subba Reddy, Andrews, Timothy, Samson, Nehemiah, besides many others were also present, helping in the ministry and the general supervision of the dedication and thanksgiving gathering on the 10th of the newly constructed large worship hall, Zion, in the adjacent site. Bro. Moses, God's servant, shared a brief testimony, rehearsing the promises of God, which He fulfilled in answer to the prayers of the saints for such a large construction, beautifully finished, to accommodate several hundreds. The message on dedication was based on Psalm 50:5 and also on Psalm 132:13,14. The mighty God speaking and shining out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, and also His choosing Zion for His habitation and rest, and the blessing He would bestow upon the saints as seen

from Psa. 132:15,16 were highlighted. Bro. G. T Benjamin concluded with a brief word based on Psalm 87, mentioning the Lords love for Zion and those born in her, and the glorious things spoken of the city of God. About 2000 or more brothers and sisters participated with thanksgiving. The Lord kept the weather fair making the fellowship joyful. God's servant Bro. Moses and brethren in responsibility besides the saints with him at Zion covet our continued prayers for the follow up work and ministry.

The Lord was pleased to use Bro. John Stewart in the three days' ministry of the Word, in the meetings at Elim Prayer House, Tadepallegudem, bringing souls to salvation, and revelation of His purpose for His saints.

Bro. Nandan Rao, God's servant at Bapatla with local brethren covets our prayers for the Special Meetings, God willing to be held in their midst from November 22nd to 26th. God's servants Bros. John Subba Reddy, Timothy, Isaac and Bro. Sam Williams would be ministering the Word based on I Sam. 3:9.

God's servant Bro. Rajarathriam of Bethesda, Bolarum, covets our prayers for the speedy recovery of the right leg fracture of his wife, Sis. (Mrs.) Ashirvadamma.

It has pleased the Lord to call Home Bro. Benjamin Williams (son of late Bro. A. Williams, God's servant at Hebron, and brother of Bro. Sam Williams), after a period of sickness, at Mumbai on the 14th November. Please pray for the comfort of his wife and children and other family members.

Praying that we may know the exceeding greatness of His power to usward - the power of His resurrection, as Paul prays in Eph. 1:18-20,

1 Pet. 1 : 3,4, Col 3:1-4, Rev 20:6,7

I remain,

Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

FAMINE AND HARVEST - 2 BAKHT SINGH

Whatever be the failures in our lives, when we truly repent of them, and are willing to put things right, we find God working on our behalf, turning our failures into triumphs. Unknown to Naomi, God was working behind the scenes. He could take up the shattered pieces of her life, and form them into the beautiful design of His plan. He could so order that one of these same Moabite women might become the channel through whom His Son might be brought into the world, thereby revealing the riches of His mercy. But before He could do any of these things, Naomi should return to the land of God's promise. The moment she decided to return, God began to work. In the same way, whatever be the failures, which have crept into our lives, when we decide to return to the plan of God, God will change our sorrow into joy, and reveal the riches of His grace through us.

"Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab... and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah" (Ruth 1:6,7). She was planning to return, however, without any sincere repentance at what she had done. In verse 13, we read of Naomi telling her daughters-in-law, "the hand of the Lord is gone out against me". See also

her statement in v.20, "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me". These words do not reflect any sense of guilt and shame at her own failures. On the contrary, she was blaming God for her own failure and the resultant sufferings.

Sometimes we too are guilty of such offences. When things go wrong in our lives, we begin to blame others around us for these failures. Instead of searching our own lives for the cause of these failures, we like to place the blame on our neighbours, if not on God Himself. When, however, the Spirit of God works in our lives, leading us to true repentance, we shall be on our faces before the Lord, and will be willing to admit freely, "It is I, I only, that have sinned".

As Naomi prepared to return to Bethlehem, she thought that her daughters-in-law would be an added burden on her, and so she planned to send them away. One of them - Ruth - however, was determined to go with her, and would not be put away either by pleadings or by threats. "Whither thou goest, I will go", was Ruth's determined reply (Ruth 1:16).

She was not following Naomi for any earthly gain. She had no hope of anyone marrying her in the land of Israel. Neither had she any longing for Naomi's property. She also knew that if she accompanied Naomi, she would have to work very hard in order to support herself and the aged Naomi. It was with a full awareness of all these factors that Ruth affirms her determination to follow Naomi.

Her motive in making such a choice is found in v.16b: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God". Ruth had, in some way, heard about the Living and True God; and this had created in her a great desire to know more about this true God. It is possible that her husband - though he himself was living a defeated life - had spoken to her about the God of Israel; and these words had fallen on the good soil of Ruth's tender soul. There it had been nurtured and watered and the seeds had sprouted. She was filled with a great longing to know more about this God; and she was determined to gain this knowledge, at any price. She was prepared to undergo any hardship and suffering to make this God her God. God took note of this desire in Ruth, and blessed her. Incidentally, through her, her whole family got the blessing.

Naomi, on the other hand, was thinking only of her problems and her burdens. Thinking that her daughters-in-law would be an extra burden upon her, she tried her best to send them away. She could not understand how one of them could be used by God to bear her burdens instead of being a burden upon her.

Like Naomi, some mothers feel very unhappy when daughters are born to them. They have been expecting a baby, and have been hoping during all the months of waiting that it would be a boy. When at last the baby arrives, and it happens to be a girl instead, they feel very miserable. They feel that God has done them a great injustice by sending them a daughter instead of a son. They fail to see that this same daughter, whom they now detest, can one day become the source of comfort to them in their old age, whereas a boy, outside the plan of God, can become a problem, and cause untold grief and heartache to the parents.

When Naomi came to Bethlehem, she never told Ruth that they had a very wealthy kinsman by name Boaz. It was not Naomi who led her to the fields of Boaz. It was the sovereign hand of God- unseen by both Ruth and Naomi - that led her to Boaz. Ruth only wanted to work, and work hard, to provide for herself and her mother-in-law. It was the harvest season. People were working everywhere. So Ruth too wanted to go and take up any work available, so that she and her mother-in-law would have something to eat. But God was working behind the scenes, and led her, by His skilful hands, to the place of His blessing. (To be contd.)