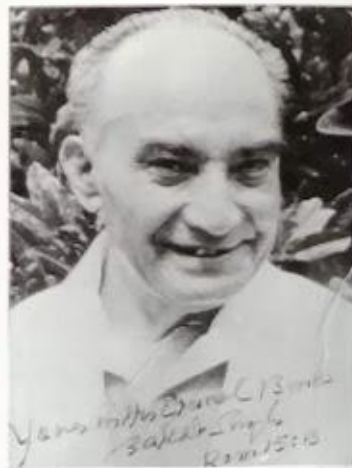


A WORD IN SEASON TO THE WEARY

(MORNING BY MORNING)

*Daily
meditations
from the
ministry
of*

Bro. BAKHT SINGH



January 1

"But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. 11:11,12).

This is the land of promise : to us it means Christ. If you are in this land, spiritually, wherever you may live and whatever your burdens may be, God's eyes will be upon you from the beginning of the year to the end of it. His grace, mercy and peace will be showered abundantly upon you and you will be given the strength you need to overcome all your trials. If you are a child of God you must claim His promises by faith, otherwise they will remain mere words.

The land of Canaan did not require any watering or artificial irrigation. It was a land that drank water of the rain of heaven (verse 11). When the children of Israel entered the land it was very fertile from one end to the other. The Lord Jesus Christ is an antitype of that land. In Him we have all sufficiency and we have no need to get troubled or anxious about anything, because He supplies all our needs provided we know how to obey Him and bring all our needs to Him in prayer.

God had told the children of Israel very clearly, again and again that He would bless them if they obeyed His commandments, and punish them if they went after other gods (vs. 27,28 and ch. 6:13,14). The people knew that God wanted them to love Him with all their hearts, and with all their souls and with all their might; yet we see that again and again they went after strange gods either openly or secretly. Therefore, although they were actually in the promised land, they were not able to enjoy its fulness.

For us this means that unless we honour our Lord whole-heartedly, and keep our hearts free from strange gods, we will not be able to understand and enjoy the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we love any person or any thing more than the Lord Jesus Christ, that person or thing becomes a strange god to us, and consequently we lose our joy and peace. Some may love their houses and their properties more than the Lord, and neglect their times of devotion, prayer, worship and service for the Lord. Others spend hours looking after their motor cars, cleaning and admiring them. Yet others worship their friends and relations and have so much desire to be popular with them that they will willingly cut short or cancel their times of prayer and attending of special meetings, and even Sunday worship. Many others have worldly friends or even defiling friendships by which they fall into sin. Love of money may become a strange god too. Some people are not satisfied with what they have and wish to increase their income by some means, and then they have no time for private prayer or even family prayer and they completely neglect the House of God. Some wives keep gold and silver as their strange gods. For some people their radios (nowadays TV) are their strange gods, and thus lose even their desire for Bible reading and prayer and Sunday worship. They say that they get all they need through these programmes but ultimately they find themselves spiritually barren. Such strange gods are responsible for all your spiritual loss including the loss of your peace and joy. God's Word says that if you will keep your hearts and homes free from strange gods, then His eye will be upon you (Deut. 11:12). In order to be sure that we begin the new year without any strange gods in our hearts, we have to spend much time examining our hearts. Thus we trust that the eyes of the Lord will be always upon us from the beginning of the year to the end of it.

January 2

"That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children... as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. 11:21).

If we obey the Lord and keep away from every kind of strange god, He will give us everything in plenty from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year (Deut. 11:12). In sickness or in poverty, He will give you all that you need: perhaps not too early, but never too late; perhaps not too much, but never too little. The Lord promised to give enough not only for the children of Israel, but also for their cattle (Deut. 11:15). This means that we need not be anxious about anything, for the Lord will supply not only our obvious needs, but also our smaller unknown needs.

Then the Lord gave a warning to them that they should not be deceived. I have seen many cases where people have prospered and their income has increased, and then they have drifted away from the Lord. At one time they were full of zeal, but now they have become cold. When they were in need they used to come regularly for the meetings and again and again they would ask for prayer. But now that their requests have been granted in answer to prayer, we do not see much of them, not even on Sundays! They have evidently been deceived by prosperity. So I would warn those of you who are prosperous, never cut short your time of prayer, and never keep away from the House of God.

Some people have been in the practice of giving their tithes regularly to the Lord. But now that their income has increased they wonder, "How can I give so much as tithe? It is such a large amount!" When we fail to give God's portion to Him, we are actually robbing God! (Malachi 3:8-10). Do not rob God of His time either. Perhaps before you got married you used to spend hours in prayer but now that you are married you have no time for Him at all! This kind of robbing will bring you into spiritual barrenness. If you take God's warning and see that you are not deceived by the attractions of the world, He will bless you richly.

We can take many valuable lessons from the instructions given to the children of Israel in Deut. 11:18. They were asked to lay up His words in their heart and in their soul: we also should let the Word of God dwell richly in our hearts (Col. 3:16). They were to bind them for a sign upon their hands, we too should carry our Bibles with us wherever we go. They were to keep the words of God as frontlets before their eyes: we too should keep God's promises before us always, and claim them daily for all our needs. They were to teach the Word of God diligently to their children. "And thou shalt teach them ...unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest... and when thou walkest... when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7). We also have to do the same.

If we obey God in all these matters the Lord promises to multiply our days and give us days of heaven upon earth (Deut. 11:21). All these promises can be our experience the whole year round, not only on Sundays but every day of the week. The grace of God will come flowing down upon us from heaven.

January 3

"... but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,...I press toward the mark..." (Philippians 3:13, 14).

Manasseh means "to forget". "For God", said Joseph, "hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house" (Gen. 41:51). As Joseph forgot the past so must we : rather we must look to the future for

something better (Phil.3:13). We enjoy talking about our past sufferings to get human sympathy. However to grow spiritually we must forget completely every past suffering of any kind.

Sometimes we look at the past and remember with joy what the Lord did for us so many years ago. We keep on telling others what happened ten, twelve or fifteen years ago. Sometimes with tears we talk of those wonderful days, and long to get back to the good old days, at least for a while. Married people look back to the first few months or years of married life and long to go back to those days not realising how much greater blessing the Lord has for them in the future. Perhaps God has been extremely good to you, and you have seen Him working mightily in the past. Do not forget that He has something far greater in store for you in future. So look forward with eager expectancy for these greater things. Paul says, "I press forward". It is only when you press forward for these better things the Lord has to give you, that your faith is kept alive. Such expectation and faith will keep you near to the heart of God. He will not be satisfied until He has filled us with His fulness and brought us into perfection. He wants to give us His whole kingdom which is our full spiritual inheritance. That is why He asks us to press forward. Thinking of the good old days and maintaining the same attitude that we had seven or eight years ago will hinder our spiritual progress and fruitfulness.

We all need the experience of "Manasseh." Whatever happens we must remember that the Lord has better things for us in the future. He wants us to enjoy fully all that He has planned for us from eternity, because He says, "all things are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21). However, merely repeating these words is not sufficient; we have to claim His promise. God says, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee" (Heb. 6:14). That is God's promise and according to it, He will go on multiplying His blessings to us in abundance for eternity. For this reason we must forget the past, however good it may have been and expect greater things to happen. We must go on claiming the full share of our heavenly inheritance in His Kingdom and His Throne.

January 4

"But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not" (2 Kings 18:36).

In Ephesians 4:11-14 we have God's plan whereby His children can reach maturity. God gives five-fold gifts to the Church viz. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Through their five-fold ministry souls are born again and brought to the full stature of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we start following God's plan to build the Church according to His Word, immediately the enemy also begins his work of opposition. We have experienced how, whenever people begin to obey God fully by taking full share in the House of God, in baptism, worship, prayer and Bible study, the enemy brings opposition from many sides. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 129:2 he tries to weaken our hands by false propaganda and does many other things to hinder the work of God. But if we really trust God and take no notice of their words or activities, the Lord will work on our behalf and confound them. It is difficult to believe that people can tell lies and disobey His commands, and thus hinder God's work. But we have only to trust God and not to take any notice of their words or activities. Many times some people come up against you and speak against you and try to harm you. At such times you should not take any notice of their words or try to take revenge

on them in any way. It would help us to remember that those who try to spit at the moon get the spittle on themselves. Our enemies can do anything to harm us, but the evil which they have devised will only go back to them. There is a promise for us in Psalm 129:5, "Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion." They themselves will come under reproach and condemnation. If you begin to worry about their opposition you will lose your sleep, appetite and peace. Instead you should leave them to themselves and enjoy God's favour.

The enemy hates Zion, the House of God. If you want to be in the House of God according to His plan, then he will raise people to hate you and hinder you from obeying fully God's revealed truth. When you desire to obey God's Word fully and follow His heavenly plan and do His will, you will be ridiculed, hated and despised. But you can enjoy His promise in Psalm 129:6, "Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up." It would be a waste of time and energy for anyone to climb up to clear the housetop. The Lord says that our enemies also will wither away in like manner. We need not be worried about them or try to resist them. If we are patient we can see the Lord Himself dealing with them.

January 5

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power..." (Rev. 4:11).

In Matt. 2:11 we see wise men at worship. They fell down and worshipped the young child. Then they presented their costly gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. By coming from such a long distance they acknowledged His worthiness. When they brought such precious gifts, they acknowledged in a symbolic way that, the One Whom they had come to worship is God Who became man (Gold), the One Whom they had come to worship had come to suffer for them (Myrrh), the One Whom they had come to worship was going to save them (Frankincense).

In Luke 7:37, 38 we read about a woman in the city, a sinner. The Lord's presence made her conscious of sinful condition. She wept in brokenness over her sin, and washed His feet with her tears. Her love was spontaneous, and her worship true. She had an inward revelation of her sins being forgiven and she worshipped Him, by pouring the ointment on His feet.

In John 12:1-3 we find Mary worshipping the Lord. She had known the Lord before, but now she had a new and a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and power of resurrection and she poured out her worship to Him by anointing His feet with a very special ointment with sweet fragrance which filled the house. When we see Him working in us, we also worship Him in a new way.

In Matt. 26:2,6,7 we see a similar scene of worship, and yet different in its significance. Here it was only 2 days before the Passover, and we see her anointing His head, because she realized that He was about to die for the sins of the whole world.

Finally, we see a more glorious sight which is described in Rev. 5:11-12. It is the glorified Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, with angelic hosts - all in oneness worshipping Him."... Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing".

After worshipping the Lord we take part in the Lord's Table, saying, "My Lord is coming back! When He comes back, the work which He began will be perfected". We declare by faith that we are waiting for that Day. We believe it will be a wonderful Day when we shall be like Him, and reign with Him. In His broken Body and shed Blood, we see every provision made to make us like Himself. In me, I see nothing but infirmity, failures and shortcomings, nothing but iniquity; but in Him, I see perfection.

In Eph. 3:18 we notice the importance of being together. His love and purpose can never be comprehended by us. We need the help of all the saints. There is a great mystery here. We find love coming in a greater and fuller measure, when we are brought together as one family. In this family, there is no Jew nor Gentile : male or female. All are ONE. People from different families, countries, nationalities, all partake of the same Lord.

January 6

"...thou canst do everything" (Job 42:2).

Job was a God-fearing man, honest and upright. Yet God allowed great sufferings and sorrow in his life. Suddenly, within a period of twenty-four hours all his children died, he lost all his cattle, all his sheep and all his camels. Soon after this his body became covered with sores. His wife mocked him for his piety and his friends began to accuse him falsely.

In the midst of all these terrible calamities the Lord became real to Job. At times, when his sufferings were unbearable he expressed his inability to understand why God was allowing all this to take place. But when God appeared to Job face to face, he discovered God's threefold purpose for him. First, God wanted to give Job much more than he had at that time. Although he was already the wealthiest man in the East, God wanted to give him twice as much. Secondly, through his sufferings, God wanted to give him true wisdom. His friends counted him a fool, and they thought they were all wiser than he. When the Almighty appeared before them, it was Job alone who recognised Him and worshipped Him. Thus the Lord proved that Job alone was wise and all his friends were foolish. God made Job wiser than he had ever been before. Thirdly, God wanted to teach Job how to pray. He had prayed till now, only for his own family (Job 1:5). Now he learnt to pray for others, even for his friends who had been cursing him (ch. 42:8,10).

When God allows painful experiences in your life do not be discouraged. He wants to give you a greater blessing this year, a double portion of blessing: He wants to impart to you more wisdom; and He wants to draw you nearer to Himself and to teach you to pray.

In the end, when Job began to understand God's mind, he was able to say, "Lord, thou canst do everything". The Lord will take us through many trials and thus reveal to us many hidden mysteries, so that in the end we also will be able to trust Him fully and say, "Lord, thou canst do everything!"

January 7

"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God..." (Psalm 40:3).

It is marvellous how God's Word is entering into many hearts by so many simple and unknown ways. God is gaining ground and the Gospel is received by people of all nations. They are so transformed that none can make them out. They will one day become kings in heaven. He not only saves us from sin but gives us authority and power in the heavenly kingdom. Some people when they become Tahsildars become very proud. They want a coolie or a porter to carry their small suitcase. When you go to heaven you will be having power and authority. All the heavenly angels will be your servants and they will even carry you. That is your privilege. What a great salvation! That is why the elders are singing the song of praise, "O, God. Thou art worthy. We were so low and defiled, yet by Thy grace and blood we are raised so high to reign for ever".

This is possible only by the blood of the Lamb and not by Bible knowledge. By the working of the blood in your life you are thoroughly purged and washed, are given divine wisdom and made kings and priests. The priests had a function. They had the privilege of going to the most holy place to speak to God, to hear His voice, to receive His message, and bring God's word to His people. Others do not have that privilege. There will be no more limitations. We can speak to God freely. Every barrier is overcome. That is why the elders are upon their knees, saying, "O God, Thou art worthy".

Once we understand the greatness of salvation and its purpose there will be heavenly song on our lips. There are very many among us who have to go through many hardships every day and shed many tears. But every tear will be transformed and your joy no man will take from you. We have to understand the real purpose of God in loving us so much and saving us. He shed His blood to save us, forgive us and make us kings and priests. That fills us with the heavenly song. Sing that heavenly song from the heart. "My Lord has saved me, even me, to be His king and priest for ever to enjoy all power, authority and dominion". At the same time we have the right to go to Him, ask Him many questions, speak to Him without any hesitation, enjoy unbroken fellowship with Him and receive a message from Him for every nation. Learn to sing that song, the song of the redeemed. Whether at home or outside, that song will not leave you. It will become sweeter and sweeter day by day.

January 8

"For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32:9).

"Jacob is the lot of his inheritance". In other words, God was saying, "Jacob, you belong to Me for ever. You are more precious to Me than the whole world." God never called the sun, moon or stars His inheritance. The privilege given by God to Jacob was great indeed. Praise God, the same privilege is given to us as well. We are called God's inheritance. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18).

Then we read, "He... led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32:10). This also will happen to you provided you are willing to put away all your strange gods. "For thus saith the LORD of hosts;... he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye". (Zech. 2:8).

In Deut. 32:11 we read, "As an eagle stireth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings." The Lord may stir you out of your nest also, because He wants you to learn to fly on high places.

While I was in Yugoslavia I found that grapes were served for breakfast, lunch and tea. They were large, luscious grapes too, and big bunches of them were on the table in abundance. That reminded me how God wants to give us everything in abundance provided we put away all our strange gods and return to Bethel. That is the only way to receive God's blessings fully. Do not let your wife, or husband, or friends, relations or your business or your pleasures keep you away from Bethel. God says, "I am the Almighty God". He is mighty to save you, to keep you, to lead you and bless you. Make Deut. 32:7 to 14 your personal experience. Ask the Lord to give you His best and show you your full portion in Bethel, the House of God.

January 9

"...Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1).

"Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel" (Psalm 20:4). This is a very wonderful promise. Whatever our needs or problems, He is able to meet them and solve them. We have to believe that God is able to give us much more than we ask. With that faith we have to go to Him. Many years ago, I wanted a type-writer. I thought if I pray for a new one God might not give. So I prayed for an old one. "Lord, I want a type-writer. Will you send an old one from somewhere? I was looking forward for an old typewriter, but after a week or so someone came with a brand new type-writer. I thought it was impossible to get a new one. That is how we limit God by our request. But God promises to grant us our hearts' desires. "Fulfil all thy counsel" means when we pray He will make our labours prosperous. Whatever we give to Him, and whatever we offer must be done whole-heartedly. Don't cut short your prayer time.

"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will setup our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions" (Psa. 20:5). In this verse there are three wonderful promises. The first one is, we will rejoice in His salvation. Even though our prayers are not answered immediately, yet the fact that He has saved us gives us great joy. Secondly, in the Name of the Lord we setup our banners. Banners speak of victory. For every sin we conquer, and for every prayer answered, we must lift up a banner. When we do not thank the Lord sufficiently we cannot lift up our banners. We should have faith in the Lord and His faithfulness. By having faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ we become more than conquerors. Every temptation we overcome is because of His victory. Our Lord became victorious and by faith we claim that victory. We have to appropriate His victory as our victory. Thirdly, "And fulfil all your petitions". If we keep on counting the answered prayers there will be no end. Whatever may be our petition it will be fully answered according to our faith.

"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed ; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand" (v.6). We should keep ourselves holy in His presence. Then He will hear us from His holy heaven. That is why we should claim the efficacy of His precious blood constantly to keep ourselves holy. Then we can pray with boldness and liberty in His presence.

"Some trust in chariot, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (v.7). Some people depend upon their wealth and friends. These are all human sources. Whatever we receive through men is only for a short time. "They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright" (v.8). It is by the fervent prayers of the Church that the enemy is defeated.

January 10

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Timothy 1:5).

A friend of mine, an engineer, send me Rs. 300/-. I never asked for it. Having heard that I had no money after my conversion he himself sent it to me. For sometime I forgot all about it. One day I found it hard to pray, and the Lord reminded me. He said, "You have to pay Rs. 300/- to your friend, who sent you that amount some time ago". First I thought because he was my friend and relation, it was not necessary to pay that amount. But I found it very, very hard to pray. So I prayed again, "Lord, will You send me some money today. I want to pay back this amount. I want to enjoy my prayer time". The same day I received a money order for Rs. 305/- and the friend who sent it to me, wrote in the coupon. "The Lord spoke to me to send you Rs. 305/-". I said, "Lord, I asked for only Rs. 300/- and not Rs. 305/-". The Lord said, "Didn't you say that you wanted to send it by T.M.O.?" So I sent that amount to my friend by T.M.O. Then I was able to pray freely. Thus there may be hindrances in your prayer life because of hard words spoken, negligence, defilement, bad habits, false statements given etc. Put things right and ask the Lord to give you good conscience. Then you will enjoy spiritual bread and heavenly drink, by taking part in the Lord's Table.

By one bread we are reminded that we all belong to one Church, and one Body. By His broken Body we have become one family. Now no more rich or poor, black or white. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28). Do not take pride in education, wealth, position or country. We want His life to be poured into us to live as one family. Before God we are equally precious. That is our testimony that before God, we are equally precious and equally important because we are purchased by the same Lord by the same blood. He has paid the same price for all of us. If we take part in the Table worthily, then all of us can enjoy our share in the House of God. For that purpose the Lord has ordained the Testimony of the Lord's Table to keep ourselves ready for His coming by living a pure life. He teaches us how to eat and drink Him freely and live as one family. May the Lord keep us ready for His coming.

January 11

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

Those who try to follow the fundamental and divine principle of threefold union can have a happy and fruitful married life. They should first of all, long for spiritual union. That means, they must begin their day upon their knees with the Word of God and in the same way end their day upon their knees with the Word of God. They must seek His will together upon their knees for every matter, worship the Lord together and go to the House of God together as far as possible. Many husbands say, "Let my wife pray, because I am very busy with my job or business". But praying together is very necessary. For the soul union, they must make sure that their love does not depend upon human attraction, worldly possession, education or wealth, but they should love each other without any selfish motive. They should have common thoughts, common friends, common affections, common desires, common interests and common secrets. Thirdly, their physical union must be kept very sacred. They must have great regard and respect for each other and take special care to understand mutual needs. They should live their marriage life by prayer and remember that they are brought together to bring forth godly seed (Mal. 2:15). They should ask God for godly children. Otherwise their children will become stubborn and rebellious.

By understanding the true nature of their personality they can easily discern between flesh and the spirit. The devil tries to weaken our faith and rob us of our true love and peace by many subtle devices. By praying in the Spirit according to His perfect will and doing all things under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they will enjoy God's favour and be kept in His heavenly plan. Then their home will be very happy and a blessed one; a home of peace, a home of joy, a home of love, a home of service, a home of divine presence, a home of faith, a home of fellowship, a home where God's Name is honoured. Through such a home many will be blessed. Such a real Christian home is a foretaste of heaven upon the earth.

January 12

"...keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The blue robe made for the high priest reminds us of our vocation and heavenly calling as co-workers with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are co-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). We have a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Every believer has a share in that calling. In the very same passage (1 Cor. 3:9), we are told that we are God's building. For a building we require many things such as stones, bricks, mud and timber. We require both large and small stones. In the same way, we require sand, timber and many other things. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a share in the building of God's house.

We are building the House of Lord Jesus Christ and we are that House (Heb. 3:6). The blue robe indicates our heavenly calling, to build the heavenly habitation of the Lord Jesus Christ under His Headship. In order to enjoy the fulness fully, we must take our share in the building of the House of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the hem of the blue robe worn by the high priest there were pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet. A pomegranate looks like a single fruit but when you cut it open, you will find it composed of many compartments, each containing deep red, juicy, fleshy seeds. Pomegranates in Palestine are very large in size. This fruit is a symbol of the Lord's people. Even though believers are scattered in every part of the world, all of them together make one Church. All those who are purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, are the members of the Church. There is only one Church. The Church is being built by the Lord Jesus Christ, with those who are of one mind and are free from jealousy. Only then you can be a co-worker

with the Lord Jesus Christ in building His Church. Just as the seeds of the pomegranates are put together in many compartments making one fruit, by the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are kept as one body. It is a sevenfold unity of believers that makes one body. One body, one Spirit, one hope, one calling, one faith, one baptism and one Lord and Creator. The Lord wants this sevenfold oneness among His people. In the beginning many began to say, "I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Cephas", and this brought division. No human name can be given to the Church of God. All those names and titles bring division. It is by oneness we are able to build the heavenly Church. The pomegranates remind us of the living Church but not of any building.

January 13

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

Here the Lord speaks of His death and His victory over death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:34). Now this is a simple and wonderful truth, which does not require any education or Bible knowledge to understand. All of us have seen the grain of wheat dying and bringing forth much fruit. One grain of wheat with good soil and water can produce about 5000 grains. Again if you sow these grains the next year and go on sowing what is produced for five years, you will have a whole long goods train full of grain. The Lord Jesus Christ is that grain of wheat. He died to bring many sons into His heavenly glory, and to fill the whole heaven with those sons. All that power was realized for you and for me, when He died and was buried, and rose again.

If a grain of wheat has so much power in it, how much more the Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ. No man could touch Him. When they came to Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:4,6,7), our Lord said "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth". And He said, "I am he." As soon as they heard that, they went backward and fell down. They were afraid to touch Him. He gave Himself up, that we may be more than conquerors. He did not die as a martyr. He gave Himself up to bring into us the highest power in the whole universe and that power is now being offered to you. Has that power come into you? Does it work in you? Are you being raised higher and higher with the same power every day? Do you find yourself rejoicing in suffering, persecutions, trials and poverty? Weeping Christians have no right to be called Christians. God's Word says: "...if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Roman. 8:9). Again, "whosoever believeth in him... have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God has promised these sevenfold tribulations, temptations, trials, famines, sword, suffering and persecution, to show in us His power and victory that while others start crying and weeping, we can be more than conquerors.

January 14

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD" (Psa. 55:22).

When the Gospel was being preached during the early days, for a period, the Lord performed many miracles. Acts 6:8, 12:11, 13:11, 16:26 and 19:11. It went on thus for about six years. Then came a sudden decline. Many were scattered, and many of God's servants and believers were put in prison and bound. Many lost their first love like Demas. That is why the apostle John was puzzled, depressed and dejected for a short time. When we are born again, we do not become supernatural beings or angels. We remain

ordinary human beings. There are times and days, when we are full of discouragement and confusion, and even down - hearted. But for a believer, it is only for a short time. By going to the Lord over and over again, we find our burdens lifted; that is why when you are discouraged, depressed and downcast, go upon your knees and remain upon your knees, even if you fall asleep. There is no harm in that! Be on your knees till your burden is lifted. By faith you can roll all the burdens on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

On the isle of Patmos our Lord appeared in a new vision to John the apostle. His eyes were in the wrong direction. If anybody comes to see you, they will come from the front and not from the back; man can make mistakes, but our Lord cannot make mistakes. John turned round and then he saw the Lord. He had been looking in the wrong direction. The Lord said, "If you want to see Me, look in the right direction; turn right round and look at Me fully. Then all your burdens will be lifted, and all your questions will be fully answered. You try it yourself saying, "Lord, I have come to You to get a fresh glimpse of Your beauty and presence. I have no other request, problems, difficult questions or need. I want only to see You in a complete way". Then you will find your whole life full of joy and gladness, and you will find yourself saying, "Am I upon the earth or in heaven?" You will find yourself in high places. You will see all things in a new way.

January 15

"...Christ ... is our life"... (Col. 3:4).

In Col. 3:3 we read, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God". If we sincerely desire to possess the life of the Lord Jesus Christ we must be willing to die, because unless we die to our old life and corrupt nature, that life cannot come into us. In order to have this experience we have to repent of all our sins, put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as our personal Saviour. Many people say they believe in the Lord Jesus, but in fact they do not know what it means to believe on Him and know Him. They repeat some words and phrases such as, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour" but they do not enjoy the blessings that God wants to give them so freely. This is all because of their own negligence and carelessness.

As far as God is concerned He offers every blessing to us in His Son. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). "All spiritual blessings" means everything we can think of. While theoretically all spiritual blessings are ours, we do not seem to enjoy them in a practical way. The reason is we do not really know what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus. We do not spend sufficient time in reading the Word of God, and we do not meditate on it to understand its meaning. The Lord says in Luke 12:32, "...it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". He is ready not only to forgive our sins, but to give us His kingdom which means all that He has. We must know these blessings in order to enjoy them. We have to study and dig deep into the Word of God, by reading it prayerfully upon our knees.

January 16

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

This is a precious promise from God's Word. Our living God has planned from eternity to give us every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. All of us who are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ have the privilege of claiming these blessings and then the Lord Himself will teach us how to be qualified for these blessings. First of all we have to believe that this is the Word of God and not man's word and that it is meant for all of us and not just for the apostles or God's servants. These words are meant for all those who believe in the Lord. Howsoever foolish, weak and ugly you may be, if you can truthfully say that you are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have every right to claim that promise. That is how we can enjoy all the spiritual blessings because unto Him you are very precious.

Because the Lord Jesus Christ bought us with His blood, we have become more precious to Him than the angels or heavenly beings. So by thanking Him for such love and salvation we understand more and more how to enjoy all spiritual blessings and that is why we find the apostle Paul thanking the Lord on behalf of the Ephesian believers. "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Eph. 1:16). This is the very first thing we should learn, to go on thanking God. We can begin every day in the same way. "Yes Lord, even though I am weak and foolish, worthless and useless, in Thy sight I am very precious because of Thy precious blood and that is why I thank Thee".

Secondly, we should learn to seek God's face even for small matters by prayer. In Col 4:2, Paul exhorts the believers to continue in prayer. In Eph. 6:18 also we have the same thought. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints".

Thirdly, we have to go on claiming divine wisdom to understand divine mysteries. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17).

Fourthly, we need to have our blind eyes opened. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened..." (Eph. 1:18). To understand heavenly things we need heavenly vision and that is why we have to pray, "Lord, open my eyes and let me see more and more from Thy wondrous Word." The mysteries hidden from the wise and prudent will be revealed to babes, that means, those who have simple faith. We can dig deeply into God's Word and always find something new. It is the Word of God and not man's word. It is like a very deep mine of gold. We have to go very deep into God's Word. Then we will be able to enjoy all blessings in heavenly places.

January 17

"For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10).

"Gad" means "a troop or an army cometh" (Gen. 30:11). Gad was the first son of mother Zilpah, but Leah believed that a troop was following after him. She saw something great in that which was seemingly small. We also should learn to look far beyond the small beginning and see the great things that will take place later. For example in John 4:3 we read that the Lord Jesus Christ left Judea for Galilee. There were two roads to Galilee. One via Samaria and other via mount Carmel. The Jews would never go via Samaria (John

4:9) but the Lord Jesus Christ wanted to go through Samaria. The Lord said to His disciples, "I have decided to go through Samaria", but they replied, "Why go that way? Who will give us food to eat and water to drink?" The Scripture says, "he must needs go through Samaria". What was the reason? For the sake of one woman He went there and the whole of Samaria was shaken. Through one soul, He won the whole country (John 4:39; Acts 8:5-8).

We think that the Lord works more through big crowds. That is not God's way. Through small things, He does great things. One day a man came in tears to see us. He said, "Please pray for my wife, she is very ill." He was a Hindu. We went to see her, gave a short message then prayed and left. The Lord healed that woman and through her husband many people came to the Lord in that area. On another occasion, a lady came to see me in Madras. She said to me, "Please pray for my husband, he is very, very sick in the hospital. The doctors are not able to cure him." We spent only a few minutes with them in prayer, gave a short message and came away. Afterwards, the whole family which was from Hyderabad came for fellowship. In the year 1950 they wrote to me, requesting me to go to Hyderabad and that is how the Lord began to work in that city through a small thing, not through great things. That is what we learn from Gad.

January 18

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

In the days of Joshua the children of Israel failed to obey God fully and did not drive out the Jebusites. The Benjamites also allowed these people to stay with them as servants to draw water and cut the wood. That is where they made a big mistake. Now they became so strong that they were mocking David. "... Except thou take away the blind and the lame, though shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither" (2 Sam. 5:6). Before David could become king over all, these Jebusites had to be defeated.

Later on we read how there was one Jebusite who still remained in the land. When he was removed then God showed David the pattern of the Temple. 2 Sam. 24:15-25. David had used his own wisdom at that time to count the number of fighting men in his kingdom. Rather than depending upon God's Word for strength, his eyes went upon the number of soldiers. That is why God brought him to the threshing floor. The same place became the site for the Temple which was built by Solomon. "Then Solomon began to build the House of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chron. 3:1). That was the place where Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar. Thus all the Jebusites had to be completely sent away from the land before David could become the king over the whole kingdom.

These Jebusites speak of men who are not born again. They are worldly people. When they are given some authority in the House of God, like the Jebusites they become strong. Those who are not born again have no part or share in the House of God. Similarly those who are not called by God also have no share in the work of God. Among some groups some people are brought into position in the Church by voting and election. That is why there is a spiritual barrenness in their midst.

God had to use force to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem. Even though they made fun of David, God helped him and his men to conquer them and drive them out. After he had driven out the Jebusites, he

began to prosper and went on becoming great. "And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him" (2 Sam. 5:10). It says in the margin. "went on going and growing". That speaks of complete victory. So we have to see that no Jebusite comes into our life, either in friendship or in marriages or in any other relationship. In the same way, no Jebusite should be given any part in the House of God. Those who are not born again and are not called for God's service have no share in the House of God.

January 19

"... Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9).

When Jehoshaphat returned to Judah in peace (2 Chron. 19:1-8), he tried to recover the loss which had come upon him through his friendship with Ahab. The Lord was gracious to him, and again began to help him to deliver him from his enemies (2 Chron. 20:1,3,22,25). The Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites came against him as a united force. Jehoshaphat was afraid: so he proclaimed a fast and set himself to see the Lord. God heard his prayer, and brought confusion in the army of the enemy, so that they utterly destroyed one another, and the whole army lay dead on the battlefield. Jehoshaphat and his people had only to go and gather the spoil, which was so much that it took them three days to remove the same.

Later on again Jehoshaphat began to reply upon his own wisdom. He entered into an alliance this time with Ahab's son Ahaziah. Is it not sad that Jehoshaphat should make such a mistake after all the bitter experiences of the past? There are many like him even today. They fall into the same sin again and again, and each time they say they will never do it again. To them life is one great cycle of falling and rising, and confession and falling again. Jehoshaphat entered into a league with Ahab's son!

Although at the beginning of his reign king Jehoshaphat had removed all high places, now he had become so weak spiritually that he allowed them to remain. This brought more darkness into his life, and he entertained his friendship with Ahab's son Ahaziah, who compelled him to become a partner with him in sending ships to gather gold from far-off places.

Thus we see king Jehoshaphat, who began his reign well in the fear of the Lord, making a complete failure of his life towards the end, and even undoing the good work which he had begun. The cause of all this was the love of money which had crept into his life, and affinity with ungodly people like Ahab which slowly weakened him and brought about his downfall. LET US BE WARNED.

January 20

"...let a man examine himself" (1 Cor. 11:28).

On the Lord's Day we gather round the Table of the Lord. Remember, it is the Lord's Table, and not the table of any man. It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who is inviting you to take part. All those who have been purchased by His precious blood have free access to this Table. If you look into your heart, you will know if indeed you have been purchased by His blood, and if not, please do not touch the bread or the cup, even if they are passed to you. These things belong only to those who are born again and are a part

of His living Body, the Church. They do not belong to those who are not born again. This then, is the first point of self-examination. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5).

This Table reminds us of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that death it reminds us also of the mighty and eternal victory wrought on the Cross. Our Lord wants us, each one, to have a life of victory and triumph and He has made every provision in His broken body and shed blood to enable us to enjoy that abundant life. As we partake of the bread and the cup we live by Him. We are reminded also that we have to be clean before we partake of it. We may have been taking part for many years, but even so, we need to examine ourselves on every occasion, lest we are unclean, lest we take part unworthily, for "...whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27). Are we clean and worthy before Him? This is why we need to examine ourselves before we take part. Are we obeying Him in all things? Is there any matter between ourselves and a fellow-believer? Is there any envy or jealousy? Is there any disagreement or disunity? Then, before we partake of the bread or the cup, that matter must be confessed and put right, both before God and with our fellow-men; that envy and jealousy must be confessed and put under the blood; that hatred or disagreement must be brought to the light, and dealt with and put right. Every weakness can be overcome by His life. Every defilement can be washed by His blood and every past loss can be recovered by humbling ourselves. As we remember His death, we remember that we also are dead to sin, and must yield ourselves as servants to obey Him (Rom. 6:16-19).

January 21

"For as the body is one, and hath many members,... so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).

Because of the entrance of sin through Adam's disobedience, he brought so much loss to himself and all mankind. Now all that is being recovered by the Lord Jesus Christ. In this great work of recovery God wants us to be His co-workers, just as the members of a human body help to fulfil all the purposes, plans and desires of the head. That is why we are called the Body of Christ. God has exalted His Son, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). In other words, the Church is called the Body of Christ because it has to contain the fullness of God.

Those who are not born again will never understand this mystery, even though they may read many books and hear many sermons. The heavenly mystery of the Body of Christ cannot be understood with human wisdom because we need spiritual wisdom to understand spiritual matters. A carpenter knows all about carpentry, a goldsmith about gold, a blacksmith about iron, and a farmer about fields. We require human wisdom for all these matters. In the same manner we need divine wisdom to understand divine things.

How can we receive this divine wisdom? It is written that Christ "is made unto us wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:30). The living presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in us, is our wisdom. You should not think that Bible knowledge is wisdom. Many people have learnt several portions of the Bible by heart and yet are not familiar with divine truths. Let me say it again, unless the life of the Lord Jesus Christ flows into you, you can never know the mystery of the Body of Christ.

In some cases babies are still born. The body is there, but there is no life in it. Without life the body is useless, and is fit only for burial. Even though you love a person very much, you will not keep his lifeless body. It will be of no use, so it has to be buried. In Eph. 1:23 saved children of God are called "The Body of Christ". This means they have received the life of Christ. It is therefore evident that only those who have received the gift of eternal life can become members in the Body of Christ.

January 22

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mark 16:9).

After His resurrection the Lord first appeared to a woman named Mary Magdalene on the Easter morning. Although she had much devotion for the Lord, she was unaware of the fact that He was risen again and that the power which was manifested by His resurrection was meant for those who love Him and believe in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ stood by her and spoke to her, but she did not recognise Him and so was weeping. Today we find many believers throughout the world weeping for every small trial and temptation; but the Lord wants them to be more than conquerors in every situation. The reason for their weeping is that they do not know how to appropriate the power of resurrection for every need.

When the Lord called Mary by name, she recognised Him. She wanted to touch His feet to show her devotion and love for Him; but the Lord said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). A short time later, He allowed other women to hold Him by His feet as we read in Matt. 28:9. Then eight days after the resurrection He said to Thomas, "...Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). So it was for a purpose that the Lord did not allow Mary, though so devoted, to touch Him. The Lord Jesus Christ had to ascend to heaven as our everlasting heavenly High Priest to offer His own blood on our behalf in the most Holy place according to Heb. 9:12. According to the prophecy of Psalm 16:10, His body saw no corruption and His blood also did not see any corruption. The Lord Jesus Christ as our everlasting High Priest by His own hands offered His own blood for the atonement of all our sins and for cleansing us from all the defilement caused on our guilty conscience by our thoughts, words and deeds. Thus we see, if we want to enjoy the power of resurrection daily, first of all we have to wait upon Him sufficiently till He speaks to us, according to our need. Before He can speak to us, we have to be cleansed from all the defilement caused by our thoughts, words and deeds by the precious blood of the everlasting covenant. By faith we have to keep ourselves constantly under the sprinkling of His precious blood. Then we will be able to enjoy the power of resurrection.

January 23

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15).

In Joshua chapter seven we read of the defeat of the children of Israel before Ai. It happened because of sin in one man's life. We are engaged in the Lord's work as a body. As the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ we are waging a war against the devil. Any failure or shortcoming on the part of even one individual will

adversely and harmfully affect the whole Church. As Joshua and the elders continued in prayer, the sin of Achan was exposed. It was dealt with in the way God had asked them to do; immediately after which the promise of the victory began to be fulfilled. In the light of the above, we should also search our hearts and set things right before God and man so that we may not bring any hindrance to the work of God.

Achan had to pay a very great price for his sin. That should remind us of the extremely great price which the Lord Jesus Christ had to pay to bear the judgment of all the sins of the whole mankind. How grateful we ought to be to our beloved Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord promised complete victory over Ai (Josh. 8:1), over the king of Ai, over his people, over his city and his land. They could enjoy that victory as they obeyed the commandments of the Lord in the fullest details. The Lord Jesus Christ has obtained full victory over Satan and his evil power (Col. 2:15). As we obey His commands we too can enjoy His victory day after day. In the book of Joshua we find many simple but important truths revealed which we can appropriate by faith and come into the full enjoyment of His inheritance.

January 24

"...Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21).

Suppose you are like a filthy, dirty beggar and you go to see a king. Imagine you are in filthy, dirty garments, which have not been changed for years; and your hair, very long, not cut for years; and you have had no bath for many weeks. In such a condition you go before the great king. You say, "Your majesty, I want to see your face for one minute." And the king says to you, "Come inside." First, he calls for the barber and asks him to give you a nice hair cut. He sees that you are washed and then brings you a new garment and makes you to put it on. Then he brings you outside and says, "Go now as my prince." How would you feel at such a time? You came in as a dirty, filthy beggar, to see the king for a minute, and you go out as a prince! With the very same desire our Lord was saying to the Greeks who came to see Him, "You only want to see me for a few moments, but I want you to see Me and become like Me." But how could that be possible? To show this He was saying (John 12:24), "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone". Now, we know that one tiny grain brings forth hundreds of other grains. In the same way the Lord was teaching, "I must die so that not only these Greeks, but the whole world may be able to see Me for ever, and whoever sees Me may become like Me". Thus our Lord taught plainly and clearly that He was not drawing men by miracles, signs and wonders, or by other worldly means, but by His being lifted up upon the cross.

Some years ago many Indians thought that by putting on western clothes they would become Christians. They adopted western names like George, Henry, Charles and so on. Change of name, or change of garments cannot make you a Christian. The Lord said, "I will change you and make you like Myself." When a grain of wheat dies, it brings forth the same kind of grain in the whole stalk. Christ died that we all might become like Him.

January 25

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). The Lord wants us to take our share in the heavenly city which has foundations as we see in Heb. 11:10. We have to be chastened and rebuked by the Lord, to prepare us for that heavenly city. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:6-8). We must be partakers of God's holiness that we may be able to live in the heavenly city as heavenly kings and possess it for ever. We must be constantly chastened by the Lord. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to the joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). God's purpose is so great that He wants to make us citizens and kings in that heavenly city, to reign with Him where angels are ordained to minister to us (Heb. 1:13,14).

In the end days God is going to shake everything (Hebrews 12:26). All that has been accomplished by our own effort, wisdom, or strength will be removed. Only that which has been accomplished with His strength, for His glory and praise will remain. Constantly we have to examine ourselves and do nothing in our wisdom and strength, but do everything through the Holy Spirit for God's glory. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (v. 28). We are going to be in that kingdom which shall not be shaken.

January 26

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

In the eighth chapter of Hebrews we read about the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of the Heavenly Tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle was pitched by Moses. Now the Heavenly Tabernacle is pitched by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (v.2). Just as in the Old Testament period, all those who were willing could take a share in the construction of the tabernacle by bringing offering such as gold, shittim wood, brass and iron, now as believers of the Lord Jesus Christ each one of us has the privilege to become a part of the Heavenly Tabernacle. The material used for the tabernacle built by Moses was earthly: that is why it did not last long. Now our Lord Himself is building an everlasting tabernacle in which each one of us can take some share. We do not offer a little of what we have, but we offer all. All of us are built together into a sanctuary according to the heavenly plan under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The previous tabernacle was only a shadow of the true Heavenly Tabernacle, as we read in Heb. 8:5.

God kept Moses on mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights before giving him the pattern of the tabernacle. Before that he was kept in the wilderness for forty years. During that period he was completely and thoroughly emptied of his own wisdom. Then God gave the pattern and he had to carry out His

instructions without any change. Even though the whole pattern was given by God Himself, yet it was only a shadow. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is building the true Tabernacle without hands but with our co-operation. That is why believers are called by different names such as: God's building, God's habitation, God's temple, God's co-workers, God's peculiar treasure, the pearl of a great price, His bride and so on. All these names reveal our heavenly vocation. Here, the Lord is reminding us that His heavenly pattern cannot be changed by anyone.

January 27

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron...for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:2).

The garments designed by God for the high priest are able to show forth God's glory and beauty which He desires to share with us. That is why these garments of the high priest in the Old Testament are called 'Garments of Glory and Beauty'. On the one hand God was showing that nobody was worthy to go into the Holy of Holies. All had sinned and so nobody could go there. Only the high priest had the privilege to go behind the veil once a year to make atonement. On the other hand God was showing through the garments of glory and beauty of the high priest, that He wants us also to become glorious and beautiful, although we have been ruined completely by sin, and have to say like Paul, "(in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom 7:18). Really, none of us is worthy to enjoy the presence of God in the Holy place. The high priest could go into the Most Holy Place and commune with God only once a year. Through these garments God was showing how our joy and our love can be full, how our nakedness caused by sin can be covered completely and how we can become glorious in the presence of God.

Those who saw the high priest walking up and down in the tabernacle or the temple were being spoken to by God. "Oh My People, who are away from Me, I want you to be near Me and enjoy My fulness". We have to learn the same secret of enjoying fully our share in God's fulness and not to be satisfied just by having our sins forgiven and obtaining some corner in heaven. We have to learn it by faith. The Lord Jesus Christ is my garment of glory and beauty. In Him we can see all these seven garments and thus we can be filled more and more with His fulness.

January 28

"... obey in all things... not with eye service, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (Col. 3:22).

As believers of the Lord Jesus Christ whatever job is given unto us at home or outside we should do it heartily. This is a great secret for a believer's life. Whatever we do we should do it heartily as unto Him (Col. 3:23). In a certain hospital there was a nurse who was a believer and she was very conscientious in her work. After sometime she was put on duty in a new ward, and there also as usual she began to attend to her duties heartily and thoroughly, and kept everything in the ward perfect and clean. On seeing this one patient questioned her as to who was coming to inspect the ward. She replied "No one". That patient continued to ask her, why then was she working so hard. He remarked that the nurses who had worked in that ward prior to her coming had not been so faithful and thorough in their duties. To this the nurse

replied that she was not working to please any human being, but to please only the Lord Jesus Christ Who was her Saviour.

We must learn to willingly accept any kind of job, which the Lord may entrust to us. When I gave myself for the Lord's service in the year 1932, I promised the Lord that I would make no choice regarding the type of work, food, climatic conditions or anything else and that I was prepared to go wherever He would send me. I believed that He would not leave me alone and that was sufficient for me. He goes before us, behind us and with us and gives us strength for any kind of work which we may undertake to complete, as long as it is according to His perfect will and plan.

In the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, among those who came to help Nehemiah there were some who were not qualified as carpenters or masons, but they accepted the work only because it was from God. As a result of it God Himself gave them skill and knowledge that were necessary for this work. On the other hand there were some who did not do the work heartily. We can see from Nehemiah 3:5, that although the nobles did not actually refuse to work, yet they did not work heartily.

During our Holy Convocation gatherings when we ask for volunteers to attend to various jobs some come forward and work very happily for the first few days, but as the days go by they lose interest forgetting the fact that we should take our full share in any work which is entrusted to us in the House of God.

January 29

"...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1:4).

In the book of Joshua we are made to understand how our loving and living God wants us to possess by faith our great spiritual inheritance. When God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, He did so with the purpose of giving them the rich and fertile land of Canaan as their inheritance. Similarly the Lord Jesus Christ, not only forgives us our sins but also wants us to take our full share of the heavenly inheritance. (1 Pet 1:4). The apostle Paul refers to it as "the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12) and says in Eph. 1:14 that the Holy Spirit is given to us as an earnest of that inheritance.

The land of Canaan is a shadow of our spiritual inheritance in Christ. At that time Canaan was a fertile land with plenty of water and abundance of the best fruits. In Canaan everything was in abundance. That speaks of the fulness of God which we can enjoy in Christ Jesus according to Col. 2:9,10. God wants us to possess that fulness by faith. We receive eternal life as a gift, but our share in the inheritance has to be claimed and appropriated by faith day by day. A child born in a wealthy family automatically gets a claim on his portion of the family property. Similarly each believer born into the family of God has a claim on the Heavenly inheritance. But it must be possessed by faith.

The story of Rahab, as recorded in Joshua chapter 2, teaches us how we can possess our inheritance by faith. Rahab being a heathen harlot had no right to the great inheritance which God wanted to give to the children of Israel. Surprisingly we find that this despised woman had real living faith in the great God of the Israelites. Rahab could say to the spies "for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in

earth beneath" (v.11). She even believed that the LORD had already given them the land. She saw by faith how God's judgement would surely fall on Jericho and its inhabitants, and hence she claimed deliverance for herself and her family. At the moment she had no idea about her share in that inheritance. God not only delivered her from sinful life but also brought her into the holy and chosen generation. That is how she became the great grand-mother of David (Matt. 1:5), and eventually in the same line the Lord Jesus Christ was also born. Thus we see how first of all, by faith in the living and true God we can enjoy our inheritance.

January 30

"...and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:3).

That was the happiest home in the whole area, because the Lord Jesus Christ had done a great work in the family of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Every member of the family had become happy because of His grace and power. All who passed by that house could smell sweet fragrance from the house, even to a long distance. That is the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ for every new home, that people may come to know Him through them and they themselves may receive great joy. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to make our joy full as He says in John 16:24 and also in John 15:11. The desire, plan and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ in saving us, is to make our joy full. Now, that joy does not depend upon worldly possessions or worldly qualifications. We may be very rich or poor, educated or illiterate, have a high position or no position. We may belong to any country, yet our joy can be full under all circumstances, and no man upon the earth can take away our joy from our hearts. Our Lord says in John 16:22, "...your joy no man taketh from you". Earthly joy can be taken away by our enemies, friends and circumstances but this joy can no man take away from us. People may try by words, deeds and schemes, but they will never succeed. What a joy it is! This joy is for all times, not occasionally. This is Paul's testimony too as he says in Phil. 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice". Whenever there is a marriage, there is joy. In Jer. 33:11 and Isa. 62:5, the joy of the bridegroom and the bride is compared to heavenly joy. It is not ordinary joy but heavenly joy and God wants every home to have such a joy. But you may say, "We don't have such joy". In many cases this is true. It is not God's fault but our fault because we fail to abide by God's Word. In John 15:7 there is a very simple divine law. "If ye abide in me, my words abide in you". We must be sure that we have everlasting life flowing in us. For every walk of life, we have God's Word for childhood, youth, middle age, and for old age; for sickness, sufferings, trials and other circumstances. God's Word is given to us to overcome every situation and to come out victorious. We can say with apostle Paul as a testimony in Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ".

January 31

"... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

We have steps to go to the terrace, or from one floor to the other. Growth in the salvation of God also is a step by step, forward and upward process in our spiritual walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. We begin with the first step and then we have to take step after step. One step at a time. Sometimes children like to jump from the first step to the third. In many cases they slip and fall down, and sometimes they get hurt. This is true in our upward climb to the heights of salvation. We must be sure to take only one step at a

time. The initial step is our being born again, or receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. Then the Holy Spirit will show us the next step. In this way it will be easy to enjoy unbroken fellowship with our Lord in our spiritual growth.

For many years we had thought we could do without the Lord. We have been cock-sure we could manage our own lives by our own cleverness, knowledge and wisdom. We had never thought of calling upon God for help, and in many cases, we ended up as miserable failures. Then and then only did we realize that unless God took hold of us we would be completely ruined, and that there would be no hope for us either in this world or in the next. In this way some took the first step because of some crisis or the other, such as serious illness, poverty or a similar circumstance when no one else was able to help them; or because of some great disappointment either in private or public life when all human comfort failed them; yet others, because of some dominating sin from which no one could deliver them. Indeed God does use such varying circumstances in our lives to show us our helplessness and inability to teach us to call upon Him for help and deliverance. When we call upon Him for salvation, He answers us and becomes real and personal to us.

FEBRUARY 1

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

In Psalm 127:1,2 we have the secret as to how to build the House of God. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it... It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late." We have a double responsibility towards God's Dwelling Place. We have one responsibility as labourers together with God in building it; and another responsibility is His building material, "lively stones," in being built by Him. Since we are co-workers with God we must take heed how we build His House. We cannot build it with our human zeal or wisdom and we are warned against doing so, "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late." We must build God's House only according to His plan, on the true foundation and under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn how to find and take our share in this work. It does not matter to God how many handicaps and disadvantages we have, or how few our talents are. What matters is that we should be willing to take our share and that it should be under the Headship of Lord Jesus Christ even in small things. When we work in an office or factory we ask permission from the person-in-charge if we want to go out for a few minutes. The same rule applies to all of us. Learn to consult with and to ask permission from those with whom you work. Learn also to go to the Lord for every matter.

We cannot build God's House on man's plan or on a man-made foundation. The Lord Jesus alone is our foundation. He is also our Architect and our Engineer as well as the Supervisor of the whole work. Therefore ask His advice at every stage of the work. Consult Him and find out if your plan is in accordance with His heavenly plan, whether you are building on the right foundation and so on. He will answer you and show you if you make a mistake. It will be a great joy to you and to Him when you take His advice and obey Him in every however small or unimportant it may seem to you. If you do not get an immediate answer, wait patiently and He will reveal His plan to you in answer to private or corporate prayer. Only do not follow your own wisdom. When we come under His Headship and Lordship and build according to His

plan on His foundation, then we shall be a source of blessing to others, otherwise our Labour will be in vain.

FEBRUARY 2

"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22).

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels..." (Heb. 12:18-22).

Mount Sinai brought bondage and fear. Nobody became righteous and just by the Law. By the Law people learned what sin was, their mouths were closed, they began to see the horror of sin and the Law prepared them like a schoolmaster for Christ. Now we are come unto Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the Heavenly City. This is our Heavenly goal. Whether we worship under a tree, in a brick or stone building, in a tent, under the starry sky, or by a river bank, the place does not matter very much, but it is the spirit among the people that matters. When we worship God in spirit and in truth, He is pleased. He does not want a big building. He wants us to build His Heavenly City. Nowadays, men are very proud of their big, grand, stone buildings, but often there is no real life of the Lord Jesus Christ there.

Do not go into bondage again, but look for the Heavenly City, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and where we have the benefit of His advocacy, His blood for cleansing, the protection of God's angels, and the fellowship for God's saints, where there is true oneness. That is our privilege. But where there are rites, ceremonies, and rituals, it means the devil has robbed people of their liberty and their joy.

Do not allow the enemy to deceive you any longer. The Lord has set you free; remain free, and enjoy your liberty as a child of God. Worship Him in spirit and in truth. Do not go back into bondage and be a slave to any formality but live in the spirit. You may say you are born again and may take part in the Lord's Table in a simple way, but if you do not live the life you profess and live in enmity and jealousy, you will bring death and bondage. The Spirit of God must work freely. May the Lord break every bondage and keep us free.

FEBRUARY 3

"... the situation of this city is pleasant, ... but the water is naught, and the ground barren" (2 Kings 2:19).

During the time of Elisha, the prophet, the condition of Jericho was barren; and this can be compared of unfruitful churches in many places these days. Where similar conditions prevail spiritually, in the churches,

the Lord needs men like Elisha to take away the barrenness. Among God's servants there are many who have hectic activities, without much fruitfulness.

There were many sons of the prophets studying the Word of God under the prophet Elijah and yet they were full of doubts concerning it. That is why, in their ignorance of God's ways, they tried their best to prevent Elisha from accompanying Elijah from place to place. Elisha knew very well that Elijah would be taken away from him by the Lord. The sons of the prophets also knew this (see verse 3). Yet instead of themselves going with Elisha, they tried to hinder him from following Elijah. Elisha was willing to go through any trial or sacrifice in order to be with Elijah right to the end. The Lord needs fruitful servants like Elisha.

The sons of the prophets watched Elijah and Elisha with doubting minds. When Elisha returned alone, they expressed their doubts to him (see verse 6). Fifty strong men among them wanted to go in search of Elijah's body which, though taken up by the Spirit of the Lord, they argued, might have fallen on a mountain or in some valley. Their desire was perhaps to have a grand funeral service, although they had not bothered to be with Elijah till his departure.

These sons of the prophets had faithful servants of God like Elijah to expound the Word of God to them and yet they were full of unbelief. In the same way there are many today who are taught God's Word by strong and faithful servants of God, but remain weak in faith, and are full of fear. When trials and suffering come to them, they start murmuring and go about with very sad faces. We must learn how to be like Elisha, so that the Lord may use us to take away barrenness, and bring fruitfulness into every situation.

FEBRUARY 4

"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river ..." (Isaiah 48:18).

In 2 Thess. 3:16 we read about peace which God Himself will give you, and the Lord Himself will be with you always. This peace will make you and keep you conscious of His presence with you. You will be conscious of His actual presence. Christ says: "I am with you, don't be afraid." That consciousness of His presence is a wonderful thing.

In Phil. 4:7, we read "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This peace will keep you strong within. Like a strong army around you, God's peace will garrison you. Let there be famine, calamity, earthquake or war, you are safe and secure. The Scripture says, your hairs are all numbered and your tears are bottled up. You are safe in Him.

In Jer. 33:6 we find these words: "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and . . . reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth." True peace will heal all your wounds. When friends betray, they cause a very deep and painful wound. In the same way, when you find children are unfaithful, they leave a deep wound, which cannot be healed by any medicine. But this peace heals every kind of wound caused by friends, or enemies (Psa. 119:165). "Great peace have they which love thy law and nothing shall offend them". How many believers get offended very easily. They sometimes keep away from meetings for many,

many months. Their peace has gone away, because it is worldly peace. But with the peace of God nothing can offend them. It is a great peace.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. 26:3). This is perfect peace, which gives you strong faith in all situations. You can trust God's Word and His promise. "Have you got that peace? How can you find it?" Eph. 2:14: "...he is our peace". Romans 8:6 "... to be spiritually minded is life and peace." By receiving the divine nature, we find true peace. The Lord Jesus Christ died, that we might die to our old nature. He died also to take away our punishment, and rose again to give us a divine nature. That nature gives you peace and by obeying God you have it multiplied. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river" Isa. 48:18.

FEBRUARY 5

"O come , ... let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Psalm 95:6).

Daniel was promoted to a high position. Though his enemies were against him yet God exalted him to a high position. Do not let the enemy's activity discourage you. The Lord will use the same circumstances to promote you. The enemy will try to drag you down in the dust but God will lift you up as long as you honour Him and refuse to bow down to the gods of the world.

Now Daniel was given the highest place in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, that of being the president over the 120 princes of their kingdom. The jealousy of his enemies became all the greater. I warn you beforehand, that as you enjoy divine favour in your different places, as you live a life of honesty and sincerity and as you work hard and refuse to take bribes or eat the king's meat, your co-workers will join together against you. By many wicked devices, scandals and other means even your own ungodly relations will persecute you. If they can drag you down by any means they will certainly do so. Daniel's enemies wanted to drag him down from his high position. They made a very clever scheme. But Daniel went on praying three times a day. (Dan 6:10) Sad to say many of us are ashamed to kneel down. We say in our hearts, "What will he or she say if I kneel down? God knows my heart and I can pray sitting." Some young men who earn even a small amount are ashamed to kneel down. So proud are they that they sit down in the presence of the Almighty God. Do you call that prayer? O foolish and blind people, people refusing to bow down and kneel before your Creator and your God! When you are in trouble you call upon Him for mercy. When you want promotion, when somebody is sick you want prayer. But you refuse to bow down your God and your Saviour.

Daniel went on praying three times a day. All the high officials brought him and threw him before the lions in the den. But God sent His angel to shut their mouths. All the lions gathered around Daniel for he was a heavenly king, so much so that even the lions had to bow down before him. Our loving and living God is calling you to be such a king. All the evil powers will bow down before you. In this world people may mock you, but a time is coming when the evil powers will bow down before you provided you now refuse to bow down to the world.

FEBRUARY 6

"They looked unto him, and were lightened" (Psalm 34:5).

Sometimes you may be troubled by your wandering thoughts. You want to pray but your mind is disturbed. That is how the prayer time is so often occupied. But do not give up, you have got to stay upon your knees. By faith, you can rebuke Satan. Say by faith, "Lord Jesus, I am being troubled by wandering thoughts. Will you help me now? Will you please bring my thoughts under captivity to Yourself?" Only He can do it! Nobody else can control your thoughts, but the Lord Jesus Christ can bend them and bring them to captivity. When you spend sufficient time upon your knees, and feel God's presence, you will be happier and better.

I remember many years ago, I went to a barber for a hair cut in Canada. The barber said to me. "What a miserable day! What a rotten day! What a cold day! What a bad day!" It was raining and it was a very, very cold day. I said, "There is sunshine in my soul". He said, "You come from India". I said, "I am not talking about the sunshine in India. I have a new sunshine which keeps me warm and rejoicing every day. I have never once said, "It is a rotten day". Every day is a good day for me, --rainy, or sunny, or cold. As long as I feel my Lord's presence, to me it is a happy day. I find how from His face the sunshine goes into me, healing me and curing of many germs many times. Evil thoughts are like germs. Most diseases are caused by germs of some kind. Even though you are careful yet somehow or the other they push through the food into your mouth. You may drink boiled water every day. You can wash your hands and feet with carbolic soap many times a day, and you avoid going to any filthy place, or eating food anywhere. Every fruit which you eat, you first wash with potassium permanganate. Even so these germs will find their way here and there, for they are very clever.

In the same way evil thoughts are like germs. You can shut your eyes and ears, but evil thoughts are still there. Only the sunshine of His face can kill these evil thoughts. That is why we have to remain on our knees in the presence of God, to be washed in His sunshine. And you say by faith, "Lord, these thoughts are troubling me. I cannot control them. Please control them". Thus you will get victory over your thoughts, and your prayer will be a delight and an inspiration. You can talk to the Lord as a friend to friend: and you will feel healthy and fresh the whole day. And many will say that the light of God is shining upon your face.

FEBRUARY 7

"...and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:3).

Our longing and desire for all believers is, that they should have such real happy Christian homes. Happiness does not depend on furniture, clothes, jewels and other worldly goods or any other qualifications such as university degrees. These cannot bring real or lasting joy. True joy depends upon our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and on how far we honour the Word of God and obey His Word. We do not usually come across many happy homes. We mostly come across many sad homes. They are sad because they neither honour God's Word, not consult or obey it.

Now let us see from the Word of God how a happy home can become possible. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). This the first pre-requisite for a happy home. Be

positively sure that you are joined by God. You might say that all are joined by God because they are married in some church building. It does not necessarily mean they are joined by God. Only those who have sought to know God's will for their marriage and then are sure of doing God's will are joined by God. For the Word of God say, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). We consider the highest privilege of believers to be the ability to know and do God's will. I do not know any other joy comparable to this joy. In many marriages couples are joined together by their personal feelings, for the sake of money or gold, and some because of their liking for outward appearances or other qualifications like belonging to the same caste. Some are joined by brokers. In all these cases the motives are wrong and unworthy. God's Word says that those who are joined by God should not be separated by man. Believers have the right and privilege to seek the face of God and find God's will before they agree for marriage. It may take one year, two years or even more. It is up to God to decide the time and the partner. We cannot dictate to God. As far as possible it is better to wait for Scripture guidance. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17) and "...prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). Those who are born again are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will enable them to say, "Not my will but Thy will. I will gladly accept Thy will Lord, kindly speak to me".

FEBRUARY 8

"...let every man take heed how he buildeth" (1 Cor. 3:10).

On the 31st of May, 1935 there was an earthquake in the city of Quetta. I remember in 1933 an expert engineer came to Quetta. He warned the Government that there would be an earthquake in the city area in about a year, and he advised them to make some provision for it at once and also construct earthquake-proof houses. The Government did not take it seriously. Only the Railway officials agreed to the proposal and they had six earthquake-proof houses. Suddenly the earthquake came, and in 18 seconds 58,000 people were killed and except for these six specially prepared houses every other house, whether of stone or brick or mud, became rubble. It is high time for us, who are God's servants to learn our lessons also.

There will be many severe attacks by Satan upon God's people. He will come as a roaring lion, or a ravening wolf, or like a flood, or even like an angel of light. God's servants are responsible for the flock and have to make every provision for their spiritual protection. This can be done only if we build according to the heavenly pattern. Some people think they can serve in their own way. They say, "God is blessing us anyhow!" Please do not be satisfied with a temporary blessing. God is gracious. That is why He blesses our work in a way in spite of the fact that our obedience is only partial. We need to recognize that; nevertheless God always keeps to His original plan. Paul the apostle says in 1 Cor. 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase". He admits that he had need of co-workers, and that although he was an apostle he was not sufficient by himself. God uses some servants to plant. Others are needed to come and water. Thus all have to labour in oneness and unity. If you have been called only to sow the seed, and have no other calling or burden, then you should pray that God may send an "Apollos" to come and water that seed. Paul could remain in a place long enough only to do the planting. Before he left that place, he would tell those who came after him, that it was God's work. Therefore, "Let a man take heed how he buildeth thereon".

FEBRUARY 9

"...there was a 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". When there was famine in the land 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; they had no thought of seeking the will of God. They were being governed only by "that which was right in their own eyes". Even today, for the sake of money and worldly prosperity, many believers 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.

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 they 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 the enemy. So never neglect the fellowship of God's people. Disobedience to the Word of God and to divine principles invariably brings us into loss and this, in turn, leads to sorrow.

It was only then that Naomi began to think of Bethlehem-Judah. It dawned on her that she would be better off in Bethlehem and that she had done wrong in coming away from the land of God's promise. 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. Her Moabitish daughter-in-law Ruth became the channel through whom His Son may 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 in our lives, when we decide to return to God. He will change our sorrow into joy, and reveal the riches of His grace through us.

FEBRUARY 10

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ..." (1 Cor. 15:10).

Through the mitre which the high priest wore we have a message of grace. "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). We may wonder why human beings like so frail, so weak and so foolish, should be filled with His fulness. Why does God want to fill us with His fulness? The answer is not because of what we are, nor because of our cleverness or our

gifts or our talents, but because of His grace. Perhaps you may think, a man like Paul can attain to that standard of fulness, but I cannot, because I am so weak. But Paul himself declares that he is what he is only by the grace of God. It has to be the same with you and with me. Do not think that you can receive God's fulness because of your Bible knowledge, or intelligence or other qualifications. It must be only by God's grace. Therefore we should never take pride in our family or in our education or in any thing else. The Lord shows us that if we want to be a partaker of His glory and beauty, we must learn how to claim His grace for every thing. We are saved by His grace alone and after that, day by day, we have to claim the same grace for every need.

Sometimes, through very painful experiences the Lord teaches us that His grace is sufficient in every situation (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul, the apostle, had gone through many hardships without a murmur or complaint (2 Cor. 11:23). We read that God permitted him to suffer from a painful "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7-9a). We do not know what this thorn was. Evidently it was something exceeding painful, because Paul says, "I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." This proves that the thorn must have been an extraordinarily painful one. At such a time, God's answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." God allowed the thorn to remain with Paul for a definite purpose. First of all, it was meant to keep him humble, lest Paul should be exalted above measure through the divine revelations given to him. Secondly, it was meant to teach him a little more of God's grace. This cannot be understood easily. Even though Paul had received many revelations and wonderful experiences, he still had to suffer this very painful thorn in the flesh in order to learn more of the grace of God. Thus we see that God permits all kinds of painful experiences in the lives of His children in order to teach them more of His grace.

FEBRUARY 11

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, we all have some fault or failure or weakness in us. Nobody is free from them. We inherit these weaknesses from our fathers and they from their fathers and so on. We are born in sin (Psa. 51:5). If the father has a bad temper, invariably the children will have it. If the father is greedy for money, the children too are of the same type. If the father has a haughty, proud spirit, the children will have the same. Thus we inherit the weaknesses of our parents. We cannot overcome our weaknesses by reformation or tears or other things. But the Lord Jesus Christ can transform us as we humble ourselves and confess our failures and weaknesses day by day.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our High Priest and He bears our weaknesses on His shoulder. We are privileged to go on Him with all our weaknesses, shortcomings and failures. So by faith we say to Him. "My Lord, I confess my shortcomings, failures and faults. Have mercy upon me. Give me victory over all these." As our High Priest He bears our burdens also (1 Pet. 5:7). Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has a very strong shoulder to carry you through any kind of weakness, shortcoming or failure. He is our strength in our weaknesses and failures. He is our Advocate (1 John 2:1). By His advocacy all our shortcomings are transformed into divine virtues (Heb. 7:25). These virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ are symbolized by the five materials of the ephod : gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen. Through these garments, God shows

us how the virtues of Christ should be woven into our lives. Five is the number of grace. Divine virtues are given to us as we willingly obey Him. Here the gold speaks of the divine nature by which we are enabled to know heavenly things, and which is manifested by Christ-like virtues. These virtues become apparent when we, with strong faith endure patiently trials and temptations (1 Pet. 1:7). The blue speaks of divine wisdom, purple speaks of the Lord's authority, scarlet speaks of His precious blood and fine twined linen speaks of the pure life of our Lord.

FEBRUARY 12

"... that ye may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead ..." (Eph. 1:18-20).

God wants us to be filled completely with His power. It is by that power we conquer our temptations, trials and difficulties and by the same power one day we shall have immortal bodies (Rom. 8:11). It is the power of resurrection, that power which God manifested in raising up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Upon the earth, we are being quickened daily with the same power to overcome our temptations and burdens. By the same power we shall be given immortal bodies in heaven and by that same power we shall enjoy eventually our share in God's fulness. It is only by the power of resurrection that our inner man can be strengthened, and that we can be deeply rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:16, 17). We see tall trees on mountains. Let there be any big storm, the trees do not fall down, because their roots go very deep over large areas. That is why no storm can uproot them, rather they go on growing taller and taller and the roots go deeper. In the same way by the power of resurrection, in the inner man, we are rooted deeply in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let there be any trial, persecution or hardship, it will not shake us. We will rejoice in our trials and at the same we will become stronger spiritually. As we grow spiritually, we know that eventually we shall be filled with God's fulness. Thus we will find in a practical way the love of God filling us more and more. We become loving, tender, patient and gentle as a result. We can love our enemies. we can love the unlovely and pray for those that hate us and curse us. That is the evidence of the fact that we are being deeply grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope is that one day, we will be filled by His fulness. God help us to learn that secret more and more.

FEBRUARY 13

"And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom" (Numbers 17:5).

Korah and his company were jealous of Moses. They along with 250 princes rebelled against Moses and Aaron. God judged them very severely, and yet we see that the children of Israel did not stop murmuring against Moses (Num. 16:41). That is why God told Moses to take twelve rods, one for tribe and keep them in the tabernacle. Then He said, "And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you. And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness" (Num. 17:5, 7). The next day, they saw to their surprise that the rod with the name of Aaron had blossomed and yielded almonds. Normally it takes a long time for an almond tree to bear fruit. Here in one night, the rod brought forth buds, blossom and fruit. Through this God was saying that even though Aaron's rod appeared to be

the same as other rods, there was a vast difference. There was some kind of life in that rod which other rods did not have. It was heavenly life. When a seed is sown in the ground and watered, it grows because the seed has life in it. But Aaron's rod was completely a dry one and yet the same dry rod yielded blossom and fruit. The same power was manifested when God created everything as we read in Gen. 1:11, "God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." There was no sowing, tilling or gathering. God just spoke and different kinds of trees came forth straightway. That is the power of the word of God. Even though Moses and Aaron were ordinary men, yet God had put new life into them. The Spirit of God was working through them.

Moses had to obey the Lord and give His message at His command. Whatever God told him he spoke without adding anything to it. But Korah and his followers thought that Moses was saying everything in his own wisdom. Even though Moses and Aaron spoke the same words as others, yet there was life in their words. One could find new life flowing through their words. There was power and authority in every word. But these men, because they were princes, thought surely they too could speak like Moses. God showed them through the budded rod that they were only like dry rods. Whereas Moses and Aaron had power in them. God proved that He had chosen them for His service. Many people want to become great preachers in the world by getting much knowledge. There is no joy and no power in them. One can see only dryness, though they may teach and preach very cleverly in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matt. 7:22, 23 we have a solemn warning. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

FEBRUARY 14

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger" (John 6:35).

God knows where we live and in what surroundings. He knows our difficulties. So He asks us to come to Him Who is the Living Bread. The manna which fell from heaven is a type of the real bread, our Lord Jesus Christ. How the manna was made, how it came, we do not know. But it came, and they ate it and were kept strong. How much better to have the Living Bread!

But to eat Him, you must first be hungry for Him. It is possible you might be hungry only for Bible knowledge, or miracles and signs and outward things, but not for God. The hunger for the Lord may be very little. If so, that is the reason why you are deceived so easily by Satan. Do you desire to overcome Satan? Then this is the Lord's provision for you-The Hidden Manna.

God wants to do a new work in you, and for this purpose He will give you new and fresh food morning, noon and night, wherever you may go. After my conversion, while I was in Canada, I had no money with me, so I had to work as a cook, and prepare food for four to five hundred people in a hotel. I had to pray every morning, how much of every ingredient to use for each dish. I found the food had new taste every day and a new flavour. The people thought I was an excellent and experienced cook, even asked me for my recipes. If the Lord enabled me to prepare the food with new taste and flavour everyday, how much

more will He not give you the living Bread to satisfy your hunger and thirst? By eating that Living Bread you will also receive new taste, new love, new hunger for the Word of God.

The hidden manna speaks of the secret of feeding on the Lord, eating His flesh and drinking His blood; being occupied in adoration and worship for the One Who is altogether lovely. Many look for miracles and outward signs and Bible knowledge for their spiritual growth. But none of these can fully satisfy us and bring us victory. The enemy comes with much subtlety to lead you to a defeated life. God knows how weak you are and how you try to face the devil wrongly. So to help you to overcome, He had made this provision of feeding upon the Living Lord Himself daily. The simple test is to note how much time you can spend before the Lord in worship and adoration without any supplication. Learn to wait upon Him first, for the joy of it. You will find that for hours you will not be tired, and when duties call you away you will be sorry to go. Have you learned to eat the hidden manna? By faith we can eat Him as the Living Bread and drink of Him also.

FEBRUARY 15

"And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethern!" (Matt. 12:49).

When Joseph brought his two sons before Jacob, he laid his hands on them (Gen. 48:14). By doing so, he identified those boys with his whole family saying, "You are my children, even though you were born in Egypt. You belong to my family. Now you have an equal share in the blessings which God has given to Abraham and his seed." By laying his hands on them he also reminded them, "Now my grandsons, do not be deceived by Egypt and its wealth or glory. God has given you a great spiritual and eternal inheritance along with the other children of Abraham." Thus, by the laying on of hands, we show our spiritual oneness and relationship with God's children who are bought by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In your town there may be many people, but only those who know the Lord Jesus Christ are your brothers and sisters. In Matt. 12:50, our Lord said, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother". In the laying on of hands we declare that we belong to those who love the Lord, irrespective of nation or culture or education. We belong to the same family. We cannot be deceived any more by the world and its attractions. So the first significance of the laying on of hands is our spiritual relationship with other believers.

Secondly, by the laying on of hands we declare our identification with the Lord Jesus in His sacrificial death. "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Lev. 1:4). Whenever anyone brought a sacrifice to the door of the Tabernacle, he would lay his hands upon the animal and confess his sins. The animal was then killed and sacrificed upon the altar. By laying his hands upon the animal, he declared, "This animal is going to die in my place". He himself could not go inside. In his place the animal was killed and taken inside for a sacrifice. Similarly, by faith we declare that the Lord Jesus Christ is our stead. Thus our spiritual identification in the death of the Lord Jesus is expressed by the laying on of hands.

FEBRUARY 16

"O love the LORD, all ye his saints" (Psa. 31:23).

We need to be prepared as the Bride of Christ so that we may appreciate and return the love of God. As we are we have little capacity to understand God's love; we think of God only when we are in trouble or in need. As His Church He wants us to be co-workers with Him to gather the material which He requires for the coming new creation. For this purpose we should be able to discern what things really give Him joy.

Imagine a newly married couple. The young bride is very anxious to please her husband. She will not take her food until her husband comes home. She is so zealous in her love for her husband. In many cases, after few months, things become different; but those who are really joined together by the Lord will find their love increasing day by day. Even trials and difficulties fail to quench their love for one another, because it is not based upon their complexion and upon the wealth which they possess. They are joined together in a threefold manner, in a union of spirit, soul and body. "...a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccles. 4:12). Often family-happiness is made to depend upon sarees, or food, or earthly pleasures and possessions. That is why it does not last long and we find so many unhappy homes. A few days after the wedding, quarrels begin. Husband and wife are not able to agree. If the husband says, "Let me go North" the wife says, "No, let us go South!" On the other hand those who are joined together by the Lord have no need to argue: they go upon their knees to find God's will. Their love for one another increases day by day.

In the same way when we are joined to the Lord Jesus as His Bride we learn to love Him, and as we grow spiritually our love increases. In the beginning we might say, "LORD, these are the things I require. Thou art my loving Saviour, so give me all these things and satisfy my desires". As we increase in spiritual understanding our prayer changes. Now we say, "Lord, what is Thy wish, what is Thy will? Tell me what things will please Thee, and I will do them". It gives us great joy to please and satisfy our Lord. We obey Him, not out of compulsion, but with willingness. It becomes easy to obey the Lord because we have full assurance that He knows more than we do. He knows the end from the beginning. His way is perfect, and He makes my way perfect. (Psa. 18:30,32).

FEBRUARY 17

"...the God of peace ... brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20).

The risen Lord appeared the fifth time on Easter evening itself when the disciples were gathered together in a room in Jerusalem. The Lord came into the room, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst. His first words were, "Peace be unto you" (John 20:19). He repeated these words in verse 21, thus showing us that it is only by maintaining our peace that we can continue to experience His power of resurrection. The enemy is bent upon disturbing our peace. To this end he brings into our hearts all kinds of fears, doubts and subtle temptations of the flesh. But as we humble ourselves and keep on claiming the cleansing power of His precious blood we can enjoy His great peace which passeth all understanding. God's Word says, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psa. 119:165) and "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). The more we have peace the more can we enjoy victory over every attack of the enemy. But we must exercise our

faith more strongly to make his peace reign in our hearts and flow like a river, not allowing the enemy to rob us of our peace. In case we have to put right anything with God and man we should do so immediately by His grace and with humility. It is also by this growing, multiplying, inward, spiritual peace that we can be sure of His will. Only when we have this inward peace shall we be willing to go anywhere He may send us, and be prepared without any question to give Him all what He demands for His glory. When He had said this to the disciples He breathed on them and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). As we obey Him, He anoints us afresh with the Holy Spirit to help us carry out His commands joyfully.

FEBRUARY 18

"That I may know ... the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10).

The subject of the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ is very important. By the power of resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. By this power He has been highly exalted far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:20-21). This power is also manifested to make us more than conquerors, and to enable us to be with the Lord as kings and priests with immortal and glorified bodies. With a heart full of worship and praise, Paul the apostle says in Eph. 1:3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". In the first part of the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul mentions a few of those great spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus which have been prepared for us by our loving God from before the foundation of the world. From verse 15 onwards, he goes on to explain how these blessings can be abundantly enjoyed by all of us who have been spiritually united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, through simple faith in His finished work on the cross on our behalf. In this connection the apostle is praying very earnestly that the believers at Ephesus might know, "...what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all...and hath put all things under the his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23). The very same power by which the Lord Jesus Christ rose again and was so highly exalted after His resurrection is also poured into us. Yet, how much spiritual poverty exists today among believers because they fail to appropriate this power daily for all their needs!

FEBRUARY 19

"And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD" (Joshua 9:14).

Joshua and the people thought there was no harm in making a league with the humble and fearful Gibeonites. So without consulting God, in their desire to show kindness and sympathy to the pleading people, they made a covenant with the Gibeonites not to destroy them. Just as Joshua and the children of Israel failed to enquire from God and know His will concerning the Gibeonites, very often we also fail to seek guidance from God. It is the privilege of God's children to be led by the Lord. He has promised, "I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8).

This is the solemn warning to us all. Before making any decision, before doing anything whatever, whether it is a family matter or a marriage or a job, let us take care to come to the Lord for guidance, lest we should suffer loss and shame. Some might wonder whether they should go to the Lord for small things also. Remember, this doubtful thought is exactly the same as what Joshua thought concerning the Gibeonites. As God's people, let us take warning not to be governed by our relations, our own community, our friends, or neighbours or anybody else. Be governed only by God's Word and the Holy Spirit and the voice of God. Now it may take a day or a week or five years, or ten years, or even more, to find God's will. However that might be, wait patiently till it pleases Him to speak to you. Pray again and again morning, noon and night, day after day. Otherwise you and your children will suffer loss. This loss may be in many ways. First of all you will become blind spiritually. You will not be able to hear the voice of God, because of dullness in spiritual hearing. The enemy will go on gaining more and more ground in your life.

The Lord wants to give you a heavenly inheritance, and make you higher than all the nations of the world. He wants to give you all that He has, His kingdom and His authority. That is why sometimes He makes you wait. If you want to receive all things from God, you must learn not to leave a hoof behind for the enemy. In everything you must be governed by God. It is a sad thing how in spite of repeated warnings from the Lord many parents have been deceived and have committed mistakes concerning their children's future. Sometimes they have feared their daughters are getting old and no one will marry them. So they have hastily got them married even to unbelievers without asking counsel from God. They argue after marriage, the daughters can convert their husbands. With great sorrow we have to warn you that if you do this, you and your family and that very same daughter, will suffer many years and bring you much misery.

FEBRUARY 20

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (Revelation 1:17).

These three small words "Looking unto Jesus" which we read in Heb. 12:2 contain a great secret. They tell us that first of all, we should see the Lord Jesus now, and then go on seeing Him not only upon this earth, but throughout eternity. The Niagara Falls in Canada is supposed to be one of the seven wonders of the world. It is a very beautiful sight. In 1928 I stayed there for six days and began to visit the Falls at sunrise, mid-day and at sunset. I began to see them a new way. The more I saw this wonderful sight, the more I noticed how exceeding beautiful it was. Nevertheless to appreciate the full beauty of the Niagara Falls one needs to see them in winter and summer, and other seasons as well. If it takes so long to appreciate the beauty of the Niagara Falls, which is only a very tiny bit of God's creation, then it is evident that it will take eternity for us to appreciate the beauty of the Creator, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is so glorious and beautiful. When you feel downcast, discouraged and disappointed in your private life or in your ministry, you should pray, "Oh God, give me a new glimpse of the glory of Your Son".

John the apostle had the privilege of seeing the Lord very closely. He served Him very faithfully. He could ask Him any question. In fact, he could even lay his head on the Lord's bosom. He saw the Lord transfigured; he saw Him rise again and ascend to heaven. But now in the Book of Revelation, John in his old age saw Him in an entirely new way. He knew it was the Lord Jesus Christ. He had no need to ask,

"Who are you?" because he heard a voice saying "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (Rev. 1:11). John turned around to see the One that spoke and straightway he fell at His feet and said, "O Lord, I never knew that you are so beautiful and so great."

Why did our Lord appear to John that way? The answer is simple. Our Lord was telling John, "I want My people to become like Me". That is why the Lord's people had to go through extreme suffering at that time. Now, for example, if you want pure shining gold, the gold has to be melted, and refined in the fire. The goldsmith makes the fire exceeding hot until the surface of the molten metal becomes like a mirror in which he can see his face. The reflection of the goldsmith's face in the molten metal is the test that the gold is perfectly pure. In the same manner, we have to be refined by the fire of suffering till the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ can be fully seen in us.

FEBRUARY 21

"I sought the LORD, and he heard me" (Psalm 34:4).

In Psalm 34:5 we read, "They looked unto him, and were lightened". This means that they were radiant and shining. Before they came to Him, their faces were filled with fear and marks of sin and shame. Every sinful thought, word or deed brings an ugly and shameful mark upon your face. You may not see it in the beginning but afterwards it will appear. Here God says, "They looked unto Him and their faces were radiant." Who were these people? They were those who once had shameful and ugly faces, where you could see nothing but the blackness of sin. But now, having seen Him, their faces shine. They became radiant. A new heavenly beauty came upon their faces.

This beauty which God gives will not come by using soap or powder or cream or by wearing jewels of gold and silver. How foolish some people are! They think that by using such things they can become beautiful. In fact in this way they become uglier. It is only when our fears go away and we conquer our trials by faith, that we can have faces shining with the glory of God. The men that had come to David with grumbling, murmuring, sorrowful faces now saw David's face shining even in the dark cave of Adullam. They also learned to look unto the Lord, and their faces also began to shine. Divine glory and beauty were shining upon their faces, in spite of their poverty and sickness.

From the same Psalm in verses 4,6,17,19 we can see that the Psalmist went through many afflictions. But when he came to the Lord and saw him, he was delivered out of all his fears. All his troubles afflictions disappeared. If I had time to listen to you and you had time to talk to me, you would tell me all about your troubles. But listen; do not tell me your troubles. Do not tell them to your neighbours or to preachers or to anyone else; they cannot help you, even if they could. This man of God, David, tried his friends and they failed him. He had a friend called Jonathan who loved him very much and he was the king's son. Even though he tried to help him he could not, and David went to other kings and they also failed him. In the end he says he sought the Lord; in other words he saw the Lord. Then he said, "I have no more pain, no more trial, and no more afflictions; they are all gone. See the Lord has helped me. He has delivered me from all my fears." Even though he was still living in the mountain cave and he was still in the same difficulties and still being pursued by Saul, he was saying by faith: "I sought the Lord and He heard me. He delivered me from all my fears, afflictions, trials and troubles." That is how He will deliver you also.

FEBRUARY 22

"... If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Before new birth, our conscience is defiled with sin. Our spirit is dead, our soul is darkened, and our body is defiled. When the Lord Jesus Christ as our High Priest sprinkles His blood upon our dead spirits, our dead spirits are quickened. We find divine life flowing into our spirits. We begin to feel God's presence. We talk to God as a friend talks with his friend. We feel heavenly peace coming into us. When our dead spirit is quickened we are given a longing to be as holy as the Lord is holy. We receive an increasing love for God's Word and His people. When our darkened soul is enlightened, we are given divine wisdom to understand the things of God and to know His purposes. Through divine love we can love all people equally. Our defiled body is also cleansed. Now we want to serve God through our members. Our tongue begins to praise God. Our legs refuse to go to wrong places. As long as we are in this body we get defiled because of our old sinful nature. We do not become supernatural when we are born again. The old man or the old sinful nature will be stirred up again and again. By entertaining sins like hatred, enmity, pride and greed in our hearts, we nurture the sinful nature, and get defiled. But we can constantly claim the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for cleansing, washing, and purging. As we read in 1 John 2:1, He is our Advocate, Intercessor and High Priest. By His intercession for us and by cleansing through His blood, we are made perfect. Just as we claim His grace and wisdom for doing His work, we can claim by faith His intercessory ministry. Through this very important ministry, we can overcome all temptations. We are saved from the deception of the world and are thus prepared for His Second Coming. And at His coming we will receive our great inheritance.

FEBRUARY 23

"Seeing... we have a great high priest, ... Jesus the Son of God,... Let us... come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:14,16).

In Hebrews chapter five we see our Lord Jesus Christ as the great heavenly High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, with a four-fold ministry. Firstly He intercedes on our behalf for all our shortcomings. He is our Advocate, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Being a merciful and faithful High Priest, He pleads on our behalf. All of us in our weakness and foolishness do things to grieve God. Even though we do not want to do wrong, the enemy drags us into temptation. The Lord Jesus Christ knowing our weaknesses and failures pleads on our behalf.

Secondly, in the Old Testament period the high priest had to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. These sacrifices pointed to the Lord Jesus in five ways: Firstly there was the burnt offering which speaks of the complete sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the sin offering reminds us how the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our sins to be our Saviour. Thirdly, the peace offering shows how the Lord Jesus Christ has become our peace and had reconciled us to God. Fourthly, the trespass offering reminds us that the Lord Jesus Christ has made full provision for cleansing and forgiveness of our sins which we commit even after we are born again. Fifthly, the meal offering shows that the Lord Jesus Christ has become our meat and drink to satisfy our hunger and thirst. The Jesus Christ has become all these five

offerings on our behalf. By one perfect sacrifice He has made us righteous. We should go on saying by faith, "Lord, You are my burnt offering, You are my peace offering, You are my sin offering, You are my trespass offering, You are my meat offering."

Thirdly, the high priest helped those who wanted to find the will of God. He has on his breastplate, two stones called Urim and Thummim. Through these two stones he could find God's will. No one knows how these precious stones operated, but we know that with their help the high priest could find God's will (1 Sam. 23:9-12). The Lord Jesus Christ is our great heavenly High Priest Who lives in us. We can talk to Him directly and find God's will for us.

FEBRUARY 24

"... give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Early one morning when I was praying the Lord told me to visit a widow who was in great need of Rs. 5/-. He told me to supply that Rs. 5/- to her. So I got up, searched my pockets and found nothing. The Lord kept saying to me "Go and give". So I put on my coat took my Bible and walked out without any money with me. Strangely enough while I was going, I noticed a five rupee note lying on the road. Picking it up I loudly asked whether anybody lost a five rupee note. After loudly announcing three times and no one claimed it, I took the note and went to the widow's house and gave her the money. She began to weep and told me how that same night she saw her husband in her dream telling her not to worry and that Brother Bakht Singh would come and give her five rupees. She also said that the Lord had sent me just when she was thinking of me. These things do not happen by chance.

We must help the needy just as the Lord helps and guides us. We have to pray asking the Lord to show us those who are in need of food or clothes or money. That is how we can help and encourage our poor fellow-believers, widows and orphans. There are many believers who have enough and more than enough money to spare for the needy, but they have no mind to share it with others. This type of self-centredness causes their hearts to be full of murmurings, hatred and jealousy. In Acts 6:3 we read how the early church solved their problems by appointing men of honest report, full of Holy Spirit and wisdom. These days we find some people who are ambitious for power and authority desiring to become deacons and elders. Such people have no love or spiritual concern for the poor believers. All they want is only prominence. Only those who are spiritual and are prepared by God can become shepherds.

FEBRUARY 25

"... that house ... fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (Matthew 7:25).

Before Nehemiah started building the broken wall, he went round to see for himself how they were broken down and how the gates were consumed with fire. Before we rebuild the House of God, first, we must find out the cause of barrenness.

These days in many places we find believers and Christian leaders praying for revival and awakening among God's people, without being sufficiently concerned to know the cause for their barrenness. Only by using some customary phrases in prayers such as "we have sinned" and so on, we cannot see God

working in the midst of His people. They think they have achieved their objective by praying and forgetting all about it. Believers also cannot expect revival without going beyond praying about it and doing nothing more. Unless a patient tells the doctor the details of his troubles, the doctor cannot examine him or diagnose his disease and give him the right treatment. The condition of the walls of Jerusalem was due to the sins of the children of Israel. This had not been faced frankly. For many years God, out of His love went on warning them through His prophets, but they continue to disobey God with much indifference to His repeated warnings. After giving them sufficient chances, God sent Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and destroyed their city, broke down the walls and burnt the gates.

These days also we can find similar situations; there is barrenness among believers, because they insist on following man-made customs, practices, rituals and ceremonies rather than obeying His Word. They fail to diagnose this as the root of the trouble. When a man wants to build a strong building first of all he has to lay a strong foundation. In the spiritual sense we see that our Lord also has said that if we build our house upon a rock it will not fall by the wind, storm or floods. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our rock. We have to build upon Him who is the rock; that means, our procedure for building has to be according to His teachings, His instructions, His heavenly will, His heavenly plan, His heavenly wisdom and heavenly power. In Eph. 2:20 we read "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone". That is how we believers have to build a spiritual house on a strong spiritual foundation. Many people forget this first law and try to build God's House on sand, on things which have no support from God. That is why, we see everything is falling into pieces. God is giving us a very solemn warning in Heb 12:26 that He is going to shake all that is of man-made origin and practice. Hence, whatever we do, it has to be based on God's Word, if we want our work to bear fruit and withstand the test of opposing forces.

FEBRUARY 26

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee..." (2 Cor. 12:9).

Whatever be the thorn in your life accept it as from the Lord. He allows the thorn to remain. That is God's way to make you strong in faith and give you more grace. You may think that Paul had become very strong, but he learned how weak he was. Only when he learned about grace he knew fully about his weakness. In 2 Cor. 12:10 he says, "when I am weak, then am I strong". To keep us weak God sends a thorn. In order to make us see our weakness He gives us a thorn and through that God wants to make us strong. What you call an unbearable thorn is meant to make you strong spiritually for eternity. If you go on thinking about your thorn and say, "Why did that man or that woman speak this about me?" You will find many bitter roots cropping up in your heart. Then you will give way to anger and hatred and it will take away your burden for prayer and God's Word and you will lose your joy and peace. That is how many have lost their burden for prayer. Because of bitterness, you will start quarrelling. You say to the Lord, "If You do not remove this thorn within a day or two, I will not go to the assembly anymore or smile at the preachers". In this way you fight with God every morning. He is Sovereign. What He cannot teach us in the third heaven, He teaches us upon the earth by this thorn. Paul was not stubborn but humble. He knew that, that thorn was the answer to make him still more humble. God's standard is very high. That is why we do not know that all our thorns are allowed for a purpose. Have you been shedding tears for your

thorn? Please repent for murmuring against God. Thank God for the thorn, take pleasure in it and you will find your joy multiplying manifold. From now onwards you will find your testimony more powerful and the power of God coming into you.

These thorns are allowed so that we may grow from grace to grace, and strength to strength. Then God will bring us into His fullness. Now see how grace and truth go together, grace and peace go together, grace and glory together. Similarly, grace and power go together. It is through God's grace, we can see God's glory. It is through God's grace, we have God's truth. It is through God's grace we serve Him. It is only through grace we are what we are. So in order to give us grace the Lord puts thorns in our lives.

If you are told by a doctor that by taking injections you will enjoy good health, you will readily take the injections, no matter how painful they are. But when God gives His injection in the arm, you begin to murmur. You say, "It is too painful, please stop". The thorn of God is God's injection, which is poked into us to bring grace into us. He answers you saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee", and , whatsoever your thorn may be and howsoever painful, you will find the answer in these two word "My grace". Do not think your case is different. We all have different kinds of pain, but the same remedy, it is God's grace. He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9).

FEBRUARY 27

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8).

The Lord Jesus Christ is our heavenly High Priest. We as His co-workers have to intercede for people who are in need. The features of the glorified Lord as given in Revelation 1, teach us how to have effective intercessory ministry.

In Rev. 1:14 we read, "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire". White hair speaks of His perfect, heavenly and divine wisdom. He knows everything, He knows our thoughts, our failures, our temptations, our names, and everything. Nothing is hid from Him. His wisdom is perfect. He knows things from the beginning (Isa. 46:10). So we can claim His heavenly wisdom. By having that wisdom from above we can know people's needs and sins, problems and shortcomings and then pray accordingly. We have to say by faith, "Lord, You are my heavenly wisdom. Tell me the need of So and So". Then we can pray intelligently. Through your intercessory prayers many will be strengthened and encouraged.

Further, in Rev. 1:14 we read about the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ that they were as a flame of fire. In 2 Chron. 16:9 we read, "...the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him". The Lord can see every one of us. The believers were scattered at that time because of persecution. They were hiding in mountains and caves. Knowing their need the Lord was working on their behalf. Even though we may be transferred to a lonely place, His eyes can see us. He sees our condition and our need, our temptations and failures. To help us He moves up and down and accordingly He helps us. There is no need to be anxious. His eyes are like a flame of fire, full of brightness. He is moving to and fro to keep us clean. The fire is for purification, for

heat and for light. The Lord was saying, "I know where My people are. Even though they are hiding in the caves, I can see them. I am running to and fro to help them". He moved on behalf of David and his 400 men and supplied all their needs. Similarly, He helped Elijah when he was under the juniper tree. When we trust God fully He will supply all our needs, because His eyes run to and fro for our sake.

Thirdly, "And his feet like unto fine brass" (Rev. 1:15). In the Bible brass is the symbol of God's judgment. Satan is responsible for our sinful life. The Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan on the Cross. It is only by His death, burial and resurrection, that He defeated Satan and not by miracles or sermons. Satan bruised His heel and the same heel crushed the head of Satan. Now through His feet which are like brass, the Lord is saying, "If you want to defeat Satan, you will not succeed by miracles or signs or visions. It is only by My death, you can defeat him". We can defeat Satan by believing that the Lord died for you sins and rose again. We claim the same victory for those who are in sin. We can say, "Lord Jesus Christ, you died for my mother, for my brothers and sisters and friends. Please have mercy upon So and So. Save their souls and forgive their sins". That is how we can intercede and claim victory of the Cross for those who are in need.

FEBRUARY 28

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psalm 73:25).

In Luke 24:15-30, we read about two disciples on the Emmaus road. They were communing together, and blindly trying to reason things out concerning what had happened in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ drew near, walked with them, talked with them and explained so clearly all about Himself, about His suffering and glory - how it was necessary for Him to die and rise again and enter into His glory. But even though the Lord Himself taught them, they still did not know Him, until He came to their house, on their invitation. When He sat with them in the breaking of bread, their eyes were suddenly opened. It was then that they recognized their Lord.

Our Lord is so great, so mighty and so wonderful; we cannot see Him with our ordinary eyes. He is beyond human comprehension - far above all our human faculties. And yet we can know Him! He can be more real to us than our kith and kin. He can be more precious to us than anyone else in all the world, when we know Him in His true glory. We may study God's Word under able teachers, read many good books written by excellent authors, and we might have wonderful experiences ourselves, as we walk with the Lord; and yet do not know Him as He ought to be known! We think we know Him, but we are mistaken.

The Table of the Lord, and the Breaking of the Bread to remember the Lord's death till He comes, provide us an opportunity for an inward sight of Him, which is not possible otherwise. It is a place of worship. It is the place where we grow spiritually, and come to know His worth. That is what worship means - "worth-ship". It is to be able to say in broken language, what my Lord is to me, what price will I pay for Him. In Amritsar, Punjab, there was a merchant selling beautiful Persian carpets. A wealthy man came into the shop and asked the price of a small carpet. The shopkeeper said, "This is not for sale.", "I will pay you Rs. 5,000.00 for it if you sell it to me." "I told you, it is not for sale." "Alright, I will pay you Rs. 10,000.00." "No Sir, I won't sell it-it is not for sale for any price." "I will pay you Rs. 20,000.00." "No sir, it is not for sale. To me it is very precious. I won't sell it for any price. When my father died, he gave it to me. His father gave

it to him. That is why he told me. 'Don't sell it to anybody-it is very precious'. So I won't part with it for any amount of money."

The Lord Jesus Christ is also very precious to me. He loved me and died for me. I am prepared to pay any price for Him. We say that we love the Lord more than our father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children or anyone else. But it must be from the heart. We might say in a meeting, "O Lord, I love Thee", but when we have to pay the price we DO NOT pay the price! How often we deny Him! How often we grieve Him! How often we fail to obey Him because of fear! We think, "What will my neighbour say? What will my friends think of me? What will the world say?" We simply do not pay the price that the Lord demands.

FEBRUARY 29

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

We should never think that it is a waste of time to pray before going anywhere or before doing any work, not matter how easy it may be. We gain much by praying. Whether we sweep a room or wash the dishes, or do some intricate technical work, it is good to look unto our Lord and offer a few words of prayer. Many times people think prayer is unnecessary because they are experienced cooks. If they have this attitude then it may be that even if they use the necessary ingredients, the food will not be tasty. I have found this by experience. I looked unto the Lord and asked Him to tell me how much oil or butter or other ingredients I should put in. The result was that my first attempt at cooking was such a success that I was even complimented on my skill.

By calling upon God we bring all His loving resources to our aid in all that we do. Just offer a short prayer before beginning the task you are entrusted with. It makes no difference whether the job is simple and insignificant, or of great importance. You will find that everything that is committed to the Lord in prayer is done well. Therefore learn to claim God's help for every need. Prove God daily in every situation. You can call any time either by day or by night. No matter how often you go to Him, He will never rebuke saying, "Why have you come at this odd hour?" or "Why do you come and disturb me so many times?" Many men will say, "Come tomorrow or the day after." But God will never put you off and you will be saved from many unhappy failures when you learn to call upon Him for help.

God is interested even in small things. We see this from the incident when Peter was rescued from prison (Acts 12:3-10). The church was praying for him and God sent an angel who woke up Peter and told him to put on his shoes. God knew that in his excitement Peter would leave them behind. Sometimes when I meet a person I find I cannot remember his name or recollect where I had met him. The moment I call upon God for help, He brings the concerned person's name to my memory, and both of us are saved from embarrassment and enjoy our fellowship with each other to the glory of God.

MARCH 1

"For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation" (Psalm 132:13).

In verse 9 of Psalm 132 we see what place the righteousness and heavenly joy have in building the House of God. As we fulfil God's will we should rejoice in Him even though He permits persecution, sorrow,

difficulties and trials in our lives. When we learn to rejoice in the Lord always, we will enjoy our share in building God's House.

In verse 13 we find David reigning in Zion as king over all the tribes, having driven out the Jebusites. There in Zion he wrote Psalm 48 in which he calls Zion "the city of the great king" in verse 2, "the city of our God" and "the mountain of his holiness" in verse 1, and "the city of our God" in verse 8. There David was given a clear revelation of the House of God, using these names. Abraham too had a vision of the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). That is why he was able to leave his kith and kin, property and possessions, and follow God, living in tents for the rest of his life. The Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts will enable us not to give any place, anywhere to the Jebusites. If we do give them room, we will only grieve the Lord.

In Psalm 132:14 David was not thinking of an earthly building. He desired to build the House of God, by God's own plan, which was a shadow of the true spiritual House which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is building. In verse 17 the Lord says, "There will I make the horn of David to bud...". David is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The "horn", speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's anointed One. Thus David began to see that there would be a great revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His own House. Only when we come to the House of God, is our hunger for Him fully satisfied (vs. 15,16); and it is there that we find great joy among God's people in spite of all our trials, persecutions and afflictions. Those who take share willingly in building the House of God have abundant joy and true fellowship. Those who only come to enjoy singing in the meeting or even for lesser purposes, and taking no share in the work of building, will get easily offended and also lose their joy.

MARCH 2

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (1 Peter 2:7).

The testimony of the Breaking of Bread is not a ceremony. It is a testimony. Our Lord gave thanks and broke the bread. He does not ask us to show sympathy for His death, but to give thanks because by one perfect sacrifice He accomplished the great work of salvation fully (Heb. 10:14). Before His coming, many sacrifices were offered at different times but not a single sinner became righteous through those sacrifices. So His suffering and death are a victory and not a defeat. By dying in our stead, He took upon Himself all our judgment and all our punishment. He made it possible for any sinner of any degree of any country and of any kind to become righteous. That is why we spend some time in worshipping Him and thanking Him before we take part in the Lord's Table. The Lord said in John 10:17,18, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, I have power to take it again". Paul testified in Gal. 2:20b "...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me". So by thanking Him for dying in our stead and conquering death on our behalf and by rising again, we are made partakers of the victory which He accomplished on the cross. We begin to see how precious as believers we are unto Him. And also we can see what a great and high purpose our Lord had in dying in our stead and saving us.

As we keep the Table in the middle the Lord speaks to us in a symbolic way. We can hear the voice of the Lord speaking to us. First, He speaks to us and then we speak to Him. Our Lord says, "Remember, My dear

children, how willingly and lovingly I gave my Body to be broken for you. I gave what all I had to be your Saviour". To be our Creator, our Lord said only one word. By one word He created all. But to be our Saviour He had to give all. He had to empty Himself. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). And that is how our Lord speaks to us in a symbolic way through the Bread and the Cup. He emptied Himself to be our Saviour. He gave all willingly. And that is why we are very precious unto Him. The Lord is saying to all among us who are redeemed by His precious blood, "My dear children, you are unto Me more precious than all the heavens put together. I gave My all to purchase you. Now you are unto Me a peculiar treasure". "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure" (Psa. 135:4). In Matt. 13:44, we are called a treasure hid in a field. Also according to Matt. 13:46, we are His shining pearl. In Deut 32:9, we are called His everlasting inheritance. Unto Him we are very precious, more precious than all the heavens put together. Heavens shall pass away, but those who are redeemed by His precious blood have the hope of living for ever. That is why falling upon our faces we worship him.

MARCH 3

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

We are God's peculiar people and so have to live a life worthy of our calling and vocation. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. 14:2). By our conversation and mode of living we have to show that we are God's real treasure, and His peculiar people. With that message the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt. Soon after they came out of Egypt God spoke these words through Moses saying, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Exo. 19:5,6). We read the same thing in 1 Peter 2:9. "But ye are .. a peculiar people; ...". The phrase, "peculiar people" is rendered as a "purchased people" in the margin. We belong to the Lord because we are purchased by Him. We find the same thought in 1 Cor 6:20. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." We are purchased to be His people to show forth His glory. We ought to live a separated life.

In Deut. 13:6-9 there is a solemn warning to those who marry unbelievers. That is a very very common weakness and temptation among believers. They marry unbelievers hoping that gradually they can win their husbands or wives for the Lord. Instead they are enticed by their unbelieving partners to their way of life. Very secretly they go to places like cinemas, then they start mixing with worldly people and even accompany them to their temples. In the beginning they do so secretly but gradually they go completely away from the House of the Lord. God gives a strict warning to you. Do not let the enemy deceive you. Do not let the enemy rob you of your heavenly inheritance and portion. God's Word says, "And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (13:10). Many believers have been deceived by the heathen (vs. 12-14). All kinds of heathen practices are now observed by many believers at the time of child birth, marriages and funerals, by being in association with unbelievers. God

hates all these heathen customs observed by some believers. God's Word is our guide. If we want to receive and enjoy our full share in God's fulness and His portion we have to live a life of complete separation. All kinds of rituals and ceremonies should be completely put away from our lives and families. "And there shall cleave nought of the cursed things to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers" (v.17). Ask the LORD to give you grace, strength and courage to follow Him all the way.

MARCH 4

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

By ignoring God's leading and disobeying His commands we will become spiritually blind. Today we find many people have lost their vision concerning the things of God because of disobedience or because of partial obedience. For example, king Saul obeyed God partially and as a result of it he was rejected by God. David also fell into the temptation of numbering his great army and thus took pride in his strength (2 Sam. 24:2,3). He knew full well that all his victories were won by God and not by his own strength of army. He did not defeat Goliath by his own might or cleverness. He fought against Goliath in the Name of the Lord God and so defeated him (1 Sam. 17:45,50). Yet in his old age he yielded to the temptation of counting the number of his army. Joab, the commander of his army tried to save him from this mistake but David's determination prevailed. It revealed the fact that David's eyes were upon the large number of his people and not upon God. That is why God brought him upon his face on a threshing floor. In this way David had to learn to put his trust only on the Lord.

This kind of temptation come to all of us. We are tempted to depend upon our own will power, ability or knowledge to overcome our temptations or to do God's service. Many people depend upon their cameras, buildings and properties. They think by having all these things they will have more fruit and see good results. For fruitful ministry, we have to cast ourselves upon the Lord for every situation. Even preachers, if they depend upon their past blessing and achievements, will cut away the chance of seeing much fruit. Day after day we need to ask God our Lord to touch our lips, tongues and throats and give us His own message for His people. Only then will our ministry be blessed with full life and freshness.

It is necessary that we go on our knees and ask the Lord to anoint us and give us His message day by day. We should never depend upon our own cleverness, ability or energy for preparing messages as it will not lead to a triumphant and useful life. In order to teach all this, God asked Joshua to circumcise the people. He reminded them that they would be able to conquer the seven great nations and occupy the land of Canaan only by depending upon the strength of the Lord and not by depending upon their own weapons of war or large size of army or their own cleverness or scheming.

MARCH 5

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ..." (Rom. 7:4).

Paul says that if a woman marries while her husband is alive, she is an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free to marry somebody else (Rom. 7:3,4). The old Law is like that. It is now dead to us and has no claim on us and we are now married and are alive to the new Law of Grace. Imagine a widow remarrying and someone bringing the bones of her former dead husband and compelling her to keep them. Have you ever seen a woman keeping the bones of her dead husband in her house? Paul said that the woman is free from her dead husband. The Seventh Day Adventists are trying to bring dead bones into our homes. We are dead to the old Law and have been married to the new Law of God's grace. Why then should we go into bondage? The apostle Paul strongly warns the people of Rome and other places of the great danger of wrong teaching. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6). We are free from the old Law and have come under the new Law, the Law of the Spirit. You may question me, "Then why do we repeat the Ten Commandments?" It is the devil's trick and it has become common custom in many buildings on Sunday morning for the congregation to stand up and repeat like parrots the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed. We are not told in any part of the Bible to repeat these passages. We are not under any commandment but we have come under God's grace. Our Lord has taught us that when the Spirit of grace comes into us we are automatically love and serve God and love our neighbour and fulfil the Law, not by merely repeating the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer or the Apostles' Creed. We cannot on our own fulfil the Law, but by the Lord Jesus Christ living in us, and by being led by His Spirit, we fulfil God's righteousness. The more we are led by the Holy Spirit the more we fulfil divine laws. Thus we have not come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion.

MARCH 6

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

Threads of gold were woven into the ephod. First of all, the gold had to be melted and taken through the refining fire seven times. The fire beneath the gold would melt it, and fire above the gold would remove the dross from it. In the same way, it is only by the fire of suffering and persecution that the believer's life can be refined and made to show forth God's glory. So do not be surprised if you are despised, hated and persecuted by the world. God will allow such fiery experiences in your life in order to make you like pure gold.

The molten gold had to be beaten with the hammer and made into a plate. Then it was cut into thin strips. Each strip was passed first through a large hole in an iron plate, then through the next hole which was slightly smaller. In this way it was passed through all the holes in the iron plate until it was finally passed through the smallest hole and came out as a golden thread, fit to be woven into the ephod. The bar of gold could not be woven, so it had to be taken through all these processes. It had to be melted in the fire, beaten with the hammer, cut into pieces and passed through many holes, and converted into fine golden threads.

Through all this we learn that, as believers, we can never become Christ-like if we do not go through suffering. Those who have had no experience of hardships and difficulties, will remain hard-hearted and unsympathetic. They will not be meek, gentle and kind and therefore they cannot show forth the virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ. After they have gone through suffering, they will become gentle and meek. You may have noticed that a person who has gone through much suffering can bear a rebuke without resentment and does not mind even if people hate him and curse him, while another who has lived only in pleasure, gets very much offended at least provocation. Therefore to make us kind, gentle and sympathetic like Christ, God takes us through the refining fires of affliction and trials.

MARCH 7

"... be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Those who are going to get married must make sure of God's perfect will about their union. They should not be governed by outward appearance, physical attraction, earthly possessions or worldly qualifications. Most people have entirely a wrong conception of married life. Some depend upon beauty, riches and education for happiness. That is why they are disappointed in the end. It is very necessary for those who are going to get married to wait upon the Lord sufficiently in prayer and give Him enough time to make His will perfectly clear and have full evidence of that perfect will. God's Word says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17), "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove that what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). It is by knowing and doing God's will that we enjoy His favour. In Matt. 12:50 the Lord said, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother". The life of the Lord Jesus Christ flows like a river in those who are born again. Those who are not born again do not have eternal life and they never find God's will. That is why before we solemnize any marriage, we question those who are going to be united, whether they are born again, whether their sins are forgiven and whether they have received the gift of eternal life. The bridegroom and the bride have to pray much individually, and find out the Lord's perfect will for their union. No one knows what will happen the next day. Our health may fail or our circumstances may change. We do not know how long we will live. Only God knows the end from the beginning. That is why we must know God's perfect will for our lives. In Psa. 143:10 the Psalmist says, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness". Those who are joined together must be able to say truthfully and sincerely, "This person is chosen for me by my Lord, according to His will". Before they think of gold, silver, job or clothes, they must find God's will.

MARCH 8

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (Psalm 40:8).

David came to be known as a valiant man. There was reason for David to be proud of his sling and five stones, with which he had been able to kill a lion and a bear and Goliath. David had other qualifications too, of which he could have been proud. He was clever in playing many musical instruments. He was prudent in all matters and not like common shepherds who are usually ignorant and often foolish. Besides

all this he was a good-looking man. A young man with so many qualifications might usually expect to rise to a very high position in life. However, David did not have any worldly ambitions; he had only one longing, to serve the living God, as we see from his words in 1 Samuel 17:26. God was saying to him, "David, if you want to serve me and enjoy my faithfulness, do not depend upon your five stones and sling, nor upon your high qualifications, nor upon your human wisdom. I will take away your five stones and give you five better ones". As the Lord took Moses to Midian, so now he took David through five great experiences in his life, and gave him always one by one five "greater stones" which he might use as weapons. That is always God's way with us: He takes away something less valuable and less useful, and gives us instead something better and greater.

According to the standards of his day, David was the best qualified man in the whole country. So he might have thought that because of these qualifications he would be much appreciated by his countrymen. He found that on the contrary, these same qualifications were instrumental in making Saul his enemy, because jealousy was stirred up in him. Saul tried to kill David three times. David had to escape into the wilderness. Thus God brought him to the cave of Adullam (meaning resting place). At the same time God brought Abiathar, the priest, to David and Abiathar brought with him the ephod of the high priest. Thus it was that David learned to speak with God through the priest and the ephod. This is the first precious stone God had planned to give David in the place of the five stones of his sling. So the first stone represents to us the capacity to speak with God and find out His will for every matter in our life and ministry.

We cannot defeat the devices of the enemy merely through our Bible knowledge, or our long prayers and fasting, or by putting on simple clothes. We can do it only by knowing God's will and doing it. If we continue doing the will of God day by day faithfully, we will see the enemy defeated again and again, and we will be able to appropriate His victory. So may the Lord teach us how to speak with God and find His will, and then obey Him implicitly. This is the first stone God gave to David.

MARCH 9

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118:8,9).

Now see the second stone which God gave to David. The people of Keilah were being oppressed by the Philistines. King Saul was unable to help them, but David went and delivered them. Then David must have thought that because of the great help he had given to the people of Keilah they would be grateful to him and would even risk their lives to protect him from the hands of Saul. However, he enquired from God, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up" (1 Samuel 23:12). This revelation would have caused great disappointment to David, but through this he learned the lesson that he should not put his trust in any man. To teach this lesson God had brought David to Keilah.

A day will come in your life also when a most intimate friend, whom you loved and helped, will fail you. You will wonder how one whom you loved so much could become your enemy. Do not be surprised. God is teaching you that you must put your faith entirely and only upon the living God, and He will prove His faithfulness to you.

The word "Keilah" means "fort" or "pillar." God was saying to David that he should not consider any human source as his fort or pillar. Of God alone he should say, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress, ...and my high tower" (Psalm 18:2). If you want to lead a triumphant life you should trust only in the living God. Many people's eyes are open upon their friends and relatives. Some have their eyes upon help from America. How sad this is! For this reason their lives remain barren spiritually. Thus we see that the second stone which God gave to David was the lesson that he should never put his trust in man but depend upon God alone.

MARCH 10

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

The third stone we can see in 1 Samuel 24:1-8. The Lord had brought David to Engedi. Saul had become David's deadly enemy and was hunting him to kill him. While Saul was camped in Engedi, one day David came very close to Saul; and if he had so desired he could easily have smitten him and killed him. On yet another occasion when Saul and his company were fast asleep, David could have killed Saul without any difficulty. On both occasions David withheld his hand from smiting Saul, saying, he would not touch Saul, for he was the Lord's anointed. God does not want us to use violence against our enemies, nor will He allow us to use earthly weapons. On the other hand God wants us to love those who falsely accuse us. When men try to kill us, we should pray for their salvation. So the third stone which God gave to David was this, that he should not trust any earthly weapon for his protection but put his faith in God that He will protect him, and not allow any weapon of the enemy to prosper against him.

Many years ago a friend of mine came to see me. He showed me a letter which some man had written against me. My friend said to me, "Brother, please give me power of attorney; and I will go to court against this man, I will bear all the expenses. How dare he write such filthy things against you". I replied, "I believe in Isaiah 54:17, which says that God will not allow any weapon to prosper against me". From that time for full three months I went on praying for that man who had written the nasty letter. Whenever I met him in the street I would speak to him nicely and kindly. I never let him know that I was aware of what he had done against me so secretly. At the end of three months he came to attend one of our meetings. When the meeting was over he came to meet me. He asked me to let him speak to me for five minutes. There were tears in his eyes. I said to him, "Before you say anything, I want to say that I have already forgiven you". He was taken aback and said, "How do you know what I have to say to you?" I told him I had known it for three months, but I had already forgiven him and had been praying for him. After that he became a dear friend to me.

We must learn not to use worldly weapons against our enemies. God's Word tells us that we will be hated and despised and persecuted for the Gospel's sake. We have to be prepared for the worst. But at the same time we are assured God will work for us. Just as in due time God smote Saul, He will also defeat all our enemies and supply us all our needs, without using any underhand methods; without giving bribes, you will be able to get victory in every matter, whether it be promotion in your office or admission of your children into schools and colleges.

MARCH 11

"O ISRAEL, return unto the LORD thy God" (Hosea 14:1).

Now let us see the fourth stone which the Lord brought to David. We read in 1 Samuel 30:1-6 of perhaps, the most humbling experience David had. David knew that He should not touch the Lord's anointed. Then after some time he became so impatient that he was tempted to join the Philistines in their fight against Saul. Nevertheless the leaders of the Philistines refused to trust David and sent him back. Sad and frustrated David returned to Ziklag. On returning, David found that Ziklag had been sacked and burnt; and the women and children had all be carried away as captives. Seeing this, David and his men began to weep until they had not more strength to weep.

After a while David's men began to speak of stoning him (v. 6). Yes, it was David's mistake. He should have consulted God before going out with the Philistines. He had done this on many occasions, but this time he had been impatient and had brought so much suffering upon himself and his men. Sometimes it is same with us also. We wait for God's will to be revealed. After a while we get discouraged and say, "I cannot wait any longer". Then we go and do something hastily without finding the will of God. For this reason we find today so many broken homes, so many unhappy lives and so many miserable families, all because of men, women and children who are living in sin. They were not willing to wait and find God's will, so now they are shedding tears.

Even after committing such blunders, if we are willing to return to the Lord, He is willing to forgive, and receive us. So when David repented, God forgave him. When he enquired of God, He guided him so that he was able to follow the Amalekites and recover all and even more than he had lost. David and his men smote the Amalekites, took all their spoil, although humanly speaking, there was no hope of recovering what they had lost, because the Amalekites were many in number and were well armed for warfare. We may fail God. But He will not fail us. He abideth faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). David was able now to pay all the debts he had incurred in receiving the help and shelter of friends during his eight years of sojourn in the wilderness. As a man of God, David remembered all the kindness shown to him, and repaid it at the earliest opportunity. He was not like some of us who are very clever in borrowing money and then equally clever in forgetting all about it. When we ask for a loan we are so earnest, and promise to repay very quickly, perhaps, even the next day or the same evening. Then weeks, months, and years pass by and we will not repay even if we are reminded. David repaid not by compulsion; but willingly and joyfully. If you are willing to humble yourself, and accept your mistakes, and return to the Lord wholeheartedly, He will give you complete recovery from every loss. This is the fourth stone the Lord wants to give us.

MARCH 12

"Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary ..." (1 Chron. 28:10).

David had imitated the Philistines and taken the Ark of God upon a bullock-cart. He had not consulted the priests and the Levites before doing this. Instead, he had consulted the captains and officers of his army. During that incident Uzzah touched the Ark and died immediately. Through this bitter experience David had learnt the lesson that he should not use human wisdom to do the work of God. We cannot dispense

with implicit obedience to the revealed will of God. We cannot change God's Word, or find a better method than God's method.

Very often, like David, we also are deceived by our own wisdom. We have so much confidence in our Bible knowledge that we go forward to preach without spending sufficient time in prayer. Some preachers have about twenty-five well prepared sermons with them. They can get ready with one of them at a moment's notice. As a result they do not feel the need for prayer. They are like some Indian wives who can cleverly use the left-over rice of the previous day. Adding tamarind juice and other ingredients to it they can prepare tasty "Puliharam" for the morning's breakfast. Guests may think it is freshly cooked whereas it is really the left-over food of the previous day. In the same way these preachers may preach very eloquently and give the impression that their messages are fresh, while they are only stale old sermons, and are like chaff in the eyes of the Lord. We should not depend upon our knowledge, but look to the Lord afresh to receive His appropriate message for every occasion. That is the divine order. Likewise we have to find the divine order for all matters in our private life, home life and church life. In every case, unless we are freed from our own plans we will not be able to find out God's heavenly plan for us.

Later on we see that the Lord had to bring David to the threshing floor a second time, the threshing floor of Araunah, because he very soon forget the lesson God had taught him. We all suffer from forgetfulness. But even those who have good memories are very quick to forget the lesson which God teaches us. So God keeps on reminding us again and again.

Later on God gave to David in writing the plan for the Temple (1 Chronicles 28:11,19), just as many years ago, He had given to Moses in writing the Ten commandments. This plan was a shadow or type of the House of God which is eternal. Thus the plan for building the House of God became the fifth stone which God gave David. The revelation of God's plan for the Church becomes the fifth stone which God wants to give to us also. The Church, which is the true House of God, is to contain all the fullness of God. We must consider and fully understand and appreciate what a wonderful privilege it is to be co-workers with God and have a share in building the House of God.

MARCH 13

"... lay up these my words in your heart and ... ye shall teach them your children..." (Deut. 11:18,19).

Naaman went to Elisha and at his word was healed of his disease by dipping himself seven times in the river Jordan. Not only was he healed physically but he was healed spiritually also. From that day on he refused to bow down to any one except the living God of Israel. Naaman would have told his king and other great men of his country how through the little slave girl he had ultimately come to know the living God. It is quite possible that many other people would have gone to prophet Elisha with their different needs. Thus Naaman became a witness of the living God.

All this happened because of the faithfulness of the little girl's parents who had taught her about the living God and His prophet. Thus we see that parents have a tremendous responsibility towards their children. Every child is a gift of God. It is the parents' great responsibility to teach them the Word of God faithfully. Many parents are very, very careless regarding the spiritual life of their children. As a result, rather than

receiving joy and blessing from them, they receive sadness and discouragement, and have to shed many tears of sorrow. If the children go astray, to a great extent it is the fault of the parents. They have been negligent and careless in their spiritual responsibility. They might have provided the physical needs of the children in abundance and given them many clothes, plenty of toys and many boxes of sweets. But they have had no time to teach them the Word of God or to pray with them. They have been far too busy with other matters and are now paying a high price for their negligence.

Please see what kind of testimony God could give about Abraham in Genesis 18:19. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD many bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him". God said, "I know Abraham". Will He say about you, who are believing parents, "I know so and so, that he will command his children and his household after him that they shall keep the way of the Lord?" God does not want to know what high education or how many university degrees you have. He wants to know how much time you spend with the Word of God along with your wife and children. When God found Abraham faithful in his duty towards his children, He said He would bring to pass that which he had spoken of him. When parents do their part, God will also do His part. He will fulfil all His promises.

MARCH 14

"They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Psa. 34:5).

In the year 1947 a ship came to Southampton carrying about 1,530 soldiers returning home from a battlefield. When the ship arrived, many friends and relatives had come to the harbour to receive their loved ones. A young girl also had come to meet her fiance who had been separated since the beginning of the war. War or no war no one could change their hearts and they remained faithful to each other. There she was going up and down the dock, looking this way and that, searching eagerly. But all men the looked alike. They all wore the same kind of uniform. Would she be able to recognize her young man in such a large crowd? As the soldiers saw her walking to and fro on the dock they began to mock. She took no notice of what they said. Her young man had written to her and so she knew he must be there somewhere on the ship. Suddenly she heard her name called. "Oh!" she said joyfully. "That is my young man. There he is, there he is!" Nearly a thousand eyes had been trying to draw away her attention but all in vain. In the same way, once we know our Lord by experience no man or woman can draw our eyes from Him.

It is our longing that our eyes also may be fixed upon the Lord. There may be extreme persecution, there may be rebuke, ridicule or mockery for His Name's sake. We may be even hated by our own parents, friends, relations or neighbours. All this may happen to us sooner or later. Many believers have been drawn away by men, women, money and position. They have denied their Lord. But our Lord loves us, and He is saying to us again and again, "Look unto Me, look unto Me... all the ends of the world" (Isa. 45:22). What a loving invitation! Our Lord is saying to all of us, "Whatever may be your difficulty, or trial or temptation, you look unto Me." That is the secret of victory.

The Lord is calling you whatever your fears, your troubles or afflictions may be, to look unto Him. First of all, David came to the Lord with tears of repentance and sorrow; then there was joy upon his face. The

Psalmist says, "They looked unto Him and their faces were radiant". Straightway their faces became radiant. We can say these words with authority; "All your afflictions, troubles and trials can disappear provided you look at the One, Who loved you and died for you." He is saying these words showing you His wounded hands and wounded feet, "Look unto Me and see what I have done for you. How much I have suffered for you to forgive you, and to transform you, and to take away all your fears, afflictions and trials." Look unto Him today and you also will become radiant.

MARCH 15

"And in those days, when the number of disciples were multiplied, there arose a murmuring..." (Acts 6:1).

Whenever the work of God increases there is bound to be murmuring. There are murmurers in every congregation. In the early church the Greeks were tempted to feel that partiality was being shown towards the Jews while their own needs were being neglected. This was a delicate question and a difficult barrier. How did the apostles overcome it? We find the answer in verse 2. The apostles called the congregation together and said to them, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." Then after fasting and prayer deacons were chosen and set apart. Many of us are tempted in the same way, and the devil often succeeds in making us forsake our first job for the second. Men who have been commanded of God to preach the Gospel and who have been anointed by the Holy Ghost for this purpose are now serving tables. They say, "Somebody has to do this also! If we don't do it, who else will?" The real issue is this, "Did God call you to serve tables or did He call you to preach the Word?" You have to find this out for yourself. If God has called you to minister His Word then do not be carried away by what seems to be "important duties".

When I returned to India after my education abroad, I also faced a similar problem. My father had been involved in a court case in Punjab and had suffered a loss of more than a lakh of rupees. He told me that the family was counting on me to help them, as I was the eldest son; and that I should find a job for at least six months. He appealed to me for the sake of my younger brothers. I told my father I knew definitely that God has called me to preach the Gospel. After two years of struggle I had at last yielded my life and time and energy to God, for His service and now if I disobeyed God my father would suffer more loss. I said to my father, "I cannot give you any help, I cannot protect you from dangers. But God can. Your safety lies in my obedience. If I obey my Lord I know that eventually you and the whole family will be blessed. I believe in God". At this, my mother began to weep. My father also wept. He took off his turban and laying it at my feet he asked me, "Not even for a few months?" Again I said firmly, "No, God must come first. One day all your troubles will be over through my obedience." Later, whenever I visited Punjab, my relatives expressed their gratitude to me for my obedience to God because through it they had been so abundantly blessed. Everyone in my family has been richly blessed much more than you can imagine. They say, "It is all because of your prayers we are what we are". As a result I had an open door to preach the Gospel in all their homes. They will even sit up till midnight waiting for me to visit them and give them God's message. I still remember what a great temptation it was for me in the beginning to yield to their plea and disobey God's call. What a loss it would have been!

The same temptation faces many other also. I know many servants of God who under similar pressure, have forsaken their calling and are spending their days doing "good things" but not fulfilling the calling which God had for them. It is only through faith and waiting upon God in prayer, that we can overcome all barriers.

MARCH 16

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

It is so very clear. He has right now blessed us with all the blessings of heaven: all the blessings, mind you, and not only a few. "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus... all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's (Eph. 1:3, 1 Cor.3:22 and 23).

Now imagine you want to buy something and you go into a very big shop in London. In these days they have super markets. In such a place you can buy anything and everything you want. But you only want to buy a small suitcase and so you go in there. You can walk around the whole super market and you show the salesman only a small suitcase. You go to the manager and ask him, "What is the price?" Suppose the manager answers, "All these things are yours. There is no price. Everything is free. You bring all the trucks you can and carry away everything you desire. You can carry all things away." You will be surprised, will you not? You came to buy just a small suitcase, but the manager is telling you the whole super market is yours, and that you could take it all away. Will it not be wonderful? You find a similar thing here. We go to God and say: "God have mercy upon me, and forgive my sins. Do not punish me. Have mercy on me." But the Lord says, "My son, not only do I forgive you but also give you my whole Heaven." That is what God's Word says. They are not my words. God has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Is it not a wonderful salvation? It is a great salvation. Our Lord wants us to be filled with His fulness. To this end He wants us to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that we might be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3:19). What a love! That is the prayer of Paul the apostle. We must understand that God's love is so great. It passeth our knowledge, it is beyond our understanding. It is so great! It is unique! Ah! the wonder of it all: God wants us to be filled with His fulness. It is only when His work of salvation is completed that we shall know how we are filled with God's fulness. That is why God wants us to be with Him for eternity as kings that we might be filled with His fulness.

MARCH 17

"But now being made free from sin, ... ye have your fruit unto holiness" (Rom. 6:22).

When a wound becomes infected it gets filled with pus, but when it heals you find the old flesh getting dry gradually and new, clean flesh forming. In the same way when the life of the Lord Jesus comes unto us, old things like hatred, malice, jealousy and enmity dry away and new attitudes appear in their stead (Col. 3:8-10). That is why we read, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (verse 12). These virtues come by themselves when the power of resurrection works within us. Everyone who has wronged you, you will have a desire to forgive. God's love will come into you and make you forgive others and will keep your

heart free from bitterness and hatred. Heavenly peace will fill your soul. Your heart will be full of gratitude to God and you will end every day with thanksgiving as you constantly remember how the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for your sins and forgave you. This threefold union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection will fill our lives with His divine power of resurrection and make our lives like Aaron's rod that budded, and brought forth almonds.

Now let us see what almond stands for in the Word of God. "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it" (Jer. 1:11,12). Whatever God declares in His Word, will be fulfilled one day. Whatever has proceeded from the mouth of God must come to pass. His Word cannot fail (Psa. 33:9; 148:5). Thus, resting upon His promises which never fail and by being filled with divine life, we can serve God in newness of Spirit.

MARCH 18

"... and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb are without spot and blemish, and even angels in heaven can see no fault in them. What a wonderful salvation! What a wonderful Saviour! If you have really accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, the Spirit of God makes you His for ever, and gives you the divine nature. Only the grace of God does this, and not any man. Henceforth wherever you go you will shine in the glory of the Lord. Once a man took a piece of clay from under a rose bush, and found that it smelt very sweet, because the fragrance of the rose was upon it. In the same way, whenever you spend more time at His feet you will see every part of your life being filled with His glory and beauty and power. This is our heavenly calling upon the earth. Even though you may have any profession upon the earth, still the fragrance of His holiness will be seen upon you.

Also the Lord has promised to guide us continually (Isa. 58:11). This provision is meant for every believer. In the Old Testament, only the high priest was able to know the mind of God. But now every believer has the privilege of knowing His will (John 4:34; 6:38; 7:17; 8:28; 9:31). We can enjoy His love and affection if we know and do His will (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21). He offers to reveal to you the mind of God, so that you may know God's will in every kind of individual, family or assembly need. Then His fragrance will flow through you.

By the guidance of the Lord you will be victorious over every trial and the Lord will make for you "a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters" (Isa. 43:16). His guidance will take you safely through any darkness, or any valley, led by His loving and skilful hands. Even though you may not know the opposition of Satan and be surrounded by darkness, by His guidance you will hear His voice, "Fear not; there is a way here also." This can be your daily and hourly experience.

MARCH 19

"... And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9).

Let us see how God prepared Elisha to be his faithful servant. First he had to be just pouring water on Elijah's hands (See 2 Kings 3:11). Such a task is more profitable than studying Ph. D. or any other degree. Many who study hard to get their degrees, are full of doubts. They may study well and learn much, but they remain weak in faith. When the Lord called Elisha he had been engaged in the hard task of ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen (1 Kings 19:19). So Elisha could have thought he was now wasting his time, just pouring water on Elijah's hands. Elisha was to be given a heavy task by God, because there were many false prophets in the country, and other bitter enemies of God's interests, like Jezebel. Even though there was much urgent need, the Lord did not commission Elisha till many years later. By serving Elijah, Elisha had to learn divine order, subjection and humility. Other sons of the prophets came to be taught and went away satisfied with new knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. But Elisha was not satisfied with this. He went on ministering to Elijah with a great longing in his heart to become an effective and fruitful servant of God. At last in 2 Kings 2:9, near the end of Elijah's life on earth, Elisha found an opportunity of asking a favour from Elijah. He did not ask for popularity, or worldly gain, but for a double portion of the Spirit which Elijah had, because he wanted to be God's faithful and fruitful servant.

We must be careful not to have wrong motives in our hearts, even in serving the Lord, because the devil will try to put them in us, so that the testimony of Jesus may be dishonoured, and confusion be brought into the churches. You can always tell false prophets by their love for money. No matter what their income, they will never be satisfied. They will be constantly hinting or making some kind of reference to their need in order to extract money from people. You must be careful when you come across such people. There are some preachers who claim to have the gift of healing. They advertise themselves in attractive posters to give wide publicity to their gifts of healing. At the same time they adopt all kinds of clever devices to get money from the people. May the Lord protect us from all such men.

The moment we entertain in our hearts, love for money, the devil will lead us into some place where we can get plenty of it. If we have a secret love for popularity, Satan will attract us to people who flatter us, and thus we will go astray from the will of God. Satan has power to make our own hearts deceive us. Our constant prayer should be, "Lord, remove all unworthy and wrong motives from my heart and make me a Spirit-filled servant of Thine, whom Thou canst use anytime, anywhere".

MARCH 20

"And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church" (Col 1:18).

In Ephesians 1:23 the Church is called the Body of Christ. Those who have not received the life of the Lord Jesus Christ have no right to be called the members of His Body. For instance, take a man with an artificial leg. It may be a very good leg, and may help the man to walk very nicely. Yet it is not a part of his body. It has to be fixed with many bolts, nuts and straps into its position, otherwise it may fall down somewhere. Now in what way is your arm joined to your body? Is it held by nuts, bolts and straps? No, the human life flowing through all the members of the body holds them together. In the same way those who are born again and in whom the life of the Lord Jesus has been poured, are the members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

In the human body there are many members and many organs: head, hands, feet, eyes, blood vessels. Some are large and some are small. No man would happily lose a member of his body. Every member is necessary and important, and has a function to fulfil. In the same way every one of us, who is a member in the Body of Christ, has a service to fulfil and a gift to exercise. We have to fulfil our allotted part faithfully and also be satisfied to be what we are. Whoever you are, if you are a member in the Body of Christ your service is equally important and precious to the Lord.

The secret of true joy and usefulness is this: you must realize that you are a member in the Body of Christ, and Christ is your Head. Suppose the members of a human body could all move separately without the control of the head; you cannot even imagine it! The human body is not like that. The members are all governed by the head and they act in unity. In the same way the members of the Church have to be controlled by the Head, Christ. Then only can you have the living Church. If God's fulness is to be seen in an assembly or church, it is essential that every member individually, and the church as a whole, should acknowledge Christ as the Head. Because of failure to do this many assemblies have no life. The people are governed by ungodly men, and leaders are governed by personal interest. The result is, there are parties, strife and quarrels among them.

MARCH 21

"... I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2).

It is through the blood of the Lamb alone that our sins are forgiven and cleansed at the new birth, and it is only through the blood of the Lamb that we can get daily cleansing from the defilement of the way. The devil tries to bring some defilement constantly in our lives, because as long as we are in the flesh our old nature is still there. We will never attain perfection upon this earth. We find in our old nature which is called the "old man" in Rom. 6, that there is a tendency to be defiled again and again but we have to be kept constantly cleansed from these defilements. Evil thoughts can never be prevented by human efforts. Even though your eyes are closed in prayer, you find evil thoughts coming in. At the time of prayer and worship you will find such thoughts gaining entrance, or in the quiet of the night. Again, we are made to hear certain things which create defilement and such defilement cannot be removed by human effort. By the blood of the Lamb we can be washed and kept clean.

In Revelation 19:8 we read about the Bride, "to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." The word "granted" indicates that her desire was to be kept clean and because of her faith she was granted that fine linen clean and white. We also need to be cleansed daily. When a person is sensitive to uncleanness he wants everything to be kept clean every day. In the same way, spiritually we must long to be kept clean. The very second we find defilement entering in, we must desire cleansing through faith, by the blood of the Lamb, and we must claim that blood thousand times a day. The Lamb will never refuse us. He is willing and ready to cleanse us whenever we go to Him. Cleansing by His blood and constant washing by His Word gives us clean and white linen, which is the Church's preparation to be the Bride of the Lamb.

In 2 Cor. 11:2,3, Paul speaks of presenting the believers as a chaste virgin before the Lord Jesus Christ. We know how one thought of unfaithfulness on the part of the wife grieves the husband. We have to be so prepared that we may be presented before the Lord without blemish. Having come to Him, we must refuse to give the least ground to the devil and his hosts, and also refuse to allow even a little defilement to remain in us. Our Lord has made abundant provision to wash us and keep us clean and if we, through our blindness refuse to be washed, we have no part with Him (John 13:8). The believer must be extremely sensitive to any defilement. The devil will try again and again to bring defilement, but we must claim cleansing by the blood.

The false church is compared to a whore, - a woman living in sin. Are not the practices of the false church, the burning of incense and worshipping of statues, rightly called spiritual fornication? Their buildings are full of these things and through these, and by means of different rites and rituals and practices, spiritual fornication is being committed by them every day. Such people cannot be called the chaste virgin of the Lord Jesus Christ.

MARCH 22

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19).

The sixth appearance of the Lord Jesus after the resurrection was to five hundred brethren according to 1 Cor. 15:6. As the news of His resurrection spread, the believers began to gather from different places, where they had been hiding. The number reached above five hundred, Then the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them who had gathered together in one place. By this appearance we see how we can experience His power of resurrection when we meet together as one family, overcoming all man-made differences. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed before He went to the garden of Gethsemane, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). In this chapter we have the record of the most inspiring prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. He prays for four-fold oneness among us as believers, oneness in relationship; secondly oneness in love; thirdly oneness in perfection; fourthly, oneness in glory. The more we live together as one family, forgetting all national, communal and social differences, the more closely are we drawn to our Lord. At the same time our closeness to the Lord and to one another helps us to appropriate His power with strong faith. In these days we find believers being divided over trifles. This brings a great spiritual loss to many and they remain babes spiritually for a long time. Wherever believers gather as one family under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ with forbearance towards, and service to one another with true love, we find much spiritual growth, a deeper understanding of the Word of God and the ability to enjoy His abiding presence. We see from God's Word that wherever the early Christians came together as one family, the Lord worked deeply and freely. We have the privilege to welcome and serve all equally without any partiality.

MARCH 23

"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him" (Psalm 25:14).

The joy of the Lord fills our hearts when we realize that we are going to be fully identified with Him as His bride. As the bride and the bridegroom share their thoughts and their possessions in perfect love, we also will share everything with the Lord when we are united with Him. We are chosen as His everlasting partners and companions. Those who do not have such a joy or hope have nothing they can really look forward to and they have nothing to share with others. Some husbands demand good food from their wives, and if they do not get it they become wild. This is all because they do not know what the joy of the Lord is and they are unable to share that joy with their wives. They only demand many things. So many husbands and wives do not have oneness. We can share this great Heavenly joy with others and as we do so, it increases.

As we go upon our knees and share all our thoughts and desires freely with Him, He will show us what He wants to teach us, what we can do to please Him and our joy will increase. The Lord shared His thoughts with Abraham as we read in Gen. 18:17, 18. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" The Lord says that Abraham is His friend, and that He cannot hide anything from Him. The mighty and great God is saying this to Abraham, and also sharing His mind with him about destroying Sodom and Gomorrah because of the wickedness of the people. Our Lord must have shared His thoughts with Martha and Mary also in Bethany. Whenever He went from Jerusalem to their house, He must have shared with them how He went into the temple and found corruption all around. That is how we too must share our thoughts with the Lord. We are always asking for something when we pray, but we never wait in prayer to hear what our Lord wants to share with us. Many times in the early hours of the morning, I have felt the Lord calling me to share something with Him asking me to go somewhere. It is a great joy to know what our Lord wants to share with us. It is a greater joy to do what He wants us to do for Him.

MARCH 24

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15).

It is only by inward peace we can be sure of God's perfect will, for without that peace you cannot find it (Heb. 13:20,21). When people do not know how to find God's will, they make many mistakes in their business, marriages and other plans in their lives, and they pay a heavy price in later years. See how necessary it is, therefore, to make sure that our peace is genuine and real, and not an imitation. It is the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that He gives to us. "My peace I give unto you. My own peace". He Himself becomes our peace. He died and rose again, that we may die to our old nature. Then only can our Lord Himself come and live in us by the power of His resurrection. Unless you are indwelt by the Lord Jesus Himself, you will not find that peace, for that peace does not depend upon Bible knowledge, nor upon any human qualification. He cannot live in us unless we are inwardly purified, cleansed and washed. Nobody can purify himself, by his own efforts. The Lord Jesus Christ undertakes to cleanse us from every inward defilement by His own blood. Then He says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). His true peace will deliver you from all your fears; fear of the past, fear of the future, fear of the enemy, fear of diseases; fear of death, fear of war and other calamities, fear of men and fear of loneliness. All these fears are driven away when the Lord Jesus Christ comes inside. No human activity can take away these fears. The Scripture says, "Fear is torment", and that fear will make you restless and take

away your sleep and hunger. No man can take away that fear. But the Lord can. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

In Col. 3:15, we read: "let the peace of God rule in your hearts ...to the which also ye are called in one body". That peace will make you feel one with everybody else. No more Malayalis, no more Tamilians, no more Punjabis, no more rich, no more poor, no more white, no more black, no more Telugu, no more Komti,... or whatever it may be; all divisions go away. No man can do this. But in the Lord Jesus Christ, we can be perfectly one with everybody anywhere, everywhere. I have had the privilege to visit many countries. I have never felt a stranger in any country. I did not know the language, but I could feel one with those who love Christ. There was no question of difference among us. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can make us one like this. Further in the same verse Paul says, "Be ye thankful". Real peace will make you thankful. There will be a note of praise and thanksgiving all the time. Otherwise you are never satisfied. You begin the day murmuring and you end the day murmuring. Always something is wrong somewhere, either in the coffee, rice, rasam or food, or someone speaking about your head, nose, etc! The Lord can teach you to be thankful in everything, in all situations, circumstances and conditions, in life. We can thank God for His love, grace and mercy, for everything turns out for our good eventually.

MARCH 25

"...by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

God has a great and high purpose in saving us, that is to make us princes and kings in the coming New Creation. All those who are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus have that privilege (Rev. 5:9,10). For that purpose, the Lord has made His grace available for all our needs, shortcomings and weaknesses. By coming before His throne of grace we can receive His grace. Whatever may be our trial, temptation, affliction or hardship, His grace is sufficient for us. Our need may be like a great mountain and yet the Lord Jesus Christ Himself invites us to come boldly before His throne of grace with faith (Heb. 4:16). That is why we have to learn more and more about God's grace and how to obtain and enjoy it.

We begin our Christian life only by His grace, and not by any human qualification. God demands everlasting righteousness. There is no comparison between God's righteousness and our righteousness. None of us has the least qualification to receive this great salvation. It is only by God's grace and our faith in the efficacy of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we can obtain this salvation (Eph. 2:5,8) and show forth God's glory and grace. The apostle Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." That means, whatever he did or suffered for the Lord was only by God's grace. As a God's servant Paul went through many afflictions. Then he testified later on, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Thus we find that all our afflictions are allowed by God to teach us the meaning of His grace and enable us to enjoy it.

Even the weakest believer in the whole world can become strong by claiming His grace. We need not feel sad or downcast for our weaknesses or shortcomings, because we have bold access to the throne of grace. For our sake the Lord went through every possible temptation and yet was without sin. That is why He is now interceding for us for all our human weaknesses. When I find my strength failing, and my temptation

too much for me, and my faith becoming weaker and weaker, and doubts fill my heart, I say "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art my High Priest, kindly intercede on my behalf and lift me up. Now grant me Thy abundant grace". He gives me boldness, faith and strength.

Please realise your heavenly calling. However weak you may be, the Lord has made every provision to bring you to His throne. If you have any doubt, claim the intercessory ministry of the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that He faced the same temptations which you are facing. He knows exactly what you are going through and His grace is fully sufficient. May the Lord teach us to claim that grace for our heavenly calling.

MARCH 26

"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8).

The first lesson the Lord taught me during the early years of my Christian life was that I should not tell anyone about my needs either by words or by hints but only the Lord. There was a time when I had no food for many days, and to add to my difficulty, I had to walk long distances. One day I was very hungry, and then I thought within myself, "I am very hungry. I cannot beg or ask anyone for food. If I go to my friend's house at food time, he is sure to ask me to have food with him. Then I will say, 'No, thank you'. If he asks me once more I will once more say, 'No, thank you', but if he asks me for the third time I will then agree to have food with him." With such thoughts I went to his house and it happened exactly as I had thought and I was able to have food in his house. After a few weeks I had the same temptation again. I was feeling very hungry and so I thought of going to my friend's house once again with the hope of repeating my last experience. As I was on my way at about 1.30 p.m. the Lord rebuked me saying, "Where is your faith?" I replied "Lord, I do not intend to ask or beg for the food. Only if he insists until I refuse him two times I will take it". To this the Lord questioned me saying, "What is your motive in going to your friend's house?" I was put to shame; I immediately asked the Lord to forgive me. I promised Him that I would not go to any person for any need of my own because He is my living sufficiency (Psalm 23:1). That is how the Lord gave me a strong faith.

There is another occasion when I had to go without food for a whole day. At midnight a man came and knocked at my door and woke me up. Then he said to me, "Brother! Please forgive me for coming to you at this late hour of the night. I was asleep and had a dream. In my dream I saw someone asking me to go and call you over for food. So I woke up, went to the kitchen and found that a plate of cooked rice as left over; please tell me did you have food today?" I could not reply him with a lie. So I told him that I had no food that day. He immediately took me to his house at that midnight hour and gave me food. These things do not happen by chance. Do not say "Your case is different". If we trust God fully we can prove His faithfulness.

On yet another occasion twenty-five of us went on a Gospel campaign. At that time we are doing our own cooking. When Sunday came those of us who were responsible for the cooking wanted to stay back and attend to the cooking for all us. I told them that the Lord wanted all of us to go for the worship service. They said, "What shall we do about our midday meals?" I told them that the Lord would provide. So we all went to the worship meeting. After the meeting we were all standing at the bus stop. I saw one man

who was known to me coming towards us carrying a very big basket. I asked him what he was doing. He told me that he had been to a wedding feast where much food was left over. The host said that anybody could take away the leftover food. He thought since he had no family of himself, he could take the food for his neighbours and friends. But when he saw us, he felt that he should give it to us. So he left that basket full of food with us. There was food sufficient for all of us. So God will supply all our needs as long we do our part of trusting Him.

MARCH 27

"... So I prayed to the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 2:4).

Many people advertise their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but when troubles come they begin to weep. They give hints about their financial need to other people in many subtle ways, sometimes even in their prayers they pray loudly. But in the case of Nehemiah we do not find anything of the sort. He did not make any request to the king even though he was the foremost among his servants, and had every opportunity for getting any of his petitions granted; instead, he first prayed to the God of heaven before he could express his request to this earthly king. He prayed that God would grant him wisdom to make his request in a proper way. Thus he depended upon God for each word that had to be spoken by him before the king. As a result of this when he made the request before the king, the king could see that he was a man of God and the words which he spoke were the words of God.

Nehemiah only requested the king for permission to leave, in exactly the same manner as government employees apply for leave when they need it (Neh. 2:5). At that time he was badly in need of a large amount of money for the work which was before him. He could have easily requested the king for financial help and the king too, being so great could have readily helped him. But Nehemiah did not want to depend upon the king's money for God's work. And we see that the king was not only pleased to grant him permission to go to Jerusalem (vs. 6), but he also sent with him captains of his army and bands of horsemen for his protection on the way (v. 9). Thus we see that when we go upon our knees with any burden, we not only have the privilege to be led and governed by Him, but also find every provision being made for our safety and success. So Nehemiah reached Jerusalem ready for the task before him.

MARCH 28

"Brethern, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1).

It is only when we realize God's goodness and grace in forgiving our backsliding that we can be of real help to those who are in the same condition. We can pray for them with tears of loving sympathy rather than condemning them harshly and hating them for spoiling their testimony. We learn how to go to them in love and humility, and see to bring them back to the Lord (Gal. 6:1-2). There is no doubt that in many subtle ways the devil tries to bring defeat into the lives of the believers. Many fall when they are strongly tempted. Then they are condemned and forsaken by other believers; some even hate them and they as well as unbelievers despise them. But if only we would remember how the Lord waited patiently for us to repent of our backslidings, how He met our need when we lost our first love, how wonderfully He helped

us to return to Him and what a tender welcome He gave us, we cannot but try to help them. We would pray with tears for them and do everything we could to have them restored. Many times in our own experience, we have seen fallen ones coming back and being restored to their former position after we have prayed with tears for them and with them. On the other hand if we judge and condemn them, their hearts become harder and harder. Let us remember what a great responsibility we have towards our backslidden brothers and sisters. We have our Lord's example of how He dealt with His disciple Peter before and after his fall. The Lord Jesus knew how Peter would deny Him three times before the cock crew twice. Therefore He lovingly warned him saying "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32). Peter was restored because of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We further see how the Lord told Peter that inspite of his denial of Him, He would still trust him and expect him to pray for his weaker brethren who might also fall. The Lord repeated this again in His last message to Peter (John 21:15-17). He told him three times, "Feed my lamb," "Feed my sheep," and again, "Feed my sheep." Both those who are newly born again and are babes in Christ, and those who are weak in their faith and not growing spiritually are like lambs who need extra care, having to be carried and strengthened. The Lord has used different people to help us in our weakness that we might be spiritually restored. So if we find that our fellow-believers are weak and living defeated lives, we also must help to lift them up spiritually by our prayers, fellowship and shedding of tears. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

MARCH 29

"... the tongue can no man tame" (James 3:8)

Psalm 120:3, "...what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?" We find ourselves helpless to overcome our own tongues. We get angry at the least provocation, and our tongues get out of control and no human power is able to control them. We say hurtful things. Sometimes we say them even to our loving friends. Then we not only lose our peace because of our words but cause much trouble to those around us as well. It is true that we do not want to say hurtful words but still we fail many times. Only the power of God can help us to control our tongues.

The helm of a ship is small in size in comparison with the rest of the ship. Yet the captain can direct and change the whole course of the ship by his control over the helm (James 3:4). We need to bring our own tongues under the control of the power of God and then we shall be able to bring comfort to the needy people. We shall be able to say in real humility that we are sorry when we have done wrong. But when we do not call upon God to control our tongues then lies and words of anger, jealousy, hatred and so on, rush out of our mouths and bring much loss and damage into many lives. After this it become very difficult to confess and to say we are sorry for what we have said. Often we have to spend much time to bring peace between two contending parties. Even after both are fully convinced that they were in the wrong, they will refuse to say they are sorry or to ask pardon of each other. They will readily admit their share in the misunderstanding but as for saying, "I am sorry," it seems an impossibility to them! That is why the

Psalmist admits in Psalm 120:1 that he called upon God in his distress. He recalls how his own tongue and that of others had spoken words of pride, hatred and anger. He had tried to control the words but had failed. Then he called upon God. We have seen this experience repeated in our own wretched condition in this and in many other aspects of our lives and have cried unto Him and He delivered us.

MARCH 30

"... the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13).

Our work will be tested. We as God's servants must know how to labour in the Spirit. What we do in the flesh will be burnt up. What we do for our glory will be burnt up. Whatever we do which is not according to the Scriptures will also be burnt up. It is for this reason the apostle Paul says so emphatically in 1 Cor. 3:12,13; "...if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is". The same thought is brought out in Hebrews 12:27, 28. God says there is going to be a "removing" and a "shaking" as of a fruit tree. God will shake everything. Even the heavens and the stars will be removed. Why should he shake the heavens? It is in order to bring into existence His unshakeable, unchanging, everlasting Kingdom. There were many great kingdoms and many great kings in times gone by. But now they have all disappeared and gone. The Lord Jesus Christ will establish a kingdom which cannot be shaken. In the same way, the Lord is going to test our work. Whatever is not suitable for eternity will be rejected. Whatever is not a part of God's House will be shaken severely and removed.

The Government had spent crores of rupees in building a dam near the city of Pune. It was an earthen dam, and should have been allowed to stand and settle for at least six months before it was used. But because of the common opinion that it was good and strong they began to use it for water supply before the lapse of the period. This was the mistake of the engineers. When the rains started in 1962 they noticed a small breach on one side of the dam. It was not an ordinary breach; but foolishly they struggled all night with iron sheets and cement bags to stop it. Yet it became wider and wider. It was midday on July 12, and the workers had just gone out for a cup of tea, when the dam collapsed. Just imagine that huge wall of water about 30 feet high, moving at speed of 47 miles an hour! Huge stone boulders were carried away like straw. No one knows exactly how many lives were lost, carried away by the force of that mighty flood. It was because of the carelessness and negligence of a few engineers.

If God's servants fail, the result is very serious, because it brings loss to the work of God. That is why God warns us in His word, "Take heed how ye build thereupon". We cannot just go on preaching Gospel without taking any responsibility for the souls who are saved thereby. Most people will not understand the full meaning of this warning. But preachers and teachers of God's Word will understand and they should take heed. We should be prepared for everything. The Scriptures also give us warning in Rev. 12:12 "...the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time". How careful we should be to know God's plan for building His work.

MARCH 31

"... Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7,8).

In Lev. 23 we read about the seven feasts of Jehovah which were shadows of coming events. The first feast was the feast of the passover, signifying the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb. Secondly, the feast of unleavened bread, when for seven days the Jews had to eat unleavened bread. Leaven is a symbol of sin because a little leaven can leaven the whole lump. In the same way, one sinful thought can defile the whole body. The Lord wants us to become like unleavened bread and He desires to impart divine nature to us. Thirdly, the feast of the first fruits, which speaks of the power of resurrection. Just as one grain of seed when it dies brings forth many grains, the Lord's death has made many righteous. Fourthly, the feast of Pentecost, which signifies that men of all classes are equal. By the Holy Spirit we are baptized into one body. The fifth feast was the feast of blowing trumpets, when the people had to blow the trumpets for seven days. This speaks about the importance of the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world with great power. Sixthly, the day of atonement, showing how people of all classes can become righteous. Seventhly, the feast of the tabernacles, revealing to us the truth that the Lord wants us to reign with Him one day.

The Old Testament offerings could not make the children of Israel perfect by practices, customs and rituals. Only the holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross makes anyone holy. Another great blessing of His sacrifice is, boldness to enter into the most holy place because of the efficacy of His precious blood, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the of house of God; Let us draw near..." (Heb. 10:19-22). By the power of His blood we can go into the holiest anytime, for any need. The more we appropriate His High Priestly ministry, the more we enjoy boldness in His presence (verse 21). By His sacrifice, He has broken the middle wall of partition. Whenever we fail to enjoy this boldness, we have to search our hearts, confess our failures and get ourselves cleansed in His precious blood. Then we enjoy great boldness in His presence again.

APRIL 1

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17).

In Joshua's day God's people failed to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem. When the Lord gave His people the whole land of Canaan to possess, He commanded them to drive out the seven nations because of their abominable heathen practices. But the Israelites allowed the Jebusites to remain in the strongest position of the city. Years later when David became king in Jerusalem, they began to mock him, and were very self confident. When King David and his men went out against them they said, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither," thinking they could not be overcome.

But God's purpose was to have the Jebusites driven out, so He gave David and his men victory (see 2 Sam. 5:1-10). It was only when he became the true king of Zion over all the tribes of Israel, that God showed him that the Jebusites must not remain. If you want to have a share in building the House of the Lord, then you must yield completely to Jesus Christ as the heavenly King. As we enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts, our family and our Church, we will begin to see something of God's plan for His Church.

Now the Jebusites had no part whatsoever in God's House, as in these days persons not born again have no place or share in the House of God. Many are found like Jebusites in the work of God today. Though they are not born again they have been elected to hold offices and to be members of committees because of their influence through their money, positions or other worldly qualifications. Others who are not born again hold positions as pastors and deacons. Such cannot truly have any part in the House of God or any share whatever in the work of the Lord. They cannot lead and take care of God's flock as true pastors and shepherds and like the Jebusites, must be kept outside. The presence of even a few Jebusites hinders God's work. Even though David, when he came to Jerusalem had driven out many, he left some there, perhaps thinking not to trouble them because they did good and were nice people. But God had to punish David till he drove them all out.

APRIL 2

"They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion" (Psalm 125:1).

The children of Israel on their way to Jerusalem to observe the feasts of Jehovah, had to climb the mountains which surrounded Jerusalem. At that time they remembered all the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their forefathers. These promises reminded them of the Lord's help from time to time to deliver them from their troubles. In spite of all their failures, disobedience and rebellion, the God of grace and mercy heard their prayers, and delivered them. When they saw the mountains of Jerusalem which did not change, they were reminded of God's promise in Malachi 3:6 that He was an unchanging God. When we humble ourselves and confess our sins before Him, He is ready to forgive us. As the people were journeying to Jerusalem they were conscious of their defeat, disobedience and rebellion. But when they saw the mountains of Jerusalem they had hopes, that if they reminded God of His covenant and promises He would forgive them (2 Chro. 7:14-15). In this way they remembered many promises of God. At the sight of the mountains around Jerusalem they received new faith and hope. They knew that due to their sins and disobedience they had lost their power and faith. But they were reminded that He is a loving and merciful God; if they trusted Him, He would turn again to them. They had to come back to Him with all their heart, and with simple faith and belief that whatever God promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to their forefathers would surely come to pass. That is why again and again when they turned to God as a nation they were abundantly blessed. They were scattered, persecuted and punished because of their sin and disobedience, but when they humbled themselves God came in, helped them and blessed them.

Thus you find if you call upon God with real faith, He Who is the God of mercy and love will not turn you away empty. In 1 John 1:9 we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You might have grieved Him much but if you come back with real repentance, confess your sins and believe from your heart that the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself your punishment and condemnation for all your sins, even for your thoughts, and shed His precious blood to cleanse you and keep you thoroughly clean from every defilement, then the very second you believe you will be forgiven.

APRIL 3

"I Exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions... be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

We who are believers have become co-intercessors with the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our great heavenly High Priest. Often we do not realize what a great privilege it is to be co-intercessors with Lord Jesus Christ to intercede for God's servants and His people. We also do not realize how much others depend upon our intercession.

There is going to be a time of much suffering, persecution and difficulties for all the believers. Some believers are tempted even now to call themselves Harijan Christians to get admission into colleges, secure jobs or scholarships. They are ashamed to confess the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people are ashamed to carry the Bible or pray in public.

By our intercession such people can be delivered. Those who are overcomers have the privilege of interceding for people who are in such danger. If we fail God by not interceding as we should, God can rise another testimony, but we will suffer with other people. In this respect, now we have a tremendous responsibility for all those who are facing great persecution. Our intercession is so very necessary for God's servants, fellow-believers and all God's people in the whole world. Paul the apostle went on requesting believers in different assemblies to intercede for him. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Rom. 15:30). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein

I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20). We have to intercede individually, as a family, and as a church. By our intercession God can deliver many people and prepare them for the coming persecution. At the same time we also can be strengthened. May the Lord grant us a travailing and agonizing burden of prayer for God's servants, fellow-believers and for those whom we meet here and there.

APRIL 4

"... the LORD reigneth: ...he shall judge the people righteously" (Psalm 96:10)

Even though men may rise against us we do not turn away from the path of righteousness or from the ministry of preaching the Gospel, because our faith is in God, and we know He reigneth. We have a living God and we know He will judge the people righteously, and therefore no man can harm us. God will judge the world with righteousness and the people with His truth. We have this hope : The Lord will come and judge the earth. We need not take revenge upon those who do injustice to us. The Lord is righteous. He may judge now itself. Otherwise He will do it on the Day of Judgment. Let us therefore be faithful in our duties and refuse to take revenge upon anyone.

Through you and me heaven can rejoice if we bring souls to the Lord. The Lord Jesus said, "...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). The farmer may not be joyful when he sows the seed, but by faith he goes on sowing expecting that one day he will reap the harvest. Those who labour in the field sowing the seed of God's Word should rejoice by faithfully believing that their labour will not be in vain and one day they will surely reap an abundant harvest.

Many years ago we went to Guntur for open-air preaching. Suddenly it began to rain. After preaching in one street we wanted to pray before proceeding to another. I hesitated to kneel down as the ground was muddy. I wanted to stand and pray. But then I thought if the clothes get soiled they can be cleaned in the laundry, why should I be ashamed to kneel? So we knelt and prayed. After many years I received a letter. The writer said that God had spoken to him on that day, not by our preaching, but by our kneeling upon the muddy ground in prayer. By faith we must see today what the harvest will be after a long time.

APRIL 5

"But now is Christ risen from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:20).

We have seven great proofs of the resurrection of our living Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1) The prophecies made in the Old Testament by the prophets. (Isa. 25:8; Hosea 13:14; Psa. 16:10). Nobody ever dreamed of conquering death. There has been only one case in the whole world's history. "He will swallow up death in victory."

(2) The prophecies made by the Lord Himself to His disciples before He was crucified. "The Son of man must be killed and rise again." (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; John 10:18).

(3) The testimony borne by the angels on the early Easter morning: "He is not here, He is risen" (Luke 24:5,6).

(4) The empty sepulchre. "They entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." The empty sepulchre can be seen to day in Jerusalem. Every day people come from many parts of the world to see it. Other sepulchres are full of dead men's bones but this an empty sepulchre.

(5) Our Lord's appearances on ten different occasions on different days to the disciples during 40 days after He rose again; five times on the first day; again, five times from the second day to His ascension. He first appeared to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre then to other women who were returning from the sepulchre. Then He appeared to Simon Peter. Then to two disciples going to Emmaus. And that same evening to the disciples as they were gathered in the room, the door being shut. He appeared to the 500 disciples in Jerusalem as we see in 1 Cor. 15:6. Then He appeared to James. For Thomas' sake, He appeared the eighth time on the eighth day. At the lake of Tiberias, He appeared for the night time (John 21). Then He appeared in Bethany before He ascended into heaven. Like that He appeared ten times within 40 days to show us that He may come into us by the power of resurrection, to make the worst sinner a child of God.

(6) His appearances after He went to heaven. He appeared to Stephen (Acts 7:54,55). He appeared to Saul, afterwards called Paul (Acts 9:3-5). He appeared to John in the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1).

(7) There is one more proof, which is much more important than the six other proofs, and it can be much convincing to those you speak to. He lives in every believer. Those who believe in Him in any part of the world, He comes to live in them. We can all say the same thing, 'He lives in me, He lives in me'. That's why we now put the same question to you. Does the living Lord live in you?

APRIL 6

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

The Lord has many spiritual lessons to teach us through the trials which He allows to come upon us.

1. When we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, He becomes our righteousness. To all appearances, Job was a perfect and upright man, one who feared God and eschewed evil (Job 1:1). Yet, after he had gone through the mill of affliction we hear the same Job say in Job 42:5,6. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes". It was after Job had gone through painful afflictions that he began to see that his true nature was sinful and corrupt, and realized that he can become righteous only by a personal experience with the holy, living and just God.

2. Through afflictions we can develop a strong active faith (1 Pet. 1:7). It has to go through many refining fires to become really pure and bright.

3. These trials help to keep us on the right path. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psalm 119:67).

4. God allows afflictions to come upon us so that we may learn God's statutes and precepts. We can never hope to understand God's statutes through any book of human origin. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:71).

5. These hardships finally lead us to a spiritually wealthy place, enlarge our vision and give us a large heart. In Psalm 66:12, we read: "we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place".

6. By these testings, we are being prepared for our heavenly inheritance with the saints in light. "...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17).

7. When we have passed through sorrows and trials, we are better equipped to comfort those who are passing through similar sorrows and trials (2 Cor. 1:4).

8. When we have passed through mocking and revilings for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are able to appreciate better our oneness with Him. We see in Matt. 10:24,25. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master".

9. Sufferings help to keep us humble. The thorn in the flesh must have been very painful to Paul but the Lord allowed it in his life to keep him humble (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

10. Through hardships we are conditioned to enjoy God's power in fullness. See 2 Cor. 12:9 "...he (the Lord) said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me".

APRIL 7

"For the law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

The Seventh Day Adventists draw our attention to Exodus 20:10 "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates". They say, "What about this commandment? Do you observe the Ten Commandments and keep the sabbath? You ought to observe Saturday as the sabbath for your salvation. If not you are breaking God's commandments and are coming under God's judgment". They say that our Lord Jesus Christ observed the sabbath and did not change it. They are such cultured liars; they mislead and misguide people and bring them into bondage by their deceptive and evil teaching.

In the early days of the Christian era, people in Galatia were taught that unless they were circumcised or observed special days, they were not saved. That is why the apostle Paul wrote this epistle in such strong language and said that when they did so, they were going back into their old ways. He was afraid that his teaching might go in vain and they might lose everything. That is the devil's old trick, not a new one. If you are getting any papers of prophecy from Pune or any papers edited by Seventh Day Adventists, burn them, because they are defiled and are being used by the devil to ruin many homes. When God has forgiven your sins already and you have become just before God through your faith, these Seventh Day Adventists say that by observing the sabbath and keeping sabbath you can be fully saved. Mark all the references carefully.

Now see for what purpose God gave the sabbath and why we are now free from it. "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, ...that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God command thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:14,15).

God told the Israelites that because they had been bond slaves in Egypt under the Egyptians and had served false gods; to remind them of that, He commanded them to keep the sabbath. Every sabbath they remembered their slavery due to disobedience, and the chains of sin that bound their hands, feet, tongues, ears, eyes and bodies. The Law was weak and nobody became righteous through it. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ became man and fulfilled the righteousness which God demanded through the Law. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:2,3). What man could not do, the Lord Jesus

Christ did and set us free from every bondage. He bore our burden, punishment and condemnation and became a curse for us. That is why we are completely free and come under a new Law-the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, while those who come under the former old Law come under the law of sin and death.

Thus in observing the sabbath, the Israelites remembered their slavery under their hard task-masters, but now, the Lord Jesus Christ has broken all chains of bondage and has given us His own true rest.

APRIL 8

"Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ...concerning the work of my hands command ye me" (Isaiah 45:11).

Abraham was prepared to do as God told him (Gen. 22). God said, "Take your son"! and he took him. He took wood also. Then God told him to build an altar, and he built it, without any question or doubt in his mind. That is real friendship with the mighty God. When God says, "Yes", I say, "Yes" and when God says, "No" I say "No", and when God says, "Go", I go, and when He says, "Stay", I stay, and when He says, "Speak", I speak. You find that such friendship will carry you up every mountain. Your sufferings are sufferings of trial, and trials and sufferings are all preparation.

In the first instance God told Abraham how He was going to judge Sodom and Gomorrah. But now God wanted to tell him what was going to happen through his seed, in blessing to all nations of the earth, Verse 17. That seed is the Lord Jesus Christ and Abraham would thus be also a partaker of all the blessing which were to come through that seed. He would enjoy the fruits of the victory of that seed over all the enemies of God, and over all the powers of darkness. We too have the right in Him to enjoy the fruits of His victory, which will ensure not only a happy life upon the earth, but a share of His victory over all the powers of darkness in heavenly places. That is what it means to be a friend of God.

Verse 13 reveals something further of what the friendship of God has for Abraham. The ram was caught in the thicket, not because it would run away somewhere. God could have made that very same ram to appear right before Abraham without being bound in a thicket. But God was teaching Abraham some important lessons. After he had passed the final test, he saw the ram caught in the bush. This ram is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. God was saying to Abraham, "You have obeyed my voice, Now I am bound for blessing to you and your seed. Now command Me, Continue to command Me. "...concerning the work of my hands, command ye me" (Isa. 45:11). God is willing to bless us if we obey Him. Most of us want God to listen to us and work for us. But we won't obey Him. The Lord Jesus has been bound for blessing us that we may be able to command Him in the days to come; that we may command the blessing of God for all nations, and also victory over all enemies. God took Abraham on the mountain top; that Abraham might learn how to command the best things from God for all the generations to come. Do you have a desire to climb that mountain of God's friendship? Do you want to be a friend of God? If you want to be a friend of God, you will find the whole secret revealed in the life of Abraham and especially in Genesis chapter 22.

APRIL 9

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

As our everlasting, heavenly High Priest, the Lord Jesus is constantly interceding and pleading that we may be forgiven and restored. He is able to save us to the uttermost. The apostle John was wondering about those who had gone astray, and those who had lost their lives for the sake of the Gospel, and the Lord gave the answer: it is not merely by rebuking and teaching them that they will be restored, but by the constant intercessory prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who are truly born again, even though they may fall into some horrible sin, and remain in sin for some time, will find the Holy Spirit striving with them constantly in their hearts. The Lord will not leave them till they come back to Him. He will pull them by His prayer. Believers may forsake other believers, but our Lord Jesus Christ will never forsake them.

In a sanatorium, there was a patient whose heart was very hardened, and who would never listen when anyone spoke about God. One old lady used to go the sanatorium for Gospel work once a month, but that man would never listen to what she said. Even though she gave him many things, he paid no attention. The lady had a small girl of about ten years of age. One night in the family prayer, the lady did not mention the name of that man. The small girl said, "Mother, you have forgotten to pray for that man in the sanatorium." She said, "There is no hope for him, so there is no need to pray for him. I gave him up." And the little girl said, "Has the Lord Jesus Christ also given him up?" The mother could not answer that question. The small girl went to sleep, but the mother could not sleep. She began to pray, "Lord, forgive me, forgive me", and soon she had a new burden of prayer for that man. The next day she went back to the same sanatorium to see him. A neighbouring woman said, "I will also come with you", and took her small daughter with her. The little girl saw some flowers on the way, and plucked them. When they came into the sanatorium, the small girl went forward and offered the flowers to the sick man. The man began to weep. "Why are you weeping?" they asked him. He said, "Some years ago, I also had a small girl like this. I was very fond of her. At that time, I used to love God, and honour God. Suddenly that small girl died. I could not understand why the God of love should take away my child like this. From that day onwards, I lost all interest in things of God and the Bible. That is why I did not like to hear from your lips about God, and that He is the God of love. Why did he take away my child?" The lady said to him, "I remember some time ago you told me that your wife was not a very good woman. You told me that she was living a sinful life." "Yes, I did," he said. "Then," she said, "suppose your daughter was alive, she would also have been ruined by your wife. To save her from the horrible life, the Lord took her away." He said, "I never thought of that!" From that day he repented and turned back to God. Unknown to him, the Lord had been striving in intercession on his behalf. Many believers backslide in the same way. They doubt God and His grace, but the Lord Jesus Christ will not leave them. He is constantly interceding on their behalf.

APRIL 10

"And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties" (Mark 6:40).

In Matthew 14:19 there is a divine order. "And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass." It is not a simple job to serve food to a multitude. They all flock to one person, and say: "Give me first". It

was not an easy thing to control such a great and hungry multitude. So the Lord commanded that they had to sit down in order. We cannot do the work of God without order. People do not like divine order. They rebel against God's Word, but the servants of God have got to see that divine order is maintained wherever they seek to serve God. We have to follow divine order, if we want hungry people to be fed, and to be satisfied through our labour. Let us not rebel against divine order. God is the God of order, and we must learn to work in divine order and see that divine order is maintained. We must learn this simple secret of maintaining order in the House of God. We should show reverence and respect for the House of God. If we have learned how to come into the House of God, how to kneel and show reverence, then we can learn divine order. Often the leaders find it difficult to control the young people even in an ordinary Sunday gathering. Those who do not follow divine order, seek to bring in man's order everywhere. But God's people must not rebel against divine order in the House of God. God's servants must learn how to bring in God's order and when divine order is maintained, those who love God will not rebel against it. It is only when the Lord's order is maintained that the Lord blesses the ministry.

From Matt. 14:21 it appears that men sat on one side and women and children on the other, because it is said that the men were about 5000. God has an order for family life, for church life and for weekly and Sunday gatherings. When divine order is maintained there is opportunity for God to bless. Our Lord looked up to heaven and blessed the bread and brake it. Unless things are blessed by God, they cannot satisfy. God blesses whenever you claim that blessing. Almost all Christians have the habit of saying grace before they have food, but though they claim God's blessings, they often do not believe God has blessed the food, because they seem to get much more joy in mutton than in dhal. If you believe the Lord has blessed your food you will get equal joy in any kind of food. Instead, how often you scold your wife if there is no mutton or fish or anything else according to your taste. People pray solemnly, "God bless the food", but have no faith that God will do so. I believe from experience, from the time the Lord saved me, that I no longer worry about my food. I do not care what kind of food is given to me I will never murmur or grumble. I believe from my heart the Lord blesses the food for me and it becomes good for me, and I can enjoy the food whatever it may be; and it is quite true that the Lord does bless the food when you ask Him.

APRIL 11

"I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Psa. 119:75).

The experience of being in the fish's belly brought about true repentance in the heart of Jonah (ch.2). Jonah did not hide his sin from the people in the ship, then how could he hide it from God? When the work of repentance in Jonah was deep and complete, God commanded the whale to throw him right on the spot where He wanted Jonah to be. In the same way God allows the storms in our lives to bring us to true repentance and real confession. Likewise He lovingly brings us to the place where He wants us to be, and where only He can use us.

We see an instance of God's provision for His servants in the way He commanded the fish to throw Jonah on dry land. When Jonah ran away he had to pay his fare (Jonah 1:3). But when he repented the whale took him to the shore free of charge! God became responsible for all his expenses. How many of God's

servants weep and complain when they have no money! They do not realize that they are suffering because they have disobeyed God in some matter, and have need to repent. All our needs will be met by God when there is true repentance and whole-hearted obedience.

The God of love knew that Jonah needed better protection from the sun than what the booth provided him. In a matter of minutes, God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. Jonah did not thank the Lord for His loving and wonderful provision of the gourd nor did his anger against God abate in the least degree. Very patiently God took steps to bring Jonah to his senses. He prepared a worm and it smote the gourd so that it withered. When the sun arose God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, and he fainted. Jonah had not yet learnt the lesson provided by the gourd, and was still angry, implying that God was wrong and he himself was right. We see the marvellous patience of our loving God who tenderly rebuked him (4:10,11).

The Lord never makes a mistake. He uses many means, as He did with Jonah, to bring us back to Himself. When we run away from Him, He allows storms to overthrow us, but provides safety in "a whale". He shows marvellous lovingkindness to us even when we create our own problems, and "go on strike" against Him. He suddenly provides "a gourd to protect our head," and as suddenly removes it to show us our utter dependence upon Him. When we obey God, He supplies all our needs and meets all our expenses. But when we do not obey Him, He uses both simple as well as extraordinary means to bring us to our senses, so that we may learn to live in the presence of God and be His co-workers.

APRIL 12

"...who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" (1 Chron. 29:5).

In April 1932 I was in Vancouver, Canada. One day I went to youth meeting. One man asked me to tell about the Christian work in India. I did not know anything about it, but I only found fault with the missionaries. When I went home I could not pray. Then the voice of the Lord came to me saying, "Who are you to find fault with My servants? What have you done for Me?" I said, "Lord, I thought I am most unfit for Your service and that is why I have been offering You my money and You would not take it. The Lord said, "Even now I want you." I said, "Lord, if You want me, I have no choice or conditions; keep me anywhere or send me anywhere, I will go. I will not question You, I will not complain saying this is a cold lonely place, I will go." We have no right to lay any condition before God. God is sovereign and He has every right over us. To be God's true co-worker, be willing to go any where, go on obeying His voice without any question.

The Lord said, "I accept you for full-time service on three conditions. First of all, withdraw all your claims on your property in Punjab and do not tell about your needs to anyone, don't accept any salary from any one. Secondly, do not join any society but serve all as I send you. Lastly, do not make your own plans. Let me lead you step by step." I replied, "Lord, I agree." On the 4th of April, 1932, I accepted the Lord's call for full time service. I did not know where to go, what to do or how to speak one word, but the Lord knew what to do. If we want to become God's co-workers, we must obey Him implicitly, then He will show clearly what our work is. It took me five years to know clearly what my work was. In the beginning I only

used to give out tracts. Then He went on leading me and guiding me and now I praise the Lord, I am His co-worker and partner. I thank Him for the honour given to me to be His witness, mouthpiece and servant. Later on, I had to go through all kinds of hardships and suffering. I thank God with all my heart for all the suffering I had to go through. In those days I had no house to live and never knew from where I would get my next meal. I used to walk many miles in God's service, but they were the most precious days.

All of you have a share in building God's House. Whosoever you may be, foolish or weak, deaf or dumb, if you are willing, the Lord can use you. But believe that He wants you to be His partner and He will pay you very highly. Sometimes people used to question me, "What is your salary? Who pays you?" My answer was, "Very high salary." Then they would say, "Is it Rs 500/- or Rs. 1,000/-?" I would say, "No, very high". Again they would ask, "Is it Rs 10,000/-?" Then I would say, "No, very high. God supplies all my need, and He pays me every day and gives me much more than I need." If the Lord is speaking to you about His service, obey Him, and do not harden your heart. Do not look at your foolishness and weakness. Offer yourself to Him, and pray like this, "Oh, Lord! I also want to be used by You. I too want heavenly blessings". When you believe that you are God's co-worker, He will show you what you should do. Many believers go to meetings, sing songs, sleep during the message and go away. That is all. They do not find out by prayer their share in God's work. Every believer has a part and share in building God's House under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. By doing that part faithfully, we have the privilege of enjoying all those spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But first of all, make sure that your sins are forgiven and that you have received the gift of eternal life. Only then, God can use you or else He will not touch your money or anything you give. That is why we say, "Please do not bring your offering if you are not born again".

APRIL 13

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

God had told Jacob to go to Bethel but he delayed for a long time. Again the Lord spoke to Jacob and said "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother" (Gen. 35:1). At last Jacob understood that the Lord really wanted him to go to Bethel. Then he looked at his family, and noticed that they were wearing strange garments. He realized that these worldly garments spoke of vanity and lustful desires.

Quite often children form sinful habits and fall into sinful friendships. In their young age they become slaves to worldly habits. If one has discernment one can easily find this from the garments they wear. Yet many parents are utterly blind and unable to see that their children are being steadily drawn in to the devil's net, and they coolly say, "Our children are so nice and so innocent".

Jacob commanded his household to put away the strange gods and the strange garments and strange jewels. Then he buried them all under an oak tree. Thus there was a spiritual awakening and revival in Jacob's family. After this Jacob and his people continued their journey, "and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them" (Gen. 35:5). What a change had taken place! Now all the people of the cities around about were afraid of Jacob. They whispered among themselves, "They are God's people!" Before this Jacob had been trembling and devising various schemes to appease his enemies. Now

it was the other way around, and the people began to tremble at Jacob's approach, and the fear of God fell upon them.

After this revival in Jacob's family, God appeared to him again and blessed him (Gen. 35:10 to 12). Please obey God fully, and do not stop short of Bethel the House of God. Beware of all the subtle devices of the enemy to keep you away from the House of God. The Lord wants to keep us under the blessing and protection of the House of God and also help us to take our full share in building, the House of God which is His Church.

APRIL 14

"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me..." (Psalm 43:3).

Behind the breastplate containing the twelve precious stones were the Urim and Thummim (Exo. 28:30). With the help of these two stones the high priest could find the will of God for any person in relation to any matter at any time (Num. 27:21). It has always been a mystery how these stones functioned. Apart from the high priest they could not be seen by anyone. They were the most important part of the garments of the high priest. During Old Testament times, they were the only means of finding God's will. That is why we find David constantly asking the high priest, Abiathar, to bring the ephod to find out God's will through the Urim and Thummim (1 Sam. 23:2,4,9,11).

When David was hiding in the cave of Adullam all who were in trouble and difficulties came to stay with him in that cave and it was there David found God by experience. While he was there David wrote Psalms 34,57, 107 and 108. There he learned the secret of finding God's plan. Even in small things David began to know the mind of God through the high priest who had the ephod with the two stones (1 Sam. 23:1-5,12). That privilege was available to all but only a few used to go to the high priest to find God's will. Often that is our condition. It is only when we make many mistakes and fail many times that we say, "O Lord, help me today to find Thy will." We ought to learn this lesson at the beginning.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our living High Priest. Now all of us can find God's will through Him. We have just to kneel down and pray with faith asking God to show us His will. If we remain very close to God's heart, we can easily find God's will even in small things. For instance, when we go for shopping we need not waste our time, and in the end be cheated by the shop-keepers as usually happens. If we would only pray, "Lord, I want to buy such and such things. Please take me to the right shop and do not allow me to waste my time, money and energy", He will undertake everything for us. There will be no need for us to waste time in bargaining and then to feel sorry for the loss we have incurred.

APRIL 15

"Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

To have strong faith in the Word of God and claim His promises is a mighty spiritual weapon. That is how early church prayed (Acts 4:23-31). They lost fear and doubt and prayed with strong faith in the Word of God and the promises which God gave to His people.

We have to hold on to all the precious promises given to us to encourage us. Then we can see God working in our midst according to His faithfulness, fulfilling the promises which are given to us. In Acts 4:23-31 the early believers believed in the greatness of God and claimed the promises which God gave to David (Acts 4:25). They believed that all that had happened was in fulfilment of the promises, and so they prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (v.29). They did not wish their enemies any harm, but wanted the Lord to give them boldness before the people to preach Christ. When people oppose us, we need not think of taking revenge but claim boldness for the message to be given.

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) means pray for every matter with burden not occasionally but always, even for small matters. Before giving the word we can pray, "Now Lord, help me, touch my tongue, throat and lips." In an unconscious way we find our hearts crying to God even for small things.

Another spiritual weapon we find in Acts 12:5. Agonising prayer is a spiritual weapon; not just occasional prayer but travelling in prayer with burden. There are times when we have to pray with agony in our hearts for those who are suffering, through sickness or by any other means. Similarly, we read in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them". They prayed together to find God's perfect will and plan for them for the future ministry. It was a very important matter. They prayed through till God spoke definitely. We must agonise in prayer till we hear the voice of God for our personal matters as well as for ministry.

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25). In their agony, they did not wish their persecutors any harm or wrath of God. They began to sing praises and claimed salvation for those in the prison, including the jailor. They believed God had allowed that suffering in their lives to accomplish the work of salvation in the prison. Instead of praying for the wrath of God to fall upon their enemies they prayed for their salvation.

The devil may use any weapon against us, but the Lord Jesus Christ will defeat all his weapons. We as God's servants have to be extremely sensitive to all the devices of the enemy which he will use in the end days. It is to bring spiritual poverty among God's people and spiritual weakness among God's servants to prevent them from taking their full share in the inheritance of the saints in light. It is only by learning to use our spiritual weapons of warfare effectively that we can defeat the enemy fully.

APRIL 16

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Korah, Dathan and Abiram were leading men among their tribes. They were jealous of Moses and so they murmured against him. They wanted name, fame and power. That is the desire of every man in every country. He longs for authority and power over fellow-men, and so by every possible means he tries to have that. You find such men in the assemblies also. Some believers have a desire to become elders in the church. If they are not given that position they fight for it. Some fight with their tongues, and some with their angry looks. If you give them some authority, they are satisfied. That is human nature. In the days of Moses these three leading men, men of renown, gathered together about 250 princes. They must have

been wise and familiar with the Word of God because they managed to get these princes on their side (Num. 16:2). The princes thought that these three men were more concerned about the welfare of people than Moses and Aaron. So they were deceived and turned on their side. They all organized rebellion against Moses and Aaron; men of God. As a result, they along with all their possessions were swallowed up. (Num. 16:32). Their sin was so great that God's judgment fell upon them immediately. Thus you find that much harm is done in families, among God's servants and churches through jealousy.

Most of our troubles in the family are due to someone's jealousy. Perhaps your brother is against you or your own sister is jealous of you. They wait for an opportunity to do some harm to you. Sometimes, in your office your colleagues become jealous of you, when you get promotion. Even in the ministry, if some servant of God is being used of the Lord, others become jealous of him. They think, "Why is So and So given to much importance" In which way is he better than I?" Thus through jealousy and suspicion, the enemy brings much harm. Jealousy is a great sin and God will judge that sin very severely.

Now those rebels also were saying, "In which way are Moses and Aaron better than we?" Perhaps they were more familiar with the Scriptures, and preached better than even Moses. Perhaps they were more popular and could speak well. So they were proud and thought that they knew more than Moses. That is what many people say even today, "In which way are you better than we? We also read the Bible. We know the Bible very well". They do have much Bible knowledge. They know every statement in the Bible about salvation. You cannot find any fault in their teaching but there is something lacking. Then the rebellious men also said, "Why do you say that you are the only persons whom God has chosen to lead? There are lakhs of people among us, but why only two should lead them? We too will bear the responsibility of leading them." They were fighting for leadership. You find the same thing going on in every country and much more among Christians. They have an ambition to have power, fame, name and leadership in assemblies. Korah and his company were judged very severely. Let us take a warning.

APRIL 17

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

On the third stone in the first row of the breast plate was the name of the tribe of Zebulun and this signifies the spiritual experience that will help us to draw nearer to the Lord. Zebulun means "Dwelling" (Gen. 30:20). My heart and my body must become His dwelling place. My home must become His dwelling place and my church must be His dwelling place. They go together. If we want to build the House of God, first of all our bodies must become the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16,17). Here is very solemn warning. If we want to take our share in the building of the House of God, we must keep our bodies clean and holy, fit to be God's dwelling place. We must keep our life also clean. Then the Holy Spirit can work in us and live in us freely. Otherwise He cannot accept our labours. Every time we defile ourselves by thought, word or deed, we can claim His precious blood for cleansing. Thus we can keep our whole life clean, pure and unspotted for His use.

In the same way our house must be His dwelling place. We read about a house in John Chapter 12. It is an outstanding house, a happy home where the Lord Jesus could live. Although there were many homes in

Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus never stayed overnight there. He went back in the evening either to Bethany or to the mount of Olives. By His continual presence that home became a happy home. There the Lord Jesus Christ had become the living Head, not in word but in actual practice. The presence of Lazarus at the home in Bethany, as we read in John 12, speaks of the power of resurrection. We have to know as a family, how to claim the power of resurrection. The food speaks of the Word of God which we enjoy through fellowship. Martha speaks of joyful and loving service without murmuring and jealousy, and Mary speaks of full devotion, thanksgiving and praise. It is with all these we have a happy home where the Lord Jesus can live.

In the same way we can build the Church of God by recognition of the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of resurrection, by the Word of God given with power and authority, by serving and helping others, and by learning to worship together. It is by all these the Church becomes God's dwelling place. As we take our share in building the dwelling place, we will experience God's presence very near to us.

Every believer has a part or share in the building of the House of God. When our bodies become the temple of God, He will tell us automatically how to serve Him and others. Then the heavenly place is revealed to us for the heavenly Church, in which every believer has a share. We can find out by prayer, what service He requires of us. Pray, "Lord, do You want me to help anybody in need; or comfort anybody in sorrow and discouragement? If so, Lord, give me Your thought and Your message for somebody in weakness and poverty, sickness or discouragement." Thus we can take our share in the building of this dwelling place for God.

APRIL 18

"Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee..." (Isaiah 43:4).

We become to God very precious like the bright, shining, precious stones on the ephod. Take a piece of black coal and put it very deep in the earth. After many centuries, by heat and pressure, the coal will become a diamond. If a piece of black coal becomes a diamond by heat and pressure, how much more can His blood make us a pearl of great price! In the eyes of God we are very precious. Others may call us by other names. Our neighbours and relations may make fun of us by different names and say that we are foolish and stubborn, but the Lord Jesus Christ says that we are His peculiar treasure as we are redeemed by His precious blood (Exo. 19:5; Deut. 14:2). The name Jacob means deceiver but Israel means prince. Before we were born again, we had Jacob's black nature, full of deception. By coming to Him and being transformed we become princes, Israel. The breastplate speaks of those who are purchased by His precious blood. They are very, very precious unto Him. He paid all that He had to purchase them.

In Matt. 13:44-46, we read about a person who is in search of a field. Being a man of experience, he discovers hidden treasure in a field. He sells all that he had to buy that field. His eyes could see that hidden treasure. In a similar way gold was found in a Kolar near Bangalore. For many years it was only a wilderness and a jungle. One day a soldier, who knew something about geology discovered that there was some gold in Kolar. Then he went and bought that land. Similarly the Lord finds some hidden treasure in us. Our fellowmen cannot see it. They can only see our foolishness, our weaknesses and failures. But our Lord

Jesus Christ, being the Creator, could see in us the hidden treasure. He gave all that He had to buy us. He left His throne and His glory. He became a babe and was born in a manger. He emptied Himself completely. Eventually He gave His hands and feet to be pierced. His back to be scourged, His hair to be plucked and face to be spat upon. By His precious blood He purchased us, who are full of sin and corruption, to make us precious stones.

APRIL 19

"No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24).

When we read 2 Chronicles 18, we might think that it is here that the story of Jehoshaphat's downfall begins. However, if we look carefully, we find that the story really begins in chapter 17:13; "he had much business in the cities of Judah". At the first reading, we might overlook this weakness in Jehoshaphat as a small thing; but we must remember, that this small weakness later led to a great downfall. It is true that Jehoshaphat secured much business, became more and more prosperous and amassed great wealth. But the devil made use of his love for money to weaken him. In the same way, Satan will first gain a little entrance into your life and eventually overthrow you completely.

We read in 2 Chronicles 18:1 that Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab. Ahab was one of the worst kings who ever reigned in Israel (1 Kings 16:30-33). It was with such a king that Jehoshaphat entered into an alliance. When people become prosperous, wealthy and well-known, they are tempted to see the friendship of other people who are also well-off in the world. They like to be on friendly terms with every one who is rich or in a high position. Many people love to go to tea-parties, and dinner-parties, not only because of the nice things they can eat, but also because of the prospect of meeting important people there. It gives them a peculiar satisfaction to say to their friends, "I know Mr. So and So (meaning a well know personality); come to me; I will speak to him and get our business problem or your official matter straightened out immediately".

This desire for running after big people of the world is sometimes found even among believers and servants of God. If you are always busy with your children and other people's children, getting them admitted into colleges or getting them married, gradually, your burden for prayer will become less and less. You will adopt more and more worldly ways and methods, and compromise with worldly friends. You will pay less and less attention to God and to His word. Many a servant of God brought in worldly methods even into His service. Such a worldly life will bring great spiritual loss in your life.

APRIL 20

"...every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are the fifth and sixth fundamental principles of salvation (Heb 6:1,2). We must believe that one day we are going to be resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:50-57). Those who do not believe this truth become careless. By resurrection, I believe, that just as my Lord Jesus Christ rose again, He is also coming back for me and when I see Him, I shall be like Him. Those who

do not believe in the resurrection of the dead become worldly. They have no desire to get ready for the Lord's Second Coming.

Sunday by Sunday we take part in the Lord's Table to be prepared for that day. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). Thus we declare that the Lord Jesus Who died for us is coming back again to receive us and give us immortal bodies. By believing in the resurrection of the dead, we are saved from worldly deceptions.

One day we have to stand before God to give an account of our lives upon the earth. "...every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). This means we will have to give an account to God of our words and deeds. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37). If we believe in eternal judgement, we will be very careful with our speech. Our yea should be yea and our nay should be nay. Many times we say things which do not mean. Those who believe in eternal judgement will not waste their money or time or energy. We should be very careful to live a life of watchfulness.

The six fundamental principles mentioned in Heb. 6:1,2 go together; we cannot separate them. If you have repented from dead works, and have faith towards God, if you have testified in the waters of baptism and the laying on of hands, and if you believe in the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement, you will come on a strong foundation and will grow spiritually.

APRIL 21

"...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Now the Lord Jesus Christ has become a quickening Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). He is the head of a new race; a heavenly race; and He has brought us into it. That is why the apostle Paul says, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49). O, what a great mystery! We shall all be like Him. Even the angels will wonder when they see His glorious image in us. "...we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51,52). We shall be raised up with immortal and glorified bodies. The work of salvation will be complete in us on that day, and even the angels will wonder at our glory and beauty. However beautiful you might be, as long as you are upon the earth some blemish or other will be found in you; a broken tooth, or a bald head; but on that day when you will have a glorified body, even the angels will not be able to find any blemish in you. That Lord is going to make you a "New Man".

Imagine that a man walking through a poor locality is somehow attracted by a small hut. He pays the price, and buys it. Being a wealthy man and an experienced engineer he pulls down the old hut and on the same site builds an edifice higher than any building in Bombay. It is beautifully designed and wonderful to see; all the passers by wonder how the dirty little hut was transformed into such a beautiful building. The change that will take place in your body, one day will be more marvellous than that. Our Lord is seeking people from every country and every community, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, so that He may

pour into them His own life and change them into a new race, heavenly and immortal, through whom He can show forth His grace for eternity.

Not knowing God's wonderful plan, men in all parts of the world are trying to become righteous by their own efforts. Such men are just like people who use soap and cream to become beautiful, and yet remain ugly. No human effort can make you holy or righteous. After you have done all, God will still have to say that you are "dead in sins" (Eph 2:5). The Lord had to pay the same price for all by shedding His precious blood. By His death on the cross He has put an end to the old creation. By His resurrection He has begun a new creation. We, who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, are that new creation and in that sense we are called the "New Man".

The Lord says, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). First the work begins in us, and we are given a new heart, a new conscience, a new mind, a new nature, a new wisdom, a new glory, a new beauty, a new strength, a new hunger and thirst, a new calling, and new vocation, new friends, new thoughts and new desires; as you find in 2 Cor. 5:17,18, "... all things are become new. And all things are of God." This work will go on continuously until the earth and the heaven also pass away and creation becomes completely new. Then God's glory will be seen through us. That is why we are called, "One New Man".

APRIL 22

"...endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

The Lord appeared to the disciples at the lake of Tiberias at Galilee, when they had gone fishing. The disciples had toiled all night and had caught nothing. Early in the morning the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them and said, "Children have ye any meat?" They answered Him "No". And he said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find". They obeyed Him immediately, and were not able to pull the net into the boat for the great number of fish. There were 153 large fishes and yet the net was not broken (John 21:11). By this miracle the Lord taught His servants the disciples, the secret of an abundantly fruitful ministry in His service. Many of us go on struggling hard in the Lord's work and yet see no fruit. We depend too much upon our own zeal and wisdom.

But when we learn the secret of finding God's plan for our ordinary activities we find the Lord coming in and making our labours fruitful. By coming into the heavenly plan for our personal, family and church life, we get the power of resurrection. At the same time He taught His disciples that just as the fishes obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ when He commanded them to go into the net without struggling, we have to obey His command and do what He asks and give Him what He demands from us. What an orderly manner these great fishes came into the net without any striving, because they had heard the voice of the Creator. Similarly, in His service we have to keep ourselves under His subjection, free from any spirit of striving or jealousy.

When the disciples came to the shore they saw a fire, and fish upon it, and bread (John 21:9). Thereby the Lord showed them that as they obeyed Him, He made every provision for all their needs. The same applies to us. Fire speaks of the love with which He prepared it to keep them warm. At the same time it speaks of the fullness of the Spirit which we enjoy in His service when we obey Him fully. The fish speak of the souls

who are saved through us, as we obey His commandments, and the bread speaks of the Word of God upon which we have to feed daily to receive extra strength. Then the Lord questioned Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? ...Feed my lambs... Feed my sheep" (John 21:15,16). This shows how our love can be real only when we learn to feed His lambs, and His sheep and shepherd them. It is only by helping others in their need and in bearing the burdens of each other with joy and sacrifice that we bring satisfaction to the loving heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great Chief Shepherd.

APRIL 23

"...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth ..." (Luke 15:7).

The joy of the Lord begins in heaven and not upon the earth, Luke 15:10. The Holy Spirit through God's Word brings strong conviction and real repentance in the heart of a man. When he truly repents of his sins, believes in the Lord Jesus Christ that He died for him on his behalf, there is joy in heaven among all the angels of God. When a sinner repents immediately God calls all the angels to sing with all the heavenly instruments. The same heavenly joy is poured into the heart of this repentant sinner also. So it is a joy from heaven. If it were an earthly joy which comes from the preacher, it would soon fade away. One day some people may raise their hands in a meeting and say that they are born again. The next day over a very trifling matter they will get offended. But the joy which comes into a person from heaven can never fade away.

That is why John the Baptist, as a fore-runner of the Lord Jesus Christ, preached about repentance and said, "Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance". The Lord Jesus preached saying, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Both John the Baptist, and the Lord Jesus Christ preached of being filled with the Holy Ghost. If people repent for their sins it should be from heart and not from the lips. To ensure that the repentance is genuine we must make sure that we repent not because of fear, or what people would think of us, or to keep up a good name. To some people repentance is a very vague thing. They very lightly say "Oh God, if I have done this or I have done that, please forgive me". They have no real conviction and sorrow for their sins. Job had a revelation of God. He had the vision of God's beauty and glory and His mighty power, as he never had before. This made him abhor and hate himself in God's presence.

We read in Luke 5:8 that Simon Peter fell down at Jesus' feet saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord". Our Lord did not need to expose Simon's sins or rebuke him. But Peter himself was greatly convicted when he saw the greatness and mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again in Luke 19:8 we see how Zacchaeus repented very sincerely. Our Lord never had the need to point out to him that he was corrupt in money matters. The very presence of the Lord brought real repentance and change of heart in him and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and If have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold". So we see how joy comes to us from heaven through real repentance, and it is poured into the heart of anyone who truly repents.

APRIL 24

"...Christ, ... is our life..." (Col. 3:4).

The priests who carried the ark remained in the river till all the people had crossed over to the other side. Without a single person being left back all went across. As far as God is concerned He has made sufficient provision for each believer to possess the inheritance. We may hesitate and think that such a great privilege is meant only for people like apostle Paul or other great persons. But in a way God is showing us that those who put their faith in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ can have their share in the inheritance, not by depending upon their own human abilities, but by faith they can surely claim the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves. In Col. 3:9,10, Paul writes about putting off the old man with its deeds and putting on the new man, which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of God. Crossing the river indicates that the people of Israel had to put off old life and were entering into an entirely new life. So we say by faith that the Lord Jesus had put away the old man with sinful nature and also claim by faith the newness of life which He manifested in His rising again from the dead. By that life we can be prepared for receiving the heavenly inheritance.

Just as we need food for physical strength to carry on our daily tasks, we need the life of our Lord Jesus Christ to be able to shoulder our different responsibilities and to overcome various temptations. If we do not eat properly our body will not co-operate with us. Also it is not possible to eat once for all and be strong for a long time. Our bodies are so made that we have to eat two or three times a day. The same is true spiritually also. In order to be strengthened we must take by faith the life of the Lord Jesus. We can tell Him day after day, "Lord, Your life is my life. I want that life for this day's duties and activities". In this way we can be strengthened and can overcome our weaknesses. Otherwise we are bound to fail and remain weak.

APRIL 25

"...we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

The Lord wants us to have a clear glimpse of Himself and of His glory. Most of our troubles are due to this, that we do not see Him or know Him as He is. Whenever we feel discouraged, disappointed and defeated, we can find a sure remedy: turn towards the Lord Jesus Christ and receive a new vision of Him. Christian people throughout the world are conscious of the lack of holiness among themselves. We do not see life and power among God's people. Yet our Lord said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12). Again He said, "...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). We read in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever". These verses in God's Word which are known to almost every Christian, show that our God can never fail. But we have failed, therefore we do not receive His power.

Our Lord knew beforehand every attack the devil would make upon His people. That is why He has given us many words of warning. We should not think that because the enemy is very strong we will be defeated. Our Lord says so plainly. "...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Only by Him and through Him can we get victory. We need a clear glimpse of Him before we can experience the victorious Christian life.

In the Book of Revelation we see how we have to come to the Lord Jesus Christ in order to become more than conquerors. The message of this book is message of complete victory. This victory qualifies us to inherit all things of the new creation, and to recover every loss which we have sustained. We do not like to lose anything, nevertheless, it often happens that we do lose something. We lose by negligence; by theft and by our own forgetfulness. We have a great record of losses. Then imagine somebody comes to you one day and says, "Sir, come with me and see all the things you have ever lost". You follow him, and to your great surprise you find everything there that you have lost, and behold, they have all become new. Now would you not feel very, very happy? You would say, "Praise the Lord! All my lost things have been recovered."

You find the very same message in the Book of Revelation. It tells us how every loss, right from the day that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, may be recovered. Mankind has lost everything because of the curse of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to restore to us all that we have lost. Our Lord will perform wonders. He will take our ruined lives, defiled with sin, and make them perfectly whole.

APRIL 26

"... there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psalm 73:25).

Because we do not see the Lord as He is we live a life of defeat. Our eyes are unsteady looking in two directions; one eye upon the Lord, and one upon the world. Many years ago in Allahabad I saw a Brahmin shopkeeper. He had one part of his shop full of idols and in other part he help the things which he sold such as rice, sugar, etc. If anyone came to buy something he would attend upon him, and then he would return to other side and attend upon those who came to worship the idols. He could do both things cleverly. He knew how to cheat the customers and at the same time he knew how to worship the idols. It is the same with many believers; they have one eye upon the Lord, and other upon something else. That is why they become spiritually blind. When you really want to see Him, your eyes should be only upon Him.

We waste our time looking at persons and things which have no concern with us, and that is why our life is so barren. Even men like John the apostle, could be deceived. Our Lord loved John and He had so much to show him and give him. You find more mysteries in the book of Revelation than in any other. But they were all revealed to John in his old age when he was in prison and very discouraged. Then he saw things that nobody else had seen. Our Lord was able to show him the whole of heaven and the whole of His kingdom. This privilege is for us also. Our Lord Himself said in Matt. 13:17 that these mysteries are now to be revealed to us. Things which eyes have not seen, which ears have not heard, which have not entered into the heart of man, can be revealed to us according to 1 Cor. 2:9-10, provided we have eyes to see and ears to hear. But our point now is this; our eyes have been deceived and drawn away by many other things. What are the things that draw you most? Suppose you go to a bazaar with your wife and child and you pass by various shops; whenever you come to a sweetmeat shop or to the toy. The child has interest only in these things. And when you pass a sari shop your wife says, "Look at that beautiful sari." Thus we are all attracted by the things that we like most. Now can you say that the Lord has given you eyes to see that you may learn to be drawn to Him alone? If not, pray like the Psalmist in Psalm 119:18 "Open thou

mine eyes." Ask the Lord to give you eyes to see; then you will see the beauty and the glory of the Lord Jesus such as you have never seen before. Look unto Jesus, and go on looking unto Him: and let no man or woman or anything else, draw away your attention.

APRIL 27

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

In the tabernacle of the Old Testament there were three parts, as we see in Heb. 9:2-5, first, there was the outer court, where the altar was kept for sacrifices, and laver to wash the feet. Then there was the Holy place where the priests ministered. Thirdly, was the Ark of God in the most Holy place. In the most Holy place behind the veil, and on the Ark was the mercy seat. The priests were not allowed to go there. The sunlight shone in the outer court, and divine light in the most Holy place. There was no door nor window in the holy place but light was always burning in the golden candlestick which was kept there for that purpose. Only the high priest could go behind the veil once a year with the blood of the sacrifice; no other person could go there. Here, God is saying that only the efficacy of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can anyone enjoy His Holy presence. We have to be forgiven of all our sins, washed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ because every sin we commit either by thought, word or deed leaves a mark on our conscience.

By merely confessing our sins to the Lord Jesus Christ and repenting of them we are not made righteous. Every sin we commit either by thought, word or deed leaves a mark on our conscience and these marks or stains cannot be removed by our tears of repentance or offerings. Our conscience reminds us constantly of our past sins. When we go through any difficulty our conscience accuses us that God is punishing us for the sins which we committed in the past. Many people being pricked in their conscience weep, fast and give charity. Some go on pilgrimage, thinking that by doing these things the marks on their conscience will go away. Because of their guilty conscience they are troubled and have no peace. Many people are troubled at the time of their death because of their sins and start weeping, pleading with others to do something to help them get mental relief. No human effort can bring real peace to our conscience. The stains of our guilty conscience are washed away only by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus, as we read in Heb. 9:12. The Lord Himself entered into the Holy place with His blood. According to the prophecy in Psalm 16:10, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ did not see corruption. He is perfectly holy. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Now His blood is there in heaven, and it has everlasting life. From there it is sprinkled into the heart of the repentant sinner. By the blood all our guilty stains are washed away.

APRIL 28

"...the glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17:22).

The apostle speaks of the world to come or the New Creation in Hebrews 2:5. That New Creation will show forth God's glory for eternity. In that New Creation there is no more death, neither pain nor tears (Rev. 21:3-5). It will be free from the curse of sin and will last for ever. We are told that this New Creation will not be governed by the angels (Heb. 2:5), even though they are mighty angels, always doing God's will

and pleasure. But it will be governed by those who are sought and saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Psalm 103:20 it says that the angels excel in strength, do His commandments and constantly hear God's voice. They do not rebel or disobey. They are mighty and shining (Luke 24:4), and are many in number (Rev. 5:11) and yet the Scripture says, the coming New Creation filled with God's glory, will not be governed by the angels. In chapter one of Hebrews we see that the angels will be made our ministering spirits. Imagine the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will gather all the angels to tell something of the glory of the coming New Creation. When they are told of the glory of the coming Creation they will be filled with wonder. After telling the angels about the glory of the coming New Creation, the Lord will also reveal to them that it will not be governed by them, but by man who is sought and saved by His grace. According to Jude verse 24, one day we shall be presented faultless before God. Then we shall be more glorious than even the angels. The Lord emptied Himself and purchased us with His precious blood to give us such a high calling and position.

If the Lord had desire, He could have come into the world like an angel. But for a special purpose He became like one of us (Heb. 2:16, 17). For forty days He allowed Satan to bring before Him all temptations which can possibly come to any human being (Luke 4:1,2). For our sake He conquered all those temptations. So He knows exactly what kind of temptation we are facing. Whenever we have any weakness or temptation, the Lord helps us to overcome. We are being transformed day by day into His likeness by His grace, love and precious blood. And one day we shall see Him, and be like Him and be partakers of His glory and beauty. With that glory, we shall govern the New Creation. Now our earthly trials, temptations and afflictions prepare us for the New Creation. What a high purpose our Lord has in saving us even though we are so foolish! There are some wealthy parents who have high purposes for their children. They want them to occupy high positions in life; but if you ask his small child what he wants to be when he is grown up, he says that he wants to become a policeman! If you ask him the reason, he will say, "I can stop all the traffic". As children they cannot understand their father's great purpose for their lives. We also sometimes cannot understand our Heavenly Father's great purpose for our lives. Many believers live as beggars upon the earth and live a life of defeat and shame, because they cannot understand God's great purpose in saving them. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" What a great loss we incur if we are careless and negligent about our salvation! We have to be watchful, prayerful, diligent and careful.

APRIL 29

"...there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall" (Nehemiah 4:10).

Nehemiah saw that because the walls were burnt, there was much rubbish lying here and there. So to have a strong wall built they had to remove all the rubbish first. This rubbish speaks of man-made customs, traditions and practices. If we want God's work to be strong we must remove all such rubbish (Mark 7:1-13).

In many places we have seen people ignoring God's Word and clinging to man-made customs, rituals and practices, which they have received from their forefather and not from the Word of God.

God calls from His people some to be pastors and some to be evangelists and some others to be preachers and so on. When He calls them He also appoints them and prepares them. We have seen in some assemblies how those who were ambitious for position in the Church brought so much rubbish in the form of divisions, parties and strife. Unless this rubbish is removed God's work cannot be established according to the Word of God and fulfilment of His heavenly plan.

When the work of the Lord increases we cannot come together for fellowship as often as we would like to. This brings weakness in the assembly. This weakness gives room for the rubbish of indifference towards each other. To overcome this difficulty we need to make an extra effort to come together for fellowship. The Holy Convocation gatherings and special meetings are arranged from time to time to help us to come together for fellowship and thus overcome the difficulty of times of separation.

APRIL 30

"...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 5:5).

Those who are getting married must ask the Lord to pour into their hearts divine, pure and spiritual love for each other, which does not depend upon physical attraction, earthly possessions and worldly qualifications. Such a love must be inward experience and it is a gift of God. In Eph. 5:25 the Lord says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it". This exhortation is repeated in verses 28 and 33. How did the Lord love us? We had no fortune and no qualification; we had grieved Him and wounded Him, yet He loved each one of us, and gave His body to be broken for us. He loved us so much because He is our Creator. Even though we did nothing for Him, He died for us. Such a divine love is necessary between husband and wife. They should pray by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ, we are joined by for each other". Furniture, motor car, jewels, degrees, and other possessions will not make a happy home. It is God's love that will make their home happy. From the beginning of their married life they should ask the Lord for such a love. The Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. 7:7). First of all His life must flow into them. Then the pure heavenly love will make them both true partners, friends, co-workers and companions. Such a love will increase in trials, hardships and sufferings, and will draw them both together to a most intimate relationship.

MAY 1

"... lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

In Esther 2:7 we find that Esther's first name was Hadassah. The name Hadassah means an ordinary myrtle tree. Esther means, "bright shining star". When she came to Babylon, in the beginning hardly anyone knew her. She came as a captive, or a slave, as an orphan girl, without any prominence. But because of her virtues, she became a bright shining star and her name was changed from Hadassah to Esther, as one who had received new life.

Here lies the divine secret of a happy home. The light of God must shine in the hearts of those who are going to be joined together. Many people are governed by faces. The outward appearance is no proof of inward beauty. The light of God shining within gives true beauty. That is why, as far as possible, those who

are going to be joined together, should make sure the light of God has come to shine in them. Then we are sure that they will enjoy God's favour. Then they can also enjoy God's presence with them.

What an honour we have in having the loving and living God with us! How much we lose by not knowing the secret of God's presence. God's Word says in Psa. 16:11, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore". It is only in the presence of God that one can have full and true joy. Without that consciousness of God's presence you cannot have true joy. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to live in those who are born again. That is why He rose again. It was prophesied that He would die and rise again. The living God, the Holy God, the loving God, the mighty God comes to live in us and among us. That experience will give you victory over every trial.

Those who want to be indwelt by God, must have their sins forgiven and their hearts cleansed. That is why the Lord shed His blood and died. The living and the Holy God is willing to live in us. How can we know? We can feel the presence of God always. In sickness or health, in poverty or prosperity, in the midst of enemies or friends, far away from home, or right inside the home, in young age or old age, in war or famine, earthquake or scarcity, you will enjoy His presence. It is such an experience that gives happiness to the children of God. The great God, the mighty God, comes to live in us. To have a happy home, be content. Do not murmur or complain, but prove God in every situation. Enjoy His presence at all times. God's Word says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee".

MAY 2

"...as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation" (2 Corinthians 1:7).

As soon as we begin to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and confess Him as our Lord and Saviour boldly before all men, we are bound to be despised and hated by those who do not want to follow the Word of God in all their ways. We are reminded in 2 Tim. 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The Lord Jesus Christ warned us in Matt. 10:24,25, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" In John 15:18-21 we are being taught by the Lord that before the world hated us, it hated Him and if we were of the world, the world would love us but because we have been chosen from the world, the world hates us.

We read in Psalm 123:3-4 how for the Lord's sake we will be hated and despised even by our friends and people whom we respect greatly. By keeping our eyes upon the Lord as written in Psalm 123:2, "...as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress," we can come out fully victorious in all these situations. For His Name's sake we must regard our sufferings and shame as privilege, as we see in Acts 5:41, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Our joy becomes greater when we learn to suffer shame for His Name's sake.

In Psalm 124:1-3 we read how the Psalmist was attacked by all kinds of enemies. The same thing happens to us also. For a short time we are protected from all the enemy attacks but after a while the Lord does permit all kinds of painful trials and we feel as if everything is going wrong. For a period God takes us through a very dark valley. When we find ourselves going through such dark valleys we feel very lonely and forsaken. As we trust in the Lord, He brings us out victoriously from all such trials.

MAY 3

"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).

Jacob was full of fear, and he sent the messengers with many presents for his brother Esau, to appease him of his anger, in case he still had any (Gen. 32:3,18). He instructed his servants to address Esau as "my lord". There is a saying in Hindi that when people are in trouble they will address even a donkey as "father"! Even to an ordinary constable some people say "yes sir", "no sir". This they do, not from their hearts, but only to escape from their trouble. In other ways also we can see that Jacob was not depending upon God's promises and God's angels for safety. He was still scheming. He divided his flock into two bands (vs. 7, 8), and his plan was, in case Esau still showed anger against Jacob and attacked the first band, he could take warning and escape with the other. In spite of all his scheming, Jacob could not get peace of mind. At last he began to pray and this was his prayer, "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children" (v. 11). It is the same with many of us when we get into trouble we cry very fervently to God, with tears and with agony. Otherwise we have no time even to think of Him.

Then Jacob sent away the whole company and remained alone by the brook Jabbok. As he prayed, there God met him again for the third time and said to him, "Do not behave like a slave. Do not be afraid. You are my prince."

MAY 4

"Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day" (Psalm 25:5).

When we read the Word of God, we can pray as it is written in Psalm 119:18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." That is how we receive divine light. Let us say, "O Lord, open my eyes and pour into me the divine life. Let me see from Thy Word the hidden mysteries, and show me Thy path for today and tomorrow." It is only by reading the Word of God that divine light comes into our heart and we can hear the voice of God clearly.

Elijah the man of God was God's prophet. When he prayed, fire came down (1 Kings 18:38). When he prayed for three and a half years the rain was withheld. Again he prayed and the rain came down. The very same prophet was found under the juniper tree and he was saying, "It is enough; now. O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4). He was discouraged. What was the reason? He did not know the mind of God. God took him to a high mountain; there he heard a still small

voice. Then he understood what God would do and how He would judge Jezebel and others. In this way he was delivered from fears and doubts and began to see God's will clearly. It is by hearing the voice of God, we become God's co-workers and God's partners in building God's House. We have to make it a daily practice to call upon God and hear His voice. First of all, we have to make sure that we are born again. Secondly, we have to be certain of His presence, remembering that any kind of sin will rob us of this privilege. As Elijah became discouraged we may also become like him. We must keep our hearts clean and we must be free from greed, enmity and defilement. By daily practice we can hear God's voice and for every problem of any kind we can go to Him.

We must wait patiently in the presence of the Lord to hear His voice. King David knew how to hear the voice of God. But later on, he became very impatient. Without consulting and hearing God's voice, he went and joined the Philistine against Saul (1 Sam. 29). When he and his followers came to Ziklag, they found that their houses were burnt and their women were taken captive. David repented and sought the Lord, who spoke to him and promised recovery. David obeyed and recovered all because he enquired from the Lord with the help of Urim and Thummim.

God will not force us to do His will. We have to go to Him concerning marriage, or business or job or any other activity to know His will. But sad to say, very few believers exercise their privilege of consulting God because they will not wait patiently. The result is unhappiness and failure. They become spiritually deaf and blind. It is by coming back to God we recover everything. Therefore let us pray, "Lord, be thou my Urim and Thummim. Help me to hear Thy voice.

MAY 5

"... pray one for another" (James 5:16).

The word high priest is repeated again and again in the epistle to the Hebrews. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only our Saviour but also our intercessor and our High Priest. Those who have to go to court engage an advocate because they do not know how to present their case. These advocates know all the laws and claim justice for them. The Lord Jesus Christ as our High Priest is willing to plead for us in heaven. Because He knows our weaknesses, limitations and failures. He pleads for us. He does not cover our sins that we may be forgiven and restored, but as an advocate He pleads, saying, "Father, forgive So and So. In the weakness of his flesh he has fallen into sin. Someone had deceived him and he has fallen. Father, forgive him. He is sorry for his sin. I have bought him with My precious blood. I will deliver him and help him in future". Some parents plead in the court saying, "From now onwards we will look after our son carefully. He is too young and fell into bad company. We too have been careless so far". The Lord Jesus Christ pleads for us and afterwards helps us to become overcomers. He gives us extra strength for our temptations. We as His co-workers have to learn, to intercede for those who fall into sin. Rather than condemning them we ought to plead for them and travail for them. These days we find only few who know how to intercede. Many are clever in spreading stories. They think, they must go about telling stories. So they go to people saying, "Don't you know, what happened in such and such a place? They are talking about it all over". They go on adding some salt and pepper to make it very interesting. They go from door to door; that is their business. As believers, we have to intercede for others. The devil is far too strong for all of us. No

one can say, "I will never fall" because the devil is very clever. For a small thing he can deceive us. Sometimes people put their feet unawares on a piece of soap in their bathroom and they fall down and fracture their legs. It is due to a small negligence. That is how the devil makes us to fall into some small temptation and commit sin.

We are told in Gal. 6:1-2, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ". As co-workers with the Lord Jesus Christ we must intercede for others. The Lord Jesus Christ is our heavenly King, but in Rev. 1:13 we see Him as our Advocate and High Priest. In John 13:4,5 we read that the Lord girded Himself with a towel, to wash His disciples' feet. Thus He reminded them that though they were disciples, they needed their feet to be washed. Our Lord warns us that in this wicked world, we are bound to be defiled by hearing and seeing. Just as we wash our hands many times a day, the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to wash us constantly from all our defilement. As our everlasting High Priest He is girded with a golden girdle and is willing to intercede and pray for us. We as His co-workers should do the same ministry.

MAY 6

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12).

The angel said to Joseph, "... fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20). In other words, "Don't be afraid to bear the reproach for a while. You are given the privilege of being reproached. Don't take any notice of what will come upon you and your wife. God will defend you and bear your reproach". It is very hard to imagine what kind of reproach Mary and Joseph had to bear when the Child was conceived, because at that time no one knew the truth except Mary and Joseph. Afterwards God revealed it to Elizabeth and she also knew. And so they had to bear the reproach. If you want to enjoy your salvation, do not be afraid of the reproaches that will come upon you. If you want to be a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ you have to bear reproach. You may live a life of ungodliness and sin, and you find that your relations, neighbours and, friends will not bother about you. But when you follow God's Word even your most intimate friends and relations will start reproaching you. The more you obey God, the more you will have to bear reproaches. No one can escape that. That is the divine law. We must be reproached.

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matt. 10:24-25, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" The Master of the house went about doing good (Acts 10:38) yet they called Him Beelzebub. In fact, they called Him by many other names too. So the Lord Jesus Christ said, "If they have called Me by that name how are you going to escape?" People who were healed by the Lord called Him by many bad names. But He bore it all. We too must be prepared for reproaches through friends, relations and neighbours.

If you want other people to be blessed by you do not murmur or complain when you are reproached. It does not matter how watchful and careful you are, you will be reproached. You may say, "I have not done anything wrong, why am I being reproached? When I do not harm anyone why do people speak against

me?" Did the Lord Jesus Christ do any harm to anyone? As a matter of fact, He only did good to others. Yet He was reproached. Yet He was reviled. People will speak many unkind things about us (See 1 Peter 4:12-14; John 15:21). But it happened to all the prophets and it happened to the Lord also. We ought to rejoice that we are partakers of the Lord's sufferings. If God wanted, He could have hid Mary and Joseph, but He left them where they were, and allowed them to bear the reproaches. We too have to bear the reproaches. You cannot escape.

If you want to be partakers of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have to rejoice in your reproaches. You may say, "If others reproach me I do not mind, but if believers do so how to bear it?" Whether they are strangers or believers, they are led by the devil. And we are going to be reproached more and more, as we obey the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord said, "Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt 5:12). We have to be glad because the Spirit of glory will rest upon us. (1 Peter 4:14). All God's servants and prophets suffered much. Do not be afraid of bearing reproaches. A time will come when people will understand.

MAY 7

"... Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments" (Genesis 35:2).

"Bethel" means "the House of God". But to Jacob it was merely a place, and nothing more. No doubt, Jacob had great respect for this place, because God had appeared to him there, when he was fleeing from home and from his brother Esau. At Bethel he had seen heaven opened and God spoke to him yet at that time Jacob never understood the real meaning of God's House, and to him Bethel was merely a place of sentimental value.

Many people today regard the House of God in the same way, and they are more attached to the place itself than they are to God. They do not know what God's House is. They might have built nice buildings in the Name of Christ; they may be taking part regularly in Christian worship services; yet it is possible that they may not be in the full enjoyment of the blessings of God's House. Like Jacob they need to come back to Bethel, so that God may speak to them and reveal to them His plans and purposes!

Before Jacob started for Bethel he began to search his own heart and set right all his household (Gen 35:2). He became strong in his determination and commanded his household to put away defiling things and get ready to go with him to Bethel. He also commanded his household to change their garments. In the Bible garments stand for habits. Very often one's character is revealed by the kind of garments one wears, and their colour and the number of times one changes them. It is very sad to see how even good believers are attracted and deceived by the glamour of worldly clothes and worldly ways of living. Gradually they form habits and associations which bring darkness in their minds and lives. Just as Jacob cleansed his household we also need to put away all worldly practices and friendships and become holy even in our conversation. We are told, that Jacob buried the strange gods and other defiling articles under the oak tree in Shechem. In the same way all our old habits and ways should be buried by our union with Christ in His death and burial. Only after Jacob had buried the offending and defiling articles under the oak tree he was able to return to Bethel. Then he began to understand fully why God had changed his

name from Jacob to Israel, and why God had asked him to go to Bethel. On a previous occasion God had spoken to him in clear words. Now after many years, God was repeating the same message in much stronger language, and Jacob was able to comprehend its meaning. In the same way, it is possible for us also to use words without understanding their meaning fully. Many people are familiar with words like "Church" and "House of God", they do not live in the truth of the words they express. So please make sure that you are not merely repeating words and phrases, but living in the value of spiritual realities. Can you truly say that you have become a part of Bethel that is God's House? or is there, perhaps, some strange god in your life which is hindering your spiritual growth?

MAY 8

"... Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1).

One day a senior officer came to me in Punjab. He said to me, "I want you to ask forgiveness on my behalf to my Punjabi sweeper". He was a military officer, an Englishman. So I called the sweeper and said, "Your Sahib had told me to ask your forgiveness on his behalf, because this morning he got angry with you". The sweeper said, "I am his servant, he can kick me if he wants; he has every right". But the officer said, "No, I am a Christian. I have no right to hurt your feelings. Kindly forgive me". I met the same sweeper at Amritsar a few years later. I asked him if he was born again and with a shining face he replied that he was born again, and he said, "When my master asked forgiveness from me, I was astonished because I have never heard such a thing; a white man asking forgiveness!" The words of the officer touched the heart of the sweeper and he knew what it was to be a Christian. When you wrong anyone by word or deed, please ask forgiveness, whether it is your wife or children or friends. Then you can enjoy God's presence. In my school days, there was a Christian boy, who borrowed one rupee from me. I forgot entirely about it. One day I received a money order for one rupee with these words, "You might have forgotten about it, and so did I; But the Lord reminded me. My conscience troubled me. So I am sending you this rupee." Because he was my school-fellow I had given it joyfully. It is only when we are free from even such small failures, that we can enjoy His fellowship.

When you are in debt, you find it difficult to pray freely. Any little sin will take away your joy. You have to put things right, then you can enjoy the presence of God. When there is nothing between you and your Lord, then you have appetite for God's Word, prayer and fellowship of God's people. You can enjoy God's Word and hear God's voice. So we can say, "Lord Jesus Christ, You may come at anytime, I have nothing to be ashamed of. " "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28). Keep your conscience clear and your heart pure. Then you can meet Him joyfully and not be ashamed.

MAY 9

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

Every believing husband and wife must endeavour as far as possible to show love to all in need and render service to others joyfully, regarding it as a great privilege. Whatever they do, they should do it as unto the Lord according to Col. 3:23.

When the Lord Jesus Christ and Lazarus had food together Martha served joyfully. In Luke 10:40, we find that she was full of murmuring, complaints, anger and jealousy. But afterwards she was changed. Some husbands talk about their wives like this, "My wife is very hardworking, clean, clever and very active, but she has a very bad temper. When she gets angry everyone in the house trembles". For a happy married life, both the husband and the wife should serve others joyfully, cheerfully and willingly. Their hearts must be free from jealousy, hatred, anger and murmuring. A Christian home is a home of service for poor, needy and sick people. It is a home of love, where all are served equally.

Like Mary, they must be grateful to the Lord for His grace and compassion. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:3). Mary anointed the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ by pouring the precious ointment for two reasons. Her heart was full of gratitude, because her brother who was in the grave for four days was raised from the dead. Secondly, she recognised that the Lord Jesus Christ was not just an ordinary person, but God Himself Who became Man for the salvation of mankind. So with a heart full of devotion, she poured the ointment upon His feet. For a happy home, the couple must have devotion for the Lord and must praise, honour and worship Him. They should begin their day by singing worship songs and also end their day in the same way, with a true and humble devotion to the Lord for His grace, compassion, love and faithfulness. Their faith will be strengthened and they will be enabled to love the Lord more and more. They should also take full share in the worship meetings. Such a home is a foretaste of heaven upon the earth.

MAY 10

"... All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exodus 24:7).

God tempted Abraham, i.e. He proved or tested him (Gen. 22:1). If you want to enjoy the friendship of God, then be prepared to be proved and tried by God's own testings. When a watch maker wants to use a piece of steel for a watch spring, he has to put the steel through many tests before using it. In the same way God, Who only knows our real ministry on earth has to apply every kind of test in our lives that we may be found fit and worthy. We as believers should never question or doubt God, demanding of Him as to why this or that has happened in my life. Believe me, every test, however severe, is very necessary to one who desires to be a friend of God. Some of the tests are very painful, and the enemy will try to suggest that you are being punished by God for your failure in the past. If, however, you have understood God's purpose, then remember you are forgiven completely. When you confess your sins and put things right with God and man, your sins are forgiven, covered and washed. His grace will never dig them up again. Your part is to be faithful and sincere in your repentance and confession, and obey God, putting all things right with our fellow-men. Afterwards let God try and prove you by any test. The saints of God, all down the world's history, have been proved in different ways, and were found faithful. We read that, when God called Abraham on Mount Moriah, he said, "Behold here I am!" He could not have said that so quickly at the beginning, but he had been prepared by God for many years, till his ears had become sensitive to the voice of God. God spoke and he heard and responded immediately. He did not say "Lord, give me five or ten minutes!" So many people hear God speaking in meeting or in their quiet time or in prayer time, but they answer, "God! Please give me ten minutes. I will consult my darling wife and give you a definite reply.

She is very good wife and the best woman in the whole world. Please God, just wait for a few minutes and I will ask her permission and then come." In a subtle way the devil has deceived many God's servants, and many teachers and believers. They bring some man, some woman, some relation between God and themselves. But the answer of Abraham is: "Behold, here I am", which means, "Oh God! I am fully ready and prepared. You tell me and I will do it." If you are not clear as to God's voice, then wait. Because in some case it takes a month or two months or more to know God's will. But when God has spoken and God has commanded, you must say at once "Behold, here am I".

MAY 11

"... be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

We must learn how to become truly humble. Our Lord gave His disciples, and us, an example when He laid aside His garments and took water and a towel and washed His disciples' feet. He taught them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Without meekness and humility we cannot grow spiritually. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased" (Matthew 23:12). See also 1 Peter 5:5,6, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

True humility is a great virtue. We are all liable to become proud at times, sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. Pride is a great hindrance to our spiritual growth. We can even become proud of our Bible knowledge or the service we are rendering to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our example and enablement. It is by receiving His humility that we can learn to serve Him. This humility cannot come by our human effort. We must become true yoke-fellows with our Lord Jesus. That is the meaning of taking His yoke upon us. You have seen a yoke upon a pair of bullocks. These two bullocks have to work together. The yoke speaks of partnership. You must be willing to work with the Lord Jesus Christ as a partner, and only in this way can you become lowly.

Many of us take years to become humble. Somehow or the other we become proud and therefore dislike some people, and perhaps hate them. Even the apostle Paul was in danger of becoming puffed up, so the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh. David also was in a similar danger. He tried to bring the Ark of God in a bullock cart contrary to God's ordained order. Another time he tried to number the mighty men of Israel against the will of God. That is why God brought David twice to the experience of the threshing floor. Thus the Lord removed the chaff from his life. The Lord deals with us also in the same way to remove from us the chaff of pride and make us truly humble. After that only, can He exalt us and manifest His power through us.

MAY 12

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

It is remarkable how the Lord prophesied here concerning His own death upon the cross. Many people think that perhaps through supernatural signs and wonders people can be easily drawn to the Lord. Others think that clever and convincing arguments can accomplish it. But the Word of God is clear; it is only by the power of the cross and not by human methods that men can be drawn to Christ.

Our "self" is the main hindrance to our spiritual life, and we can be set free from the self only by the work of the cross. So Paul says in Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world". The world attracts all of us far too much and we are deceived. We may be free from the love of worldly pleasures and yet be very worldly-minded in our dealing, and influenced by worldly wisdom in our activities, and as a result we may bring much loss in the work of God. By the work of the cross in our lives we will be saved from the deceptions of the devil, and as people see the work of the cross in us, they also will be drawn to the Lord.

Many years ago a Muslim gentleman came to me. He wanted to become a Christian. I asked him how he got this desire. He told me that once he had been visiting a friend. At that time a sweeper, who happened to be a Christian, was sweeping the verandah outside the house. He had placed his basket outside. A Hindu man passed by, and by accident his garment touched the basket. He became very angry and actually removed his shoe and began to beat the poor sweeper shouting, "How dare you defile my body!" The sweeper meekly received the blows and never said a word. The Muslim man had been watching everything and approaching the sweeper remarked, "It was not your fault. You have only been doing your duty to sweep the floor. The man had no right to beat you". The man replied, "I am a Christian. My Lord Jesus Christ suffered much more than this for my sake. They spat upon His face, beat Him and nailed Him to the cross. But He never took revenge." This answer had touched the heart of the Muslim and that is why he now wanted to become a Christian. Thus you see he was not convicted through any argument but because he was impressed by the life of the sweeper in whom the cross had done its work. When the cross has worked in us we will be completely freed from the inward works of the flesh, and the power of God will be revealed through us.

MAY 13

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 13).

We read in Acts 8:14-17 how Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritan believers. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." In the normal course the Samaritans should have received the Holy Ghost when they believed. But in this particular case, for a purpose, the Lord withheld the Holy Ghost, who was given afterwards with the laying on of hands.

We read in John 4:9 that the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Now the very same Samaritans had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Lord had given them the Holy Spirit at their new birth the Jews would have said that what they received on the day of Pentecost was something better than what the

Samaritans received. That is why God sent Peter and John to Samaria so that they could see for themselves how the very same gift, which the Jews received on the day of Pentecost was also given to the Samaritans. Then Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritans to acknowledge that they were equal and that they were brothers. Before that, they were divided. They laid hands upon them to show spiritual equality and oneness. To express this truth that we all are one, we have the testimony of the laying on of hands. We declare that there is no difference between the rich and the poor, high and low, literate and illiterate. We all are one. "There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). We may come from any family, any country, or any walk of life when we are born again, we become equally precious, equally necessary and equally important to God. We express this truth by the laying on of hands.

MAY 14

"Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul" (Psa. 124:4,5).

The troubles that came to David were like floods. Floods often come suddenly when people are not at all prepared to face them. For several years there may not have been any flood; then one year they come suddenly and they bring much damage to lives, cattle and crops. In our lives also there are occasions when the enemy comes upon us like a flood, from most unexpected sources or at an unexpected time of life. The devil can work against us through friends or relations. Those whom we love, respect and admire sometimes rise up against us. It is good to be warned beforehand that such situations are possible. At such times we have a promise from the Lord in Psalm 124:2 that He will give us victory. "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us." Notice the words, "The LORD was on our side." Even though we try our best to get help from other sources we find that they all fail. In the end the Lord alone comes to our aid. Paul says in 2 Tim. 4:16, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me". But he continues in the next verse. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear : and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Thus he was able to preach the Gospel boldly in the midst of his enemies. When the enemy saw that there was no one with Paul and yet he preached boldly he was defeated. So God allows us to be forsaken and left alone without help from friends, relations or others. But He helps us in that situation so that His name may be magnified through us.

For the same purpose David had to go through much persecution from king Saul for eight years. At the end he was able to say in Psalm 18:17, "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me". Not a single friend came to his help. Saul was after his life and attempted to kill him thrice. His own people did not give him any protection. He could find no shelter in the House of God. Strangers were afraid of him. Eventually he hid himself in a cave called Adullam. It was there that the Lord became very close and precious to him. He stayed in that cave for many days. He had to pray and depend upon God for everything : for food, protection and shelter. Those four hundred men who came to be his companions were also men who were in trouble and debt (1 Sam. 22: 1,2). Not a single person was able to help him in all his difficulties and troubles. Yet the Lord helped them.

Thus we find through all our troubles, afflictions and trials we are drawn very close to Him. We can prove His faithfulness in all our afflictions when there is no one to help us. In Psalm 66:10-12, we read that David was taken to a large wealthy place. So in order to bring us to large wealthy place spiritually, He will take us through refining fires and painful trials.

MAY 15

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts" (Psalm 139:23).

Our life is in the blood. As soon as the heart stops beating, man dies and the body starts stinking that very second and that is why the body has to be buried or burnt. Similarly we have to be conscious of divine life flowing into us constantly, not occasionally (Col. 3:4). When we feel the pulse, we know that life is still present whether the person is walking, sitting or lying down and that the heart is beating and the person is alive. There is some consciousness of life. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ flowing into us constantly and freely keeps us alive. Any pride, hatred or other sin can stop or lessen the flow.

Sometimes in our taps water does not flow freely but only a few drops come through. When the pipe line is opened, and dirt is removed, again there is a full flow. How is the divine life flowing in you? It is just in drops or is it full and free? God wants us to have abundant life. He wants to give us everything in abundance - abundant life, abundance of peace, abundance of power and He wants to make us abundantly fruitful. Whenever we are conscious that the flow had decreased, that peace, joy and strength are becoming less, we must search our hearts, examine ourselves, humble ourselves and say, "Lord, why have my peace become less? Why is it that I do not feel Thy presence so strongly? I do not have the same strength for my temptations, nor the same hunger for God's Word, nor the same burden for prayer." There is some blockage somewhere and that must be removed. Then we can affirm, "Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness and I lay hold on Thee." Do not depend upon your will power. Go on claiming His life. Say before going out any where, "Now, Lord, I commit myself unto Thee." Generally, we do so for a long journey but we do not pray for short journeys and not even at the end of journey. That is our nature. We only pray for big things and thus we are deceived by the enemy. We become careless and negligent, and lose our peace and joy. It is the daily appropriation of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, that gives us the fulness.

MAY 16

"Now the God of peace ... Make you perfect in every good work to do his will" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

If you divide this verse into seven parts, you have seven evidences of the proofs of God's will: (1) The God of peace: Whenever God speaks to you concerning any matter and shows His will, there must be in your spirit an increasing, multiplying, perfect and a great peace. I find the early morning devotion time is the best time to pray, ---when the morning is fresh and clear. "Now Lord, I am prepared to die to my will. I resign myself to Thy will. Show me Thy will, and I will obey Thee, and do so joyfully." Then wait, and read His Word till you find your soul full of divine peace.

(2) That brought again from the dead: This is the power of His resurrection. When you are in God's will, the power should be abundantly and fully manifested in and through you. You have to say by faith, "Don't allow me to make any plan which will lessen Thy power in my life."

(3) Our Lord Jesus Christ: His Lordship must be acknowledged. If you are in God's will, He will supply all your need (Phil. 4:19). Come under His Lordship. He will take away every sorrow and every anxiety.

(4) That great Shepherd of sheep: The Bible is the pasture. The Lord Jesus is the Shepherd. Psalm 23:1, 2. He will lead you to the portion of the Scriptures which confirms His will. For that purpose you have to be systematic in your Bible study. Read it slowly and carefully.

(5) The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant: Our guilty conscience is cleansed by the blood (Heb. 9:14). When you are in God's will He will cleanse you from every unworthy motive. Our hearts are deceptive. Sometimes in the heart there is greed for money, or love for power, or lustful desires, or hatred or enmity. To do God's will, you must be freed from all defiling things by His blood. So say by faith, "Lord, take away from my heart every unworthy and unhealthy thought, which is against Thy nature and character."

(6) Make you perfect in every good work to do His will: Be governed completely by God's will. You have got to be controlled in every matter, not only in one thing but in all things. Refuse to take any step without being sure of God's will, and that will make you perfect in every good work, for He will work "in you that which is well pleasing in his sight".

(7) Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever and ever: That is our seventh evidence of God's will. His Name should be highly magnified through the matter for which we seek God's will. Can you say from the heart, "I want Thy name to be magnified in this matter?"

You must learn to apply these seven tests day by day. Then your ear will become very sensitive. It is a wonderful experience to hear the voice of God day by day, saying. "This is the way, walk ye in it. Do not go to the right side or the left". You will be conscious of God's hand holding your hand, and carrying you triumphantly through every suffering and trial. "...as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

MAY 17

"... he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ..." (Isaiah 61:10).

The long beautiful white robe put on Aaron speaks of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we receive by faith (Rom.1:17;10:3-10;2 Cor.5:21). It is by faith we are made righteous. We should ask the Lord, "Oh God, it does not matter what I do, or what I like or what I suffer or where I go, but make me righteous by faith." It is not by tears, fasting, prayer, sufferings or by our own efforts we become righteous. It is only by believing from the heart that the Lord Jesus Christ our Creator and our Saviour took our place on the Cross. He died in our stead, for He did no sin and knew no sin. Willingly He emptied Himself and died in our stead. By that faith we become righteous and not by ourselves nor by any effort of any kind on our part. That our nakedness of sin could not be covered by ourselves is the first message shown in the

long white robe. Our friends, relations and other people and our charity cannot cover our sin. But the Lord Jesus Christ by His life and through grace covers our nakedness because He died for us.

Many of us take pride in ourselves. We say in our hearts sometimes, "I am not like so and so, I am not as weak as he is, nor so foolish." But later on we discover that all of us do many foolish things. We do many wrong things and often fall into temptations. The very second we depend upon our own will power and our ability, we fall. We speak a word in foolishness and suffer afterwards. God is showing that we are weak and foolish. But by faith we have to say, "Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness. I am not depending upon my own righteousness, prayers, books, garments nor upon my own personality." Thank Him for becoming your righteousness. Then, day by day we have to appropriate the very same righteousness.

MAY 18

"... we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

In Exodus 17:15 the Lord revealed Himself to Moses by the name "Jehovah-Nissi". When any conqueror wins a battle, the first thing he does is to plant his flag or banner over the conquered land, as sign of his conquest. In Exodus 17 the children of Israel had just won a battle. They won it through a twofold strategy- through men who fought in the battlefield under Joshua's leadership and through Moses standing on the hill with the rod of God held up in his hands. The rod in Moses' hands speaks of the authority of God. Moses had no strength in himself. When he had cast down the rod on the ground, and it became a serpent, Moses himself ran away from it (Exo. 4:3). There was no doubt that Moses by himself was without power; whatever he had accomplished since that time was only by the strength of the Lord. The rod in Moses' hands as he stood on the mount, signified the authority of God. The men with Joshua were chosen men. They were strong and valiant. In spite of this, whenever Moses' hands were let down they were defeated. It is therefore clear that the victory depended mainly on Moses lifting up his hands with the rod of God.

We also have to fight with many enemies. The worst of these enemies are our own flesh and own self because through them come forth lust, hatred, enmity, jealousy etc. Our fleshly and selfish desires bring us into a defeated life and cause us to lose our joy, peace and desire for prayer. In this way, many believers are living defeated lives. They try to fight against these desires (Gal. 5:17), but very often they are defeated. We can never hope to win in this warfare by our own strength, whether we are newly born again believers or grown up believers. The secret of victory lies in taking rod in our hands, i.e. appropriating the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He won on the cross.

MAY 19

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you" (2 Peter 2:1).

Jehoshaphat was in the net of Ahab yet he said, "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD today" (2 Chron. 18:4). It has been his custom, always to enquire at the prophets of God before undertaking anything of real importance. Ahab was prepared for his matter also. He knew that Jehoshaphat honoured the prophets of God; and so had kept four hundred false prophets ready for consultation. Thus when

Jehoshaphat asked for one prophet, Ahab produced four hundred. Ahab wanted to create the impression that he too was a God-fearing man. But alas! without any exception all the four hundred prophets were spiritually blind. They all said to Ahab, "Go to the battle, and you will surely win, Go up, the Lord is with thee". They were not concerned about the safety of the kings. They thought in their hearts, "If these kings die in the battle, let them die; what is that to us?"

There are many preachers who are like these false prophets. They do not care to give God's message faithfully. They find out what kind of message the people like to hear and they give such messages. Their only desire is to enjoy great popularity.

However, Jehoshaphat was a man of prayer, and he sensed there was something wrong with these four hundred prophets. In the same way, those who are spiritual can sense whether or not a preacher is a man of God. As Jehoshaphat heard them prophesy, he said to himself, "I do not think they are true prophets." So he asked, "Is there no other prophet here besides these?" Then Micaiah was called. Ahab knew what Micaiah would say this time also, So he told the messenger, "You go to Micaiah, whisper in his ear and tell him what the four hundred prophets have said, and ask him to say the same thing." Even today, in many places, someone will call the preacher aside before he goes to preach, and tell him what to preach and what not to preach. And he will face the consequences if he does not heed to the advice! Sooner or later, you, who are servants of God, will face similar situations. Unless you watch your steps carefully, you also are likely to fall. That is why this word of warning is being brought to you so solemnly. Micaiah was a faithful servant of God, and he gave God's message very truthfully (vs. 16-22). To make his message perfectly plain, Micaiah declared that the Lord had put a lying spirit in the mouths of the four hundred false prophets. He fulfilled his ministry very faithfully and boldly.

MAY 20

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but ... against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12).

In these end days the enemy is very active and he uses all kinds of weapons to attack believers. God's servants and their co-workers. He uses many subtle devices to weaken our faith, bring strife among us, make us negligent about spiritual things, fill our hearts with discouragement and bring confusion among us. God has given us weapons to overcome dejection, depression, doubt, fear, strife, jealousy, anger, etc. We should know what these weapons are and learn how to use them. All these weapons must be used properly. In 2 Cor. 10:4-6 we find some of these weapons. ("For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds").

The first great weapon to defeat and confound the attacks of the enemy, is implicit obedience. Whenever God speaks to us and shows us something we have to obey immediately. Our weakness is due to disobedience. We are ready to hear but not to obey. Quick and joyful obedience is one secret of the power of resurrection. See for example, on the early Easter morning the angel told the women who had gone to the sepulchre, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you" (Matt. 28:7). Verse eight says, "And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word".

They obeyed immediately, whereas when the disciples heard what the women told them, they did not believe them and they started to argue. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the women by the way. The disciples lost the privilege of being the first witnesses of the resurrection. Thus quick and joyful obedience gives us victory. What God shows we have to obey quickly. Then our prayers are quickly answered. It is not by our loud and long prayers that we get answers. Please make sure there is no disobedience in your life against the Lord.

The second weapon we have, is to pray always and not be discouraged even when our prayers are not answered immediately. "... men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Very often we cannot concentrate in prayer. We find our thoughts wandering here and there and our body becoming restless. The enemy can use many many devices to hinder our prayer time. Many time we decide to spend one hour in prayer. But before we go upon our knees, some one comes and knocks the door. That is the enemy's device. He can bring worldly friends just at that time. Then we begin to argue, "They have come all the way to see me". So we give up prayer and spend time in eating and drinking. When we find a burden upon our heart for prayer we have to persevere in prayer and not allow the enemy to hinder us.

We have to make sure that on no occasion we take God's glory to ourselves or give that glory to other men. Some, perhaps unconsciously, give more honour to men than to God. We should depend upon God in prayer and bring all our needs to Him. In God's work, we cannot use worldly methods. Our means is prayer. It is more effective than anything else.

MAY 21

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many asleep" (1 Cor. 11:28-30).

It is the desire of our Lord Jesus Christ that His Church should be presented "to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing... holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27). Not only is it His desire but He has also made every provision for it (Jude 24, 2 Thess. 1:10; 1 John 3:1-3; John 6:36-57). We must keep this standard of God before us that we may become spotless and blameless, as He wants us to be. He wants us to be like Himself, conformed to the image of His Son. As we obey Him, He is able to pour His life into us and through us in a great measure.

As we come around the Lord's Table we must remember that we have come around our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our standard, and not some preacher, or teacher, or other fellow-men. We are not to try to be like other human beings, or great saints, or great preachers, or even like the apostle Paul. Our Lord wants us to become like Him, and every word that we speak, every thought that we entertain, and every plan that we make, must be according to His perfect way. As we examine ourselves, let us ask Him; "Lord, are You satisfied with my life? Others may be satisfied with me, but what about You? Are you fully satisfied with my life? Does my life give my Lord full joy and pleasure?" Let us think of these things as we ask Him; "Lord, are You fully pleased with my life?" As we think of His death let us ask ourselves whether He can see in us

the travail of His soul and be satisfied. As we think of His resurrection let us ask ourselves whether we are truly waking in fulness and newness of life. This is an important point of self-examination. How much is God pleased with my life? Am I being fully conformed to the image of His Son? Is His resurrection life and power manifest in me?

Then let us give to Him our full worship and praise and love, that we may give to Him full joy and pleasure as we come around His Table.

MAY 22

"... we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7).

Believers should pray together for all matters relating to the Church until they are of one mind and have perfect peace in their hearts as to what the will of God is. Mere Bible teaching is not enough; united prayer is essential.

God's fulness is in the Body of Christ as we read, "the church ... Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22,23). Some believers gather only on Sundays but do not take part in the prayer meetings. As a result they remain spiritually weak and immature, not able to understand the deep things of God. They will attend a meeting and go away saying it was very nice, but will never care to stay and enjoy fellowship with other believers or to share in the church responsibilities. Thus they remain babes in Christ. On the other hand those who have learnt to consider Christ as the Head of the Body of Christ will long to enjoy God's fulness. They will love the fellowship of God's people and will eagerly take part in Church prayers.

From experience I know what power we, as God's people, will enjoy if we learn to meet often for prayer. See Acts 12:5; Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:3; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1. In these passages we see how Paul, even though he was such a great servant of God, constantly asked for the prayers of the Church. In this sense we also have to depend upon the prayers of the Church. In this sense we also have to depend upon one another. I need you and you need me. We have to live together, rejoice together, suffer together and serve together under one Head, Christ. That is why we are called the Body of Christ.

MAY 23

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

The history of Jericho's fall before Israel demonstrates to us the lesson of the victory of faith in God and His Word. Before the children of Israel entered into the land of Canaan, the first city they conquered was Jericho. At that time the city had very strong walls. God commanded His people to go around the city once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day. The men of Jericho shut their city gates. They might have mocked at the people marching round and wondered how they could break through the very thick walls of their city. But God had promised that at the blast of the priests' trumpets, followed by the shout of all the people, the walls would fall flat, so that they could walk straight in and take the city.

I myself have seen city walls which had fallen during an earthquake. They had fallen in heaps and not flat. But the walls of Jericho fell flat as the Lord had said and this had been proved by excavations at Jericho walls over 3,400 years later. This was a victory of faith. God could have caused the walls to fall down on the first day, but He wanted to increase the faith of His people through obedience to His unusual commands. For effective ministry we need strong faith, without any doubt about God or His Word.

In the same way God will take us through many situations and hardships wherein we may prove His Word and grow in living and strong faith. For example, Abraham took 25 years to really trust God's promise of a son by his wife Sarah. In the beginning he had obeyed God in leaving his father's house and his native country. Even after making such a sacrifice, doubts came to him as to how God could fulfil His promises concerning a son, and then he made a big mistake through unbelief, and listened to his wife Sarah's advice to go in to her servant woman Hagar. As a result, much distress and trouble followed for all concerned. Abraham's testing period of 25 years was in God's purpose. Without faith in God's Word, we cannot serve Him. Looking at our human weaknesses, limitations, trials, temptations and poverty, it may seem impossible for God's Word to be fulfilled in our lives. But as we put our trust in God and His Word. He will give us the victory and do as He had promised.

I do thank God for the many impossible situations He took me through for five years to strengthen my faith. Now I praise Him for everything. Faith does not come by reading books about, but it is proved and strengthened as God puts us through His refining fiery trials just as gold is put in the fire and refined. We have to pray by faith, "Lord, increase my faith so that I may implicitly trust your Word". Only when we stop murmuring, and listen to what God says to us, can we ourselves give His Word to others in power and authority.

MAY 24

"...be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5).

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Simon Peter on the day of His resurrection as we read in Luke 24:34, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." We can imagine why Simon Peter ran to the empty sepulchre after Mary told him that the sepulchre was empty. Perhaps while he was returning from the sepulchre, the Lord Jesus Christ met Peter, thus giving him an opportunity to ask forgiveness for denying Him three times. What a great joy the apostle Peter must have experienced when he tasted the abundant grace, and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The more we humble ourselves at the Lord's feet and continue in His presence with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, the more we enjoy His power of resurrection. We find the same Peter writing in his first epistle chapter 5 verse 6, to all believers, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time". He also says in verse 5, "...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble".

We also read in Matt. 23:12, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humble himself shall be exalted". The Lord Jesus Christ Himself washed the feet of the disciples before He was crucified giving us an example of how to love and serve one another with a real sense of humility and

brokenness. Our holy and mighty God lives only in two places according to Isa 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." He does not live in places made by man's hands. Also our Lord said in Matt. 11:29 "...learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." We have to learn this lesson life-long to be kept humble in His presence. It is very easy for us to be proud and puffed up whenever we see God working mightily in us and through us. May the Lord keep us humble and save us from the great temptations of robbing God of His glory.

MAY 25

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Israelites had to cross the river Jordan and enter into the land of Canaan. They went across the river in the most unusual way. This shows us the way in which we enter into and enjoy our inheritance in Christ Jesus. "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you" (Josh. 3:11). When the priests carrying the ark of the covenant were to enter the promised land, first God Himself was going before them to fight on their behalf. It was not by their own strength, power or ability that they could cross the river or conquer the strong enemies who then occupied the land. The ark was to remind them that the living and the mighty God was Himself among them as their powerful captain. He would lead them and drive out the enemies before them, and they were not to depend on their own strength, ability or weapons of war.

As soon as the feet of the priest touched the water, the water parted and the people passed across on dry ground. The waters of Jordan speaks of our sinful fleshly nature which hinders us from possessing our inheritance. As long as we depend on our will-power and strength to overcome that nature, we will be defeated. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ takes charge of our lives that we can enjoy victory.

Paul the apostle, was one of the most highly qualified men of his time. He could also say that he was blameless as touching the righteousness which was according to the Law. Yet he did not depend on his human qualifications, rather he said that he had no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). He also said "... not I, but Christ". The children of Israel had no scheme or plan of their own to cross the river but were full obedient to the plan God had given them. Similarly, we should enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ as our heavenly King and be under His full subjection. Just as the waters parted as soon as the feet of the priest touched it, we too will find the power of the Lord working on our behalf and leading us to victory. Day after day we have to face many battles in our hearts because the enemy stirs us up with thoughts of hatred, enmity, jealousy, lust, impurity, greed, pride etc. These desires, feelings and thoughts cannot be conquered by our own will-power, knowledge or cleverness. We have to say by faith, "Lord Jesus, I cannot conquer these sinful desires by myself. They are troubling me. You please conquer them on my behalf". Then alone can we enjoy His victory.

MAY 26

"For the preaching of the cross is ... the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

There is an example of how a life was transformed by looking at the cross. A certain artist painted a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. The artist was a Jew, and had no faith in Christ. Sometime after he began to paint a portrait of a young girl. Whenever the girl came to his studio, she would see the painting and question the artist, "Who is that on the cross?" This question embarrassed him, and he would reply, "Do not disturb me about that. I now want to draw your picture." As she had to go to him every day for the portrait, she would constantly ask him the question, "Who is that on the cross?" In the end the artist had to tell her the story of the cross. He told it to her in just a few words, how Christ died, how He was buried and how He rose again. One day the artist received a message from the girl, "Please come and see me, I am dying". So he went. He saw the shinning face of the girl on her death bed, and, she said to him, "Sir, I want to thank you with all my heart because you have showed me the way of salvation. I have been a great sinner. My time has come to die. But I know that my Lord has forgiven my sins." "How did He forgive your sins?" enquired the artist. Then she told him, "From the time I saw the picture in your studio and you told me its story, I became restless. I began to see my sins and then I realized that Christ died for my sins, and confessed my sins. Now I know He has forgiven me." She continued, "It is because of you I met my Saviour and that is why I want to thank you before I die." After she had said this, she peacefully passed away. Then the artist said to himself, " This painting of the cross has been in my studio for many years. I never knew its mystery. But now I know the power of the cross." He repented of his sins and cried, "O Lord, I thank Thee for dying for my sins." Later he spent many years in painting a new portrait of the Lord Jesus on the cross. When he had finished, he wrote these words below, "All this have I done for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" This artist also died soon after.

The painting found its way into a Berlin Art Museum. Many went to see the paintings in this Museum. One day a very wealthy Count came to see the paintings in order to buy a good painting for his palace. He went round looking at them all until he came to the painting of the cross and the words at the bottom drew his attention, "All this have I done for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" The Count could not draw his eyes away from the picture and the words penetrated deep into his heart. The painting drew him nearer to the Lord. The picture was so living that he felt the presence of God. He felt as if the Lord Himself were standing by his side saying these words, "All this have I done for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" I gave My hands to be nailed for thee, I gave My feet to be pierced for thee. I gave My back to be scourged for thee. I gave My face to be spat on for thee, I gave My head to be crowned with thorns for thee, but what hast thou done for Me?" The Count could not leave the place. He repeated within himself, "For me, for me!" He saw his sins one by one, and cried, "He died for my sins." Tears began to roll down his cheeks; he went on weeping for hours in the same spot, until the watchman came and said, "Sir, I must go home, it is very late." The Count bought that painting and took it to his home. Eventually he sold all he had and used the money for the Gospel's sake. He said, "Lord, You have done so much for me, now I give You my all." Thus he became the founder of the Moravian Mission. It was from that time that the Gospel began to be taken in great power to many lands and millions have been drawn to the cross.

MAY 27

"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).

Naomi was planning to return, however, without any sincere repentance at what she had done. In Ruth 1, 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 show any sense of guilt. 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. "...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. Her motive is found in v. 16b : "...thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God". Ruth had heard about the Living and True God. 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.

When Naomi came to Bethlehem, she never told Ruth that they had a very wealthy kinsman by the name Boaz. It was not Naomi who led her to the field 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 scene, and led her by His skilful hands, to the place of His blessing.

We see from this how when we have the desire to know the Lord more intimately, and to do His will, the Lord will lead us to people through whom we can be helped spiritually. God knows how to satisfy our deepest longings. This He does by bringing us in touch with His people, who will give us the Christian fellowship which we need, and who are able to help us understand the truths of God's Word.

MAY 28

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

Those who are not born again cannot understand the mysteries in the Word of God in spite of all the Bible knowledge they may have. The moment our sins are forgiven and we are born again, we are made partakers of the divine nature. When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts by faith, divine nature is formed in us. If we spend sufficient time upon our knees we will feel divine presence. While we are in His presence, we can pray asking the Lord to prepare us and guide us the whole day and give us His instructions to be followed. We should submit our ways to the Lord and ask Him to lead us to needy people either spiritually or materially and enable us to meet their needs. We can ask the Lord to show us His plan

for the whole day, and prepare us for the hour of temptation or trial. For example, if we have to go for an interview or have to face some bad tempered person, we can ask the Lord for extra grace to bear the remarks or criticism without retaliating. Some have very troublesome mothers-in-law. It is very hard to face them because they purposely try to find some fault with their daughters-in-law. The poor daughter-in-law may bear her humiliating remarks for a few days. Afterwards, she will begin to answer seven words for her mother-in-law's one word. But that attitude will not solve the problem. Ultimately that will lead to an unhappy home.

We can pray to the Lord to overrule every situation, help us not to bring any reproach to His Name and give us grace to bear patiently all the unkind remarks, but not retaliate. In the same way we can claim His grace for any situation in the office or in other places. The Lord being our sympathetic High Priest will help us in our weaknesses in all situations. He will also write upon our hearts His laws and give us right words for every situation.

MAY 29

"Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God" (Nehemiah 4:9).

The broken walls and the burnt gates of Jerusalem speak of the barren lives of many of God's people all over the world. This was the result of the rebellion and sin of the children of Israel. Even these days, we can see much barrenness among God's people on account of their sin and disobedience to God. But the God of grace has always used a remnant to bring new life among His people so that they may enjoy His salvation fully. God used Nehemiah and his co-workers to rebuild the broken walls and the burnt gates of Jerusalem. Those who wanted to obey God and become a part of this remnant, had to be prepared for any kind of opposition, ridicule or mockery, just as Nehemiah and his helpers had to face and overcome much opposition and persecution. Sanballat was the chief mocker and persecutor (4:1). He had another companion by name Tobiah (v. 3). These men Sanballat and Tobiah were the most powerful and influential men of the place. We as God's servants will also face opposition from the powerful and influential people.

Sanballat and Tobiah could have used their high position to the advantage of building the wall of Jerusalem but on the contrary they used their privileged position to hinder God's work and become enemies to His servants. Paul says in Phil. 2:21, "For all seek their own". At the very beginning of the Lord's work in Madras, He warned us and taught us how to face such type of opposition. So before we moved into "Jehovah Shammah" in Madras (Chennai) a few of us were burdened to pray all night. We knew beforehand, that we would have to face much persecution and attack from the enemy. At the same time we knew that unless we prayed with perseverance we would not be able to stand the opposition.

So we decided to go a nearby hill in place called Pallavaram to spend the whole night in prayer. When we went there, we found the place was full of scorpions and centipedes were attracted by the bright petromax lights which we had taken with us. We went on killing them as we saw them approaching. It was an unusual experience, because on the one hand we were praying the whole night and on the other hand we were killing the scorpions and the centipedes. Early in the morning we could see the sun rising on the city of Madras. Then the Lord spoke to us in a clear and open way that we would have to face such bitter opposition as the stings of the scorpions and centipedes. The Lord also encouraged us saying not to

be afraid of them because even though these people may try to harm us, they would not be able to succeed; for as we were able to overcome the scorpions and centipedes so we will also be able to overcome those who will persecute and oppose us. What the Lord spoke through the scorpions and centipedes turned out to be true as was experienced in the years that followed. So our going to prayer perseveringly proved a great help and encouragement. We cannot overcome the enemy by our own wisdom, cleverness, talents, gifts or by our own strength and power. Now we can testify that the Lord has faithfully kept His promise. The more the people tried to oppose the work of God the more we were blessed.

MAY 30

"... rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

Those who are going to be joined together as life-partners in the presence of God and before His people have a longing to be blessed by God. The very fact that they want to be joined in the House of God shows their longing that the Lord may bless their union. They know somehow, unless God blesses their union, whatever they may do or possess will not bring true happiness in their lives. But God also wants His own divine laws to be fulfilled before He can bless them. He is the God of blessing, and He desires to bless us as He says in Heb. 6:14, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee". That means, as far as God is concerned He is willing to bless us throughout eternity. It also means, He goes on adding blessing to blessing every day, every month, every year and throughout the ages. There is no end to it. What a promise and what a blessing! and that blessing is upon all those who call upon God.

God is not a respecter of persons. Whatever He offers to one He offers to all, provided you are willing to abide by the divine laws. Whatever He gives is for eternity and in abundance. He wants to give us everything in fulness and abundance as we read in John 16:24, "ask... that your joy may be full". These words were spoken to those disciples who were with Him for three and a half years. During those years, they saw many miracles performed by our Lord Jesus and were privileged to be with Him when He performed the miracles.

The disciples also performed miracles, and came back rejoicing to tell the Lord, "even the devils are subject unto us through thy name". But the Lord knew, that none of those things could make their joy full. He did not want them to take pride in the miracles thy had performed. So He said, "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). When you are sure that your name is found in the Book of Life, only then, your life can be blessed abundantly. New life will give you new joy. When the new life comes into us the Lord will teach us all His Divine laws. The Divine life will make you content and give you true inward peace as the Lord said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". Whatever we receive from the world in the form of wealth, gold, silver, honour, position and prosperity is only for a short time. You find your earthly joy melting away after you have received what you have desired. But there is a joy which becomes more and more in suffering and trials. It does not depend upon our health, position, wealth or knowledge.

MAY 31

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

The Lord Jesus Christ could see a great harvest in Samaria by bringing the Samaritan woman to Himself. He could see multitudes who would be saved through her. His eyes can see everything. He is our Creator and knows all about us. He has all power. He invites us with great love. If you are saved He wants to save many more through you. That is how you become a co-worker with Him. The Samaritans were the first Gentiles who confessed that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. What a revelation! All this was the result of the testimony of the woman. She was transformed quickly and fully because of true repentance. At the same time she received full revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. Then she became a means of revealing the Lord Jesus to others.

See how the Lord made Hannah also His co-worker. At that time God wanted a person or an instrument to rebuke Eli. If God wanted, He could have sent angels for that purpose but God's plan is to use human beings. His choice fell upon Hannah, who began to see that God also had some need, which a poor woman like her could meet by bringing forth a child like Samuel. Thus through her prayer she became God's co-worker.

Similarly, the Lord gained ground into Ethiopia by saving one eunuch (Acts 8:26-27). The Lord asked Philip to go to the desert. As he obeyed, God guided him. The Ethiopian repented, believed and was baptized. And even today, there are believers in Ethiopia. The work began in a desert. Philip was God's co-worker.

Lydia also became God's co-worker (Acts 16:14-15). Through her, Gospel was taken to Europe and the first church in Europe was established in her house in Philippi. After a few years we find many believers in Philippi (Phil. 1:1). Not only that, in a very short time, they had deacons and elders. Also they learned to give liberally for the Lord's work (Phil. 4:15-16). Lydia, welcomed and received Paul and his whole party joyfully. Her life was an example and inspiration to all believers in Philippi. And thus the assembly in Philippi became so strong, with bold witnesses. Many churches were established in that whole region. Thus Lydia also became a co-worker with God.

Whosoever you may be, the Lord wants you to be His co-worker and partner. He wants that many more should be brought into His Kingdom through your humility. You may be small but remember that you too have a share in the building of His Church. Many doors are open. With all our handicaps God will use all of us but we must be willing to obey Him, and be true to the heavenly vision.

JUNE 1

"... All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exodus 24:7).

David, having been freed from chaff at the threshing floor of Araunah, was given the plan for God's Temple to be built on the very same site. At that very place too, Abraham proved God and passed his last test of faith. In Genesis 22:1-2 God appeared to him and told him to offer up his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah. Without questioning God, Abraham took Isaac and prepared to offer him, laying him on the altar, believing that though he should slay his son, the Lord was able to raise him up.

With such a faith and without doubting or questioning God's Word or His ways, we too may take our share in the House of God. Whatever God says, believe and obey Him. He cannot make a mistake. Sometimes we begin to argue like Peter as if we know better than God. In Acts 10:9-16 God spoke three times to Peter, and Peter said, "Not so, LORD." The LORD never asks anybody to do anything wrong. But Peter refused to obey Him, and argued with all sincerity. We do not realize how much we grieve the Lord by questioning His dealings with us. We ask why the Lord permits such suffering, such difficulties, and sorrows and painful experiences in our lives even though we are so good and obedient and active in His service.

We see in Acts 9:11-15 that the Lord said to Ananias, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus." Then Ananias also hesitated. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me...". So we too must obey Him without knowing, and must not doubt, question or argue. Our wisdom is foolishness with God. So we must receive the revelation of God's purpose for His House. We may build good buildings and have campaigns, and yet not come into God's plan and purpose. In Psalm 132:7 David seems to have had the revelation of God's purpose in His House. As we come to His feet in humility and brokenness we will receive revelation. God wants humble and contrite hearts which will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Those who have learned to worship Him thus, will be true to Him day by day. They will be willing to take share in the building of God's House. In Worship we learn to give to God. But many want only to receive. Many worship in words but not from their hearts. In verse 8 of Psalm 132 David says, he wants to give God rest, satisfaction and pleasure. We need to seek God even in the smallest matters of life and in these also to know and to do His will. Such a life is only possible as we enthrone our Lord Jesus Christ as King. Then we will learn by experience. Our obedience will give God His rest.

JUNE 2

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psa. 126:5).

In Psalm 126:5,6 we read of the step we should take when we return to the Lord after our backsliding, as did the people of Israel. When we had been away from God through our disobedience, defeat and failure, we lost our first love, our burden for prayer and our interest in God's Word. In this miserable state we caused other people also to go astray. God's people were carried away as captives unto Babylon because of their disobedience, but when after 70 years they repented, the Lord brought them back to the promised land. When they returned their joy was great but it was mixed with sadness and tears. Our joy in being restored to fellowship with the Lord is always accompanied by tears. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we find our Lord calling believers, in five out of seven churches to repentance.

The charge against the church at Ephesus is the loss of their first love (Rev. 2:4). Believers at Ephesus were well taught not only by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, and by Timothy his helper but also by John, one of the twelve disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet after a while they lost their first love and our Lord strongly rebuked them. Sometimes we also have such an experience. Through some subtle temptation we become cold and indifferent, our prayer burden becomes less and we have no concern for perishing souls. What is worse, we are content to remain in this state. But our gracious God, because of His

everlasting love draws us to Himself and we humble ourselves and return to Him. Then He restores to us the lost joy and peace, and tears are mixed with our joy; tears for having grieved our Lord, tears over our lost opportunities and tears for having led others astray. After such experiences we are in a better position to help other believers who fall. We can go to them with tears as in Psalm 126:5,6.

JUNE 3

"Cast out the bondwoman and her son" (Gal. 4:30).

"Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. ...Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Gal. 4:24-31).

The Law given on Mount Sinai brought bondage and slavery, and men became guilty; but now we come under a new covenant. Even though Ishmael was a son of Abraham, yet both he and his mother Hagar were cast out, and neither had a share in the promises which God gave Abraham. In the same manner, all those who come under bondage will be cast out for trying to become just and righteous by circumcision, Sabbath or by man's effort. Roman Catholics want to become righteous by taking part in their priest-made Masses on Sunday mornings or weekdays, rather than believing in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Seventh Day Adventists like Roman Catholics will be cast out and will have no share whatsoever in God's inheritance, because they prefer to become under bondage. Our Lord Jesus Christ completed the work of salvation on the cross when He said, "It is finished". But the Seventh Day Adventists are trying to add something more to salvation saying, "No, Lord, it is not finished, we are Seventh Day Adventists. Lord! we must add Sabbath to salvation".

Suppose you construct and complete a beautiful building, and someone says it is not complete. He then takes a broken piece of an earthen pot, puts coal tar on it and draws some ugly figures, and then stamps it on the building to complete it: how would you feel? That is how these Seventh Day Adventists are trying to add to the work of salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who knew no sin, was made sin for us. He paid the complete penalty for our sins; bore our curse and became a curse for us when He died on the Cross. That is why we say, it is all finished, and now we have to believe it and receive by faith.

JUNE 4

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).

I want to put this simple question to you. Have you found true peace? Many people do not have true peace, even though they have been saved; the enemy has deceived them. They say that they are saved, and they say that they are born again, but judging by their life and experience there is something wrong somewhere. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to give peace. Isaiah in his prophecy prophesied in minute detail the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah 9:6, He is called among many names, **the Prince of Peace**. It is only in Him, by Him and through him, that men can find true peace. The same message was brought upon the earth at His birth at Bethlehem (Luke 2:14) by a multitude of the heavenly host! "Glory to God in the highest, ...peace, good will toward men."

The first message which our Lord gave to His disciples after His resurrection was "Peace be unto you" (John 20:19, 21). Those disciples were full of fear, and were hiding themselves with the doors and windows shut. All of a sudden, the Lord Jesus Christ came inside and the first words He spoke were: "Peace be unto you". What He had said in John 14, was not being repeated. Now they knew, that was why He had to suffer for their sake, even that peace might be theirs. You may be familiar with the whole Bible and perhaps have seen many miracles being performed here and there in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps even through you and around you. But, have you found true peace? Can you say truthfully and sincerely that that real peace has come into you? The epistles of Paul the apostle begin with the words "grace and peace", which means that the grace of God, and the peace of God must go together. The more grace, the more peace. The more peace, the more grace. Many are deceived by worldly peace, but our Lord said, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

In Rom. 16:20, we read "...the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." We do not defeat the devil by Bible knowledge or long prayers, or by seeing dreams or miracles. The scripture says that the God of peace bruise Satan under **our feet**. That is why the devil tries to disturb our peace. Please make sure that you have found true peace, otherwise, you are going to be defeated by the devil by trick or device.

Further, in Rom. 14:17, "...the kingdom of God is ...righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Your share in God's kingdom also depends upon your peace, "...the work of righteousness shall be peace" (Isa. 32:17). Just by outward appearance you are not going to be righteous or good. Outwardly you may look good, but inwardly, the throne of the devil may be in your heart.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13). God's power can only work fully in you when you find true peace. If you have not found that true peace, you cannot pray properly. If you have not found true peace, you cannot defeat the devil easily. It is only by inward true peace, that you can hear the voice of God.

JUNE 5

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27).

We as believers must know how to give the Living Bread to those who are hungry. Our Lord does not like wastage (John 6:12). May we also learn this lesson that we should not waste our time. Our money too should not be wasted or misspent. We have to give an account. Once I had the privilege to spend about ten months in travelling to different countries and in all those months, I bought only three things, two tubes of tooth paste and a tooth-brush. That was all! The Lord did not give me liberty to buy anything else; because I knew there was a better use for the money. The Lord kept on supplying all my needs from

heaven, and there was no lack. The Lord gave many gifts also in the shape of money and He also gave me the privilege of spending that money for other people. I learnt this lesson at the beginning of my conversion.

In the beginning of my Christian life I used to gather very small copper coins because the Scripture says if anybody asks we should give. One day a beggar came to me and asked me for alms, I wanted to give him a coin, but the Lord spoke to me. "This is My money. You have no right to give away My money". I wanted to give but I could not. I said, "I never thought that way, Lord," but the Lord said, "It is My money, I bought you with a price and everything of yours belongs to Me, whether time or money. All belongs to Me." I asked the Lord's forgiveness, and He taught me that even though it might be a small amount I should not waste it unnecessarily. Even though you feel thirsty and hungry, be sure you spend your money in the will of God. Then you will find how you can help others, and also how you can get joy in helping others. Do not waste your money, howsoever small an amount it may be, for it is not your money. Pray before you spend it. Pray every time till the Lord gives the answer, because through you He wants to satisfy the hungry all around. It is the same about your energy also. You cannot say you can sleep as many times as you like. You say, "Lord, I am feeling tired, I want to sleep". But He says, "It is My body and not your body. I paid the price". Let the Lord control your sleep. In that way you will learn to help other people with your money and time and energy.

When the Lord blesses, even the fragments have the power to satisfy the hungry. Nothing was wasted. You will find that wherever you go, the Lord will do something through you. That is His purpose for us. We have the words of life to give a message to others, and we have the power of God to help others. Even when we do not say anything, our presence can bring blessing. Some people by their very presence give joy, and that should be our attitude. Pray; "Lord, give me the privilege of satisfying these men who are hungry," and He will surely help you. "They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matt. 14:16). The word "ye" means you.

JUNE 6

"...Jonah rose up to flee ... from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3).

The story of Jonah is a true story recorded in the Bible by the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Himself made reference to it while He was speaking to the Pharisees. It shows how the God of love reveals His love and patience in His own way in seeking us till we come to Him and learn to understand His ways. But we, in our folly, want to run away from Him. We think that we shall be better off by running away from God than by obeying Him.

God gave Jonah the great task of going to Nineveh to preach repentance (Jonah 1:1,2). It is indeed an honour to be God's co-workers. But Jonah did not realize what a great honour and privilege God was conferring on him. Rather than being thankful he was running away! Suppose a clerk is suddenly promoted to be the Governor of a state, would he refuse it? No, he would accept it gladly and thankfully. It is quite clear that the Lord had commanded and commissioned Jonah to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. Jonah was a God-fearing man, as he himself testified (Jonah 1:9). But he disobeyed God and ran away from His presence.

Just as Jonah ran away from honourable task given him by God, many young people run away from God's command for the sake of some worldly gain or pleasure. How many young men have been called by the Lord for His service, but they thought that by taking up some secular job they would be in a position to serve Him better. Only afterwards they learn how much loss they incurred by their disobedience to God.

Those who do not have a deep experience of God fail to understand what He says to them and so they do not obey Him fully. Jonah imagined certain things about God and was angry with Him. He did not understand God's ways and purposes, so he disobeyed Him. In the same way, many people fear God, but they do not understand His ways or His will, so they do many things against God's will.

JUNE 7

"Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders..." (Isaiah 8:18).

Believing parents should accept sons or daughters with equal love. We read in Psalms 144:12, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace". For a believer every child, whether it is a boy or girl, is equally precious and should be received with equal joy and thankfulness. In many cases parents give a big feast for a son, but ordinary food for a daughter. Almost every mother wants the first child to be a son. Again, if the child is fair the parents show more love and care, but if the child is dark and ugly they show less love. Believing parents should not be partial towards their children. Every child must be accepted with the same love, attention, joy and thanks. Isaiah's children became signs to himself and to the whole nation. Each of his children had a name with a special meaning (Isa. 8:3,4). These names reminded Isaiah of the message God wanted him to give to the nation and through them, he could give God's word with boldness even to the king. In this way his children became a sign. Believing parents can understand their heavenly calling through their children. The Lord Jesus Christ took the example of parents and children and explained how God the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask of Him (Luke 11:13). Thus day to day experience with your children will reveal to you many truths about God, His love, faithfulness, compassion and so on.

Believing parents should not hesitate to chastise their children. God's Word says in Heb. 12:7, "...for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" It is good to bring up children in the fear of God by chastising them from time to time. All children need punishment when they do wrong, because all are born with sinful nature. If you discipline them in their childhood, they will be grateful to you when they grow up.

God has a definite plan for each child. About Jeremiah God said, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). By prayer, believing parents can find out God's definite plan for their children and then with prayer can guide them in that plan.

JUNE 8

"... I have chosen you, ... that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

The Lord will put us through many tests in order to prepare us to be His servants. In 2 Kings 2:1, we see that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal, which means, “rolled away” (See Joshua 5:9). At Gilgal, Elijah showed Elisha that if he wanted his ministry to be effective and fruitful, he himself should be free from reproach. All of us who are God’s servants are exposed to temptations and have some weaknesses whereby we can become defiled. Then through some sin or failure we may bring reproach to the Name of the Lord. But as soon as we humble ourselves and confess our defilement, shortcoming and weakness, and by faith take the precious blood for cleansing, the reproach will be taken away. There is now no need for us to condemn ourselves, but we do need to humble ourselves constantly before the Lord, and ask His forgiveness, and at the same time ask Him to search our hearts, and show us any unrecognized inward weakness or defilement or failure, in thought, word or deed.

Next, Elijah said, “Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD has sent me to Bethel.” (2 Kings 2:2). Bethel means, “Heavenly Home”, the House of God. Be sure that you do not call a building a House of God. If we want to be useful to God and fruitful in His service, we must know what God’s House is and what our share is in building it. We must know what the Church is. The Lord is not calling us to build denominations, sects, fellowships or groups of people, but the House of God. He wants a Spiritual House, according to 1 Peter 2:5. Every one of us redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and born from above becomes a living stone in the House of God and this is the spiritual building God wants us to build. The Lord shows us in Eph. 2:20-22, and in Heb. 3:6 that this House is a habitation for Himself. His House must be built according to God’s plan and on the Rock foundation which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We may build as His co-workers under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we can begin to serve the Lord faithfully we must be sure that we have received a true revelation and understanding of His Spiritual House. We must make sure that those who are saved through our preaching the Gospel or through our testimony also learn how to take their share in the building of God’s House. It may take several months and years for us to understand what the Church really is, and what are God’s thoughts and purposes concerning it. He wants it to be in a place where His peace reigns. If the Church is not built up through our ministry then our services are only like wood, hay and stubble in the eyes of the Lord, and they are utter waste. We should learn how we may take our share in the building of the House of God.

We see in 2 Kings 2:3 that the sons of the prophets were Elisha’s companions but they discouraged Elisha. When we want to obey God, we often find that our relatives, friends and companions try to hinder us, by suggesting how much we would suffer by obeying Him. We will have to separate ourselves from these relationships in the flesh, if we really want to obey His call and whole-heartedly serve God and the interests of His House.

JUNE 9

"After that, he was seen of James" (1 Cor. 15:7).

The Lord’s seventh appearance after His resurrection was to James. James was among the chief apostles and the others referred to him in case of any doubt as we read in Acts. When Peter was released from prison by the angel, he continued knocking at the door of Mary, the mother of John Mark, and when the

door was opened the believers saw him and were astonished. "But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed" (Acts 12:17). We read further about James in Acts 15:13. "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me." From these two references in God's Word it becomes clear that any matter which needed advice and final judgement was referred to James. For this reason the Lord appeared to him in order to prepare him for this future great spiritual responsibility. The Lord gives extra strength and grace to those who have to bear extra responsibility in the House of God. But many believers just go to meetings to receive something and they are much more concerned about the message and singing rather than finding out what part they can take in the building of the House of God. The more willing we are to help others in serving them and accepting heavy burdens for His glory in the spreading of the Gospel and in the building of His Church, the more fully can we enjoy this aspect of the power of the resurrection. That is the reason why Paul says, "I count all things but loss... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:8, 10). And also, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

JUNE 10.

"Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy..." (Psalm 43:4).

The meaning of Asher is "Happy am I" and Leah added "for the daughters will call me blessed" (Gen. 30:13). God Himself is our happiness: not our talents, nor our gifts, nor our ministry. In the beginning of our spiritual life we long to possess Bible knowledge or to perform many miracles; we covet extraordinary talents like the gift of healing. Later on we realize that none of these by themselves bring us true happiness. The Lord Himself is our happiness. It is our privilege to be in His presence and talk to Him. David says, "...in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). You may have noticed that the moments you have spent upon your knees in worship, devotion and communion with Him, and in the reading of His Word, are the happiest moments of your life. This joy cannot be compared with any other joy in the world.

There is a true story about a king who plundered the temples of India. When he crossed the Indus river, he said to his soldiers, "I want to reward you all for your faithfulness. You suffered with me all these many years." He opened the bags of treasure that contained diamonds, rubies and many precious stones. Then he asked the soldiers to make their choice and to take whatever they wanted. All came up to take their share except one soldier who kept standing near the King. Then the king asked him also to go and take his treasure, but this soldier said, "I choose you. I do not want these things. You give me the privilege to stay with you." We are told that he eventually received more than all the others, for all that belonged to the king became his, when the king died. Many people think of blessings in terms of what they either want or have. They say, "Lord, give me this and give me that." They do not want the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the giver of all good gifts, and by faith in Him we receive everything. As we love Him and honour Him more, we will receive everything automatically. He is our Asher. He is our true happiness.

June 11

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matt 5:12)

In Acts 5:41 we read that when the apostles were persecuted, rather than murmuring, they were rejoicing. They were reproached, beaten, cast out, hated, yet they were rejoicing because they counted themselves worthy to suffer shame for His Name. In the same way when we are put to shame and are reproached for Christ's sake, we find a peculiar joy within us. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11, 12). So first of all you should have that joy of the Lord. On a human level if any one rejects or hates or despises you, for many days you will lose your sleep and appetite. But when you have the joy of the Lord, this joy will not decrease, but will multiply when you have to go through suffering, reproach and shame. The enemy tries his best to discourage us. Hence in 1 Pet 4:12-14 it says, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.” This joy does not go away when we are treated badly by others or hated or cursed.

We have a hope that one day we will be presented by our Lord Jesus faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Upon the earth we are full of shortcomings and failures. But when the Lord Jesus Christ appears in glory at His second coming with all His angels, we will be blameless before Him. At that time, even the angels will not see any blemish in us. We have the hope of seeing Him face to face one day. That is why we should take part in the Lord's Table worthily, so that on that day, we may see Him face to face with joy.

June 12

“Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely” (Psalm 147:1).

On the first stone in the breastplate in the first row was written the name of the tribe of Judah. Judah means “Praise.” As the children of Israel started marching, Judah had to take the foremost place and lead the others. In our lives also praise and worship must take the first place and we must learn how to worship and praise Him at all times. This is the foremost spiritual experience that we should have.

When we are born again our first desire is to have Bible knowledge. We think that by having more Bible knowledge, we grow more spiritual. It does not matter how many books we read or how many degrees we have, nobody grows spiritually by Bible knowledge alone. It is by learning how to thank him, praise Him, adore him and magnify Him always for everything, we grow spiritually. Before you begin the day, spend a few minutes in pure worship without any request or supplication. Say to Him, “Lord, I come unto Thee and into Thy presence just to be with Thee, to feel Thy presence, to hear Thy voice and to see Thy glory and beauty.” When you feel His presence, worship Him because He is the King of kings; praise Him for His mercy, kindness, love and grace; thank Him for every trouble. Thank Him for your hard life and do not feel sorry for it because God cannot make a mistake, for whatever He permits in your life is for a

purpose. So for everything we must thank God (Phil. 4:6). Even though our Lord may keep us in any difficult situation, in sickness, or in poverty or in trouble of any kind, we can still praise Him, adore Him and magnify Him, because all things are allowed by Him for a purpose. The more we worship Him, the more we grow.

Praise and worship are the secret of victory. Without any fighting on their part Judah's enemies were destroyed because they went to the battle singing praises to God. In the same way, if we know how to worship, magnify and exalt the Lord in all circumstances of life, we will be able to put to nought very easily all the attacks of the enemy against us. Many people try to defeat the enemy by their Bible knowledge, or by fasting, or by long prayers. They will soon find out that such means do not avail against the enemy, and they themselves will be defeated. Thus the first spiritual lesson is to defeat the enemy through praising and worshipping the Lord in spirit and in truth (John 4:24, Ps.34:1-3; 104:33; 105:5).

June 13

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

God commanded Joshua to circumcise the children of Israel. God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed after him and said, “This is the my covenant, which ye shall keep,... Every man child among you shall be circumcised” (Gen. 17:10). At the same time God had renewed His promise to Abraham that He would surely give him a son and multiply him exceedingly and give him the land of Canaan for an inheritance. Abraham was at that time ninety-nine years old. And Sarah his wife was eighty-nine years old. Humanly speaking they had no hope of their bodies being capable enough to produce a son. God had asked Abraham to circumcise every male child, to impress upon them that they did not get a son through their own strength or energy, but through God's own life, and power of resurrection alone. In the same way Joshua and the children of Israel had to keep in mind that they could enjoy their inheritance, not by their own might or cleverness, but through God's Spirit, might and power.

We find the same message being conveyed to Zerubbabel in Zech. 4:6. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts”. Zerubbabel was full of doubts and questions as to how the temple at Jerusalem would be rebuilt. He knew that according to the prophecy of Jeremiah the children of Israel would be in captivity in Babylon for 70 years. He saw the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and the gates that had been burnt with fire. People of Israel who were with Zerubbabel were few in number with little money and little help. Under these circumstances that Word of the Lord come unto Zerubbabel, that God's work would be done not by human might or by human power but by His Spirit. We cannot do any service for the Lord in our own strength and cannot possess and enjoy our inheritance by our own efforts. We must learn to depend upon the Spirit of God and must bring ourselves under His full subjection.

June 14

“That he would grant you,... to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16).

A small girl asked her mother, “When we go to heaven will we be black or white?” The mother replied, “We will be neither black nor white. We shall be like the Lord Jesus Christ.” That is quite true. For this

purpose we must have a clear vision of the glory of our living Saviour. John the apostle had such a vision when he turned round and saw the Lord. (Rev. 1:14-16). The Lord revealed Himself to John in His glory so that we may understand what kind of people He wants us to be.

John the apostle was very discouraged when he saw the persecution and suffering of the believers in those days; many were scattered, many were in prison, many lost their possessions, and many through fear lost their joy and peace. The devil thought, "I have got the victory," but he did not know how the Lord was working inwardly in the hearts of the believers through these experiences to transform them into His own likeness.

We preachers sometimes forget the inward work. We are very happy when we see a large crowd. But when there is only a small number to speak to, we feel sad; we lose our joy. That is how many preachers have been deceived. They thought that by having large crowds and many converts they would please God. Such people are blind. They ruin the work of God. They think only in terms of crowds and numbers. Now imagine a mother having many children: the first child is blind, the second dumb, the third lame, the fourth deaf; and so on with the other also. How much joy would these children bring to the mother? Another may have only two or three children, but they are very strong and healthy with no defect. Which mother do you think would be the happy one? Those who care for number may say, "We have baptized so many," but how many of them are spiritually deaf, dumb and blind? It is because they have not seen the Lord nor know His power. That is why we find much spiritual barrenness in Christian work in India today.

God was saying to John the apostle, "John, do not be discouraged when you look at the tribulation and the poverty of my people or at their sufferings and trials. But see the inward work I am doing in them through these very things." Just as gold is refined in the fire, so also the Lord is refining His people through their trials. It is this inward work which is of infinite value to the Lord.

June 15

"... according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5,6).

Before God's Spirit can come into a filthy and defiled spirit, it must be cleansed, purged and washed. When a person repents of his sins and puts his faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, he is forgiven. Then automatically God's Spirit come into his spirit. This process is called "new birth". Why is it called so? How do I know it happens? I know it because I undergo a three-fold upward change. As by sin I underwent a threefold downward change – dead spirit, darkened soul and defiled body, so now by the new birth I undergo a threefold upward change. By God's Spirit coming into my cleansed spirit, the once defiled body becomes the holy Temple of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). My body which was defiled for so long is now God's Temple. The wonder of it! I have the same hands, same feet and the same tongue, but now I refuse to defile them anymore. Before the transformation took place my tongue, my lips and my eyes did what they pleased. I was constantly defiled. What I long to do now is to praise God, to worship Him, and magnify Him. With these same hands I want to serve my fellow-men and with this same tongue I want to praise my God. My body is now God's Temple.

My darkened soul becomes an enlightened soul because God has given me divine wisdom. Before divine wisdom came, love for novels, stories and other filthy books mastered me. My eyes were wide open for such things and I had no interest in God's Word. But now with my soul enlightened I find a new love for God's Word, God's House, love even for my enemies. There is no longer any race or class difference, no more Malayalee, no more Tamilian, no more white or black all are one!

My dead spirit becomes a quickened spirit. How? Now I feel God's presence. I talk to God. He speaks to me and I enjoy His presence. God is a Spirit. I can love Him. I can follow Him and obey Him. God's Spirit coming into my spirit and making me a threefold new person is new birth. My defiled body becomes God's Temple, my darkened soul become an enlightened soul and my dead spirit becomes a quickened spirit. The "new birth" also gives the hope of living for ever. Now I know for certain that I will live for ever; I shall live with my Lord for ever with an immortal, heavenly and eternal body. Not only so but also as a heavenly king and as His co-worker.

JUNE 16

"...redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

John the Baptist's vision of the Lord Jesus Christ became clearer step by step. On the first day John saw Him while baptizing Him, but he remained silent. The next day he saw Him coming towards him and declared, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And the third day he saw the Lord as He passed by, and shouted, "Behold the Lamb of God!" In the same manner, spiritually you also will not see everything in one day. You will require many divine touches to see Him as He is.

You will notice the advance in his experience. He wanted others also to see Him. Having heard John call Jesus "The Lamb of God", the disciples desired to see Jesus. They pondered in their hearts, "The Lamb of God! Now let us follow Him," and they left John and followed Jesus. The Lord turned, and saw them and said, "What seek ye?" the Lord knew that they wanted to see Him more clearly. When you follow Him, He Himself turns round and looks at you. He will ask you, "Child, what do you want?" You may perhaps ask Him for many things such as a job, or physical healing. But these disciples had no such requests. They said, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" Now those who have seen the Lord Jesus Christ have a strong longing, "Where is my Lord? Where does He live?" Do you have the desire to find out where He lives?

But many Christians are seeking the living Christ in the graveyard. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" They want to see Him in buildings made by men. You can find Him only when you earnestly seek Him. Do you know where your Master lives? First, He wants to live in your heart. He is not looking for buildings made by man. How many people are begging for money, to construct a building in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to build a so-called "House of God". "Please give us some money," they say, "We want to build a House for God". Such people do not know the meaning of "the House of God". God lives in only two places. He lives in the High and Holy place; also in the humble, broken and contrite heart (Isaiah 57:15). The Lord Jesus died to forgive your sins and to come and live in your heart. He wants your heart to become His dwelling place. He loved you and died for you. His hands and feet were wounded for you. If you receive Him in your heart He will transform you, take away all your fears and make you radiant.

JUNE 17

"God ... hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The blue colour in the ephod worn by the high priest speaks of the heavenly wisdom we are given, as we bring ourselves in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ completely. The more we come under subjection, the more the Holy Spirit reveals Himself to us. Such wisdom is given to us through strong faith. That is why the gold thread and the blue material are woven together. The purple speaks of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the privilege of binding Satan in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 18:18). The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ comes into us to defeat the devil and with the same power we can claim for others deliverance or healing (John 14:12-14). The scarlet speaks of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So often we say, "I am not worthy, I dare not go near the holy place." But because of our faith in the precious blood we can go into the holy place very boldly and claim God's promises, God's power and God's grace (Heb. 10:19). The fine twined linen in the ephod speaks of the pure life of the Lord Jesus Christ which flows into us (Gal 2:20). As we obey Him, others can see the humility, kindness, meekness and longsuffering of the Lord Jesus Christ in us.

The golden thread was woven together with blue, purple, scarlet and white linen in a peculiar heavenly design. No artist in the world could have thought of such a design. God revealed it to Moses and through him to the skilled workers. Just as the design was unique, the life of a believer too must be totally different from that of worldly people. This difference will become more and more evident as the believer grows spiritually and God's glory and beauty will be revealed through him increasingly. Thus he is prepared for his share in God's fullness.

JUNE 18

"... Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And ... he was buried, and ... he rose again the third day according to the scriptures". (1 Cor 15:3,4).

The Lord Jesus Christ died to take away the condemnation of our sins. Also He died to bring into us a new power which helps unto die to our old sinful nature. By taking into us the power of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ we can conquer sin.

Secondly, through the power of the burial of our Lord Jesus our sins are buried, thus, freeing us from a guilty conscience. It is easy to understand that every sin we commit kills our conscience to a certain extent. Imagine a man about to tell a lie. His conscience tells him, "Don't tell a lie!" But he says to his conscience, "Keep quiet". Finally his conscience becomes silent and dead. Even then one day it may be quickened and say to him, "I told you not to do that and now you are suffering because you went against my protests". Thus his conscience will go on troubling him. In such cases some people try to pacify their conscience by deeds of charity. But such a relief is only temporary. True relief will come only when your sins are forgiven and buried with Christ. Our Lord died and was buried that our sins might be buried with Him.

Thirdly, Christ's resurrection power will come into us. Christ died for our sins and rose again to live in us and help us to lead a new life. If we try to live this new life by will-power or by Bible knowledge we will not succeed; we will still be easily provoked to get angry to tell lies. To get true victory we must receive into us by faith, the power of His resurrection. We have to ask for it as we are exhorted to do in Matthew 7:7 and 6:31-33. Instead of asking for worldly things we should ask for heavenly and spiritual things. Every day we must ask for the power of His resurrection. Then we can conquer every temptation and every sin.

Thus in the letter to the Colossians the apostle Paul says that having understood our spiritual union with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection, we find a new life coming into us (Col. 3:1-3). Our affections for earthly things have now decreased, and we have a longing to know more about God's

kingdom, to live a pure life, to know God's will, to understand heavenly mysteries and to serve the Lord more fruitfully.

JUNE 19

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ". (1 Cor. 12:12).

The Corinthian believers were divided into many groups. They began to call themselves by different names (1 Cor. 1:12,13). When we call ourselves by different names, such as Baptist, Methodist, Anglican Brethren, Pentecostal and so on, it brings division. We all belong only to Christ. We have no right to be called by any other name.

When I applied for a license to solemnize marriages, I was asked, "What is your denomination?" I answered, "The Body of Christ. We have no name and no label; we are only Christians." Then the next question was, "How many members do you have?" I replied, "We do not have any membership, we are all equal. We are all one. All are welcome if they are born again." But this oneness must be maintained.

By laying on of hands we testify together that we are all one and equal in the sight of God. Whatever education or wealth or position we have, it is only by the grace of God. "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). Paul the apostle laboured more abundantly than other apostles, only because of the grace of God. If God has given any one of us any gift of teaching or preaching it is only by His grace, we do not deserve it. We are saved by His grace. When we go to heaven we will be rewarded according to our faithfulness, and not according to our gifts.

In the early church the enemy brought division between the Jewish and the Gentile converts. We see in Gal. 2:11-14, how God had to rebuke even Peter through Paul because he began to make such distinction. In India even among believers we find differences of high caste and low caste. In the same way some Christians believe that one cannot take part in the Holy Communion unless he is confirmed. Such divisions come because of wrong teaching. Those who are born again are one and must remain as one. As believers we should refuse to take part any activity, function or ritual which brings division among God's people.

JUNE 20

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat". (Num. 7:89).

After God has commanded the children of Israel to build Him a sanctuary, He said very particularly to Moses, "...look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 25:40). In the chapters following, chapters 25 to 40, we have full details of how the tabernacle was to be made. When the work was all completed exactly "...as the LORD commanded Moses", the glory of the Lord came down and filled the tabernacle (Exo. 40:34).

From that day onwards the Lord began to speak from between the two cherubim (Num. 7:89). If any man wanted to find God's will regarding any matter, he would come to Moses or Aaron. Then Moses or Aaron would go to God and say, "O God, so and so has asked us to find Thy will for him". God would speak from between the cherubim. Then there was a pillar of cloud or fire resting upon the tabernacle. After an interval of some days or weeks or months the cloud would be lifted up and that was the sign from the God that they were to begin their onward march straightway. These were the two great features of the sanctuary: God speaking to the people between the cherubim and the divine presence leading

them by a cloud. Without the sanctuary these would not have been possible. For that reason God asked the children of Israel to build Him a sanctuary.

We are told in Hebrews 8:5 that all these "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things". So the tabernacle made by Moses was only an example or shadow of the true House of God. Just as the sanctuary was essential in the spiritual life of the children of Israel, so the House of God is essential to us also. But where can we find God's House in these days? Alas, so often when you go into places of worship, you do not hear the voice of God there, but rather the noise of pride and greed and strife of men. How can you call such a place the House of God? Further, God does not dwell in buildings made of brick and stone. We, who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and are born again, can become the House of God. It makes no difference whether we meet as fellow-believers to worship in a big building or in a small hut. But we also have no right to be called God's House unless the two great features of the sanctuary are found in our midst, that is, God speaking to us and revealing His will, and God's presence in power and glory going before us. In a living Church we can hear God speaking to us and revealing His will and also His power and glory will be seen there.

JUNE 21

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus". (Phil. 4:19).

When the children of Israel started rebuilding the walls and the burnt gates of Jerusalem, they had to face much opposition from their enemies. They had to face problems that hinder God's work and their full obedience to Him. Because of lack of love among themselves, they had to face many problems. At that time there was a famine in the land. Because of poverty they had to mortgage their vineyards, houses and lands (Neh. 5:3,4). There were some Jews who started taking usury or interest. As believers it is our duty to help those who are in need. If we fail to do this we will be hindering God's work. As God's children we cannot beg for money or food (Psalms 34:10, 37:25). Believers who cannot trust God and are in habit of begging for help and money remain beggars throughout their lives. Those who are in need must learn how to pray for their needs. Those who have more than they actually need, have a duty to pray and find out those who are in need of their help. If this is done according to God's guidance, many needs can be met and there will be no loss.

Some years ago, I happened to stay with a poor family who were good believers. At that time that man of that house had lost his job. One day there was no food at all in the house, not even a piece of bread. But all of them including the small children began to pray without the least murmur. They believed that God would supply their need and therefore they would have no need to beg. While we were still praying we heard a loud noise at the door. We thought that someone had struck with a big stone. But when the door was opened, they found a large gunny bag containing bread, vegetables and other food stuffs sufficient for the whole family. If we as believers start begging, God will not be pleased with us and we will continue to remain as beggars.

JUNE 22

"...now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself". (Hebrews 9:26).

In the tabernacle, only the high priest could go behind the veil once a year. Even he could not go without the blood of the sacrifice. He used to wear special garments which were called garments of glory and beauty (Exo. 28:2,4). There was the white robe; over that the blue robe; at the edge of the blue robe there were golden bells and pomegranates alternatively; over the blue robe came the ephod made of five materials: gold, blue, scarlet, purple and fine linen woven very skillfully. Over the ephod the breastplate was worn, with twelve stones on the upper part of it and the Urim and Thummim underneath.

All these garments speak of Divinity. Before the high priest entered into the most holy place, he had to remove these garments of glory and beauty and put on white clothes instead. This means, before he could take the blood of the sacrifice before God on behalf of the people, he had to become an ordinary man. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ never came into the world like an angel. He came as a man (Heb. 2:16). He became like one of us. Had He wished, He could have come like an angel. But as an angel He could not die on our behalf, because angels do not die. That is why angels cannot understand man's sufferings. The Lord Jesus Christ became like us in order to be our merciful and faithful High Priest. The high priest had to go into the holiest with the blood of the sacrifices on behalf of himself and also on behalf of the people. This happened only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, the people would gather from many far off places, but they could not go inside the tabernacle. They had to stay outside. They had to confess all their sins by putting their hands upon the head of the animal of sacrifice. That animal signifies the Lord Jesus Christ. When it was slain, the high priest took the blood of the sacrifice behind the veil and sprinkled it on the mercy seat of the ark. Divine fire came down and consumed the blood, indicating that the Holy God had accepted the sacrifice on behalf of the people and had forgiven their sins. Then the high priest came out the Holy of Holies and declared to the people that he went behind the veil on their behalf to offer the blood and had seen fire coming down from heaven. He declared that God had forgiven their sins. That was the happiest day for the whole nation. But none of these sacrifices could make man perfect, because they were only a shadow. Only the sacrifice of Lord Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. By offering Himself, He perfects all those who come to Him.

JUNE 23

"...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

Even though king Cyrus made an open proclamation that all the Jews who desired to return could do so, yet many stayed back because they were not willing to believe. In the same way if we also fail to believe and claim God's promises, He cannot work in us and through us. As believers we should keep our belief in God's promises very firm, and claim them for meeting our needs. There are many who say they believe in the Bible and yet they do not obey what it says. They are more inclined to follow man made customs, rituals and practices. On the one hand they profess to trust God, but on the other hand when they are in need of money, they start begging. Some people conduct healing campaigns and they say that they trust God to do the healing on their behalf. Yet it is strange to note, that when it comes to the question of their finances, they do not apply the same faith, but at this point they look to man for financial help. The God who could heal, could He not also provide money for all their needs? They fail to follow the Word of God implicitly. Only by obeying Him and His Word implicitly can we see God working on our behalf. According to John 15:7 we should abide in the Lord Jesus Christ by keeping ourselves controlled and led by Him in every step of our life. We must obey Him in all matters, only then can we see the fulfillment of His promise, namely, "...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Thus Nehemiah believed and then started to obey, and God on His part also started to work on his behalf.

JUNE 24

"...he is the head of the body, the church: ... that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

The house built by Moses was according to the pattern shown by God. That house was only a shadow of the house which is now being built by the Lord Jesus Christ. God kept Moses in the wilderness for forty years and then on the mountain for 40 days to empty him for his own wisdom. There, on the mountain, God gave him the heavenly pattern of the house to be built and also warned him to take heed and build after the pattern which was shown (Exo. 25:40). Every detail of the construction of the

tabernacle was shown to Moses. Neither Moses nor anyone else could change the pattern. The words "as the LORD commanded Moses" are repeated eight times in Exodus chapter 40. In building the tabernacle, Moses followed every detail given by God. Only then God's glory could fill the tabernacle. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is building the spiritual House with our partnership. None of us can make any change in that plan. If Moses could not make any alteration in building the material house, how can we make any alteration for the spiritual House? But many God's servants make some changes, and do God's work with human wisdom. That is why we see defeat, failure, barrenness and darkness in our midst. We are warned from God's Word to take heed in building His House. In the name of a constitution, people have brought in many changes. Also darkness and wrong teaching have crept into the Church.

If we want to take any share in the building of God's House, first of all, we must keep ourselves under the Headship, Lordship and Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. To build a large building, the chief engineer will have a plan. Masons and other workers will be under him. Whatever he says they must do. In the same way, when our personal life, family life and church life are brought under the complete Lordship, Headship and Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can hear God's voice day by day for our guidance. But if we are defiled by any sin, we become deaf spiritually and cannot hear God's voice. That is why many people are deaf spiritually and their ears are hardened so that they cannot understand what God wants to say. Also they become blind spiritually. They do not know God's plan. Only by keeping ourselves under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in our personal life, family life, and church life, we can know God's will. Then we will become partners in building God's everlasting habitation. At the same time we can enjoy God's fullness in His House. God's love is fully expressed in His House. Every one of us has a Heavenly calling to be true co-workers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to build HIS everlasting habitation under His Headship. We can take our share in the building of that glorious sanctuary, provided we are willing to come under His Headship and Lordship.

JUNE 25

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna"(Rev. 2:17).

When I began my Christian service, I thought that by having some extra spiritual gift God would be able to work through me in a deeper and stronger way. I longed to see miracles and signs performed. Accordingly God led me to see many such miracles happening in several places. Afterwards I myself saw that the very same people who were the means of performing miracles went back to sin and darkness. So I understood that God does not work through outward signs. He works in a very quiet way unknown to us.

Even among believers, many depend too much upon outward things. They think that by going to meetings, hearing good sermons, receiving good teaching, meeting good people, they can become spiritually strong. Yet they remain poor spiritually because they have never learned to eat the hidden manna. The hidden manna is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. You can eat Him when you wait on Him quietly and alone. It is possible that you may read the Bible for hours at a time; you may even pray for hours and you may fast regularly for one or two days or even a week, yet you may feel that you are empty and defeated. It is because you have not learned the secret of feeding on the hidden manna quietly.

When you go to the Lord do you always with petitions and requests? How much time do you spend in really praising and adoring Him? It is very easy to bring our petitions for ourselves and others and to give very little time to worshipping and adoring Him. The real meaning of eating and drinking Him, is to adore Him, worship Him, exalt Him and magnify His Name. By eating and drinking Him we receive life into us. When you have learnt the secret of hidden manna, you will be completely freed from all earthly and natural desires, and also freed from thinking that you have plenty Bible knowledge. In my early Christian life, I thought that If I could learn the Bible by heart and memorize many verses, and fill myself

with Bible knowledge, I would become spiritually strong. So I began to read the Bible night and day, and still I was spiritually hungry, unsatisfied. The hidden manna is not Bible knowledge. But when the Lord became my Living Bread, and I learnt to adore Him, my hunger was satisfied.

JUNE 26

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you"(1 Thess. 5:18).

In England on Coronation Day there is a grand royal procession, when the king and the queen in the beautiful royal coach. The royal coach is used only on that day. Before it is used for the procession, it is sent to a special place for cleaning and polishing. There are lamp stands on both the sides of the coach. Once a young boy was appointed to polish these lamp stands. He worked very, very hard and made them look very bright. On the day of the procession, he too stood in a particular place waiting for the coach. After much waiting the royal coach drawn by eight horses arrived. As the coach came near, the boy shouted with joy, "Look how they shine, look how they shine!" The man near him asked, "What?" He replied, "The lamp stands." He was not looking at the king or the queen, he was looking at the lamp stands. Why was he so happy? Because he had made them shine; he had some share in the procession. The same is true of us because our trials, afflictions and difficulties will give all of us a share in the New Creation. This is a mystery.

All of us as believers have some share in the New Creation. Our earthly trials, however painful they may be should not discourage us because all the suffering which we go through is contribution for the coming New Creation. So for a believer, failure and success have the same joy. As we grow spiritually we can thank God for everything because we know that God uses our failures also for a purpose. Many people who were careless have been drawn closer to God through sickness, poverty and hardship. Many truths in God's word become real at the time of trials. The Psalmist says so in Psa. 119:67,71 and Psa. 66:10-12. If we go on praising God for all kinds of trials and afflictions and hardships we are brought into a larger and wealthier place spiritually. "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me" (Psa. 18:17 - 19).

As believers, for every situation we can pray, "Lord, what are you teaching us through this situation?" Then thank God for the ways He uses; it may be sickness or health, failure or success, poverty or wealth, friends or enemies. We can thank God for all our enemies because they keep us humble. That is God's method. The more enemies we have more humble we are. By nature we are proud and keep away from God. By remaining humble we are brought nigh unto Him. According to Isa. 57:15 God lives only in two places, in the Holy place and in the humble heart. And that humility does not come easily. We all have some pride of country, education, caste, job etc. But under all circumstances we must be kept humble. Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 15:10 saying, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." We praise God for every situation He takes us through, to make us useful and fruitful to draw us nigh unto Himself, to give us the honour to be used by Him for the New Creation and to make us a part of His dwelling place for eternity.

JUNE 27

"... I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4).

In 2 Cor. 12:3,4 Paul says, "And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter". What a privilege it was to be caught up to the third heaven and hear unspeakable words beyond man's understanding!

There God gave him many visions and revelations. Though Paul had many visions and revelations, he could not know the meaning of grace. God could have taught him about grace in the third heaven, but God knows better. He taught him through pain. If you want to know God you have to be upon the earth and learn about His grace. The apostle was a learned man and he knew the Scriptures well as he himself testified in Phil. 3:5,6. He was quite familiar with all the Scriptures and prophecies. But neither miracles, nor knowledge of Scriptures taught him the meaning of grace. We read that the Lord allowed a thorn in his flesh. It was a very, very painful one. Many preachers and scholars try to find out what the thorn was. When God Himself is silent about it we should not go on trying to guess. It is for a purpose God has kept it a secret. It must have been a painful thorn because Paul prayed three times for its removal. He did not murmur or grumble about his physical pain. We shed tears for small things. Before any trouble comes we cry and say, "Who is going to look after us?" But Paul was not such a man; he never grumbled or complained. In 2 Cor. 7:4, he says very truthfully that he was extremely joyful in tribulation and did not murmur

In 2 Cor. 11:23-27 we see a list of all the trials Paul had to go through. But he never said, "Lord, why hast Thou brought all this upon me?" He never grumbled even once. But the thorn in his flesh was extremely painful. His own strength must have been exhausted. That was why he begged the Lord thrice. He must have prayed saying, "Lord, I beg Thee, I beseech Thee, take away my thorn". These are not ordinary words. Again he prayed, "Lord, I beg Thee to take it away". The third time also he must have said, "Please see my pain, and remove the thorn". But the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, That is the only way I can teach about grace". Paul preached boldly to everyone saying, "By grace are ye saved"; "I am what I am by the grace of God" and so on. He preached and wrote these words that people may experience God's grace. He alone had the privilege of being caught up to the third heaven, in the history of the whole Church. Now God was saying, "My beloved Paul, what I did not say to you in the third heaven or teach you by other means, I have to teach you by this painful thorn. It must remain there. That is why the thorn is given to you. Do not pray any more". From that day he stopped praying and said, "Lord, I thank Thee for this thorn". Whenever the thorn became painful, he began to sing and praise God saying, "I thank Thee Lord for the thorn. I want Thy grace, more grace, still more grace".

JUNE 28

"... the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

In Rev. 21, we see the New Creation. The old things are fully passed away, and the Heavenly Jerusalem comes forth as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It is by the Lamb and by His blood that a wife has been prepared for Him. The city is only for those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, for those who are walking in the light of the Lamb, and those who have taken the Lamb for their foundation. The thought is that full preparation for the New Creation is only by the Lamb. The life of the Lord is in His blood, and only by that blood we have been cleansed, washed and purified. That is why we see the cherubim always looking at the blood on the mercy seat of the Ark.

In Exo. 25:18,20,21, we read about the Ark. The Ark was the type of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was made of ordinary shittim wood, and not of teak wood or rosewood, because the Lord Jesus Christ became a man like us. Shittim wood is found in every part of the world. The Lord was born in a manger and took

upon Himself the form of a man for us. That is the meaning of shittim word. We read that the ark was covered with gold inside and outside. Even though the Lord had the form of a man, He was perfect God, pure gold. On the top of the box was the mercy seat of pure gold, and from the same golden piece were formed the cherubim. That tells us that the same life of the Lord Jesus Christ is given to His people. These two cherubim are a type of the Church and show how both the Jews and the Gentiles are made partakers of the same life. God said to Moses, "I will commune with thee...from between the two cherubims" (v.22). In Eph. 1:23 we see that God's fullness is the Church, of which the cherubim are a type. We all become one, because of the one life which we share.

We are told that the faces of the cherubim were to look constantly on the mercy seat, where the blood was sprinkled. We too must keep our eyes on the blood. God was saying from between the cherubim, "I will speak with thee and meet with thee," but it was possible only because of the blood. If there has been no blood on the mercy seat, God would not have been there. Communion with God was possible only where the blood was sprinkled. Then the glory of God came down and He spoke from between the cherubim. We too can commune with God only through the blood of the Lamb.

All God's thoughts of eternity are only revealed by the Lamb. You will find that the preaching of that blood is criticized much more than anything else in the Bible. The devil knows that he is going to be defeated by the blood. If you want to enjoy abundant life then learn all that you can about Lamb of God and the value of His precious blood. It is then only that you will understand the meaning of the New Creation, and the part that God has for you in that Creation, as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. The Lamb has given to His Bride His own name the "Lamb's wife". That is the highest expression of God's love for His Church. It is a heavenly mystery, the mystery of divine love - the sharing of God's life in fullness and becoming a part of God's New Creation, beholding His face and sharing His glory as His partners.

JUNE 29

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God..." (2 Cor. 6:16).

One wealthy man built a mansion. The middle room had a very high and beautiful ceiling. Skilful artists were engaged to decorate it with silver, gold and precious stones. When the work was complete he invited his friends to come and see the beautiful ceiling. It was indeed very beautiful but because it was very high they could not see it clearly. They had to bend their backs and yet could not see it clearly. Then he brought a high table and upon it he put a very big mirror and said, "Don't bend your backs. Look into the mirror". It is God's will that by His grace, His glory, beauty and majesty which cannot be revealed through angels, mountains, sun, moon and stars may be reflected through us. For that purpose we are purchased by the Lord. And that is why we have to live a life worthy of such a calling.

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). But we find many believers imitating unbelievers in their dress and manners. Many young men keep long hair like women. They think they look more handsome that way. But they do not know how ugly they look. Many men and women imitate cine stars, actors and actresses. Many young girls imitate ungodly and heathen women and keep their bodies half naked. Such believers remain barren spiritually. They have no understanding of their heavenly vocation in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14,15). We have to be careful with our words also (Matt. 12:36-37). Our yea should be yea, and nay should be nay; but some believers tell many lies. If someone offers you food you say, "I just had my food". But if they insist, you eat a plateful. Our yea must be yea, and nay, nay. In habits, conversation, manners and in everything we have to glorify God. For the same reason the Israelites had to have a blue fringe in the border of their garments (Num. 15:37-41), to show that they were God's chosen people and that they should be different from others. Believers also must live a life of entire separation from others and only then they will have full understanding of God's Word.

When the children of Israel came near the Promised Land, they were commanded not to imitate the heathen living in the land in any way. They had to utterly destroy their idols and groves (Deut. 12:2,3). They had to be governed completely at every step by the Word of God and not to follow the nations in any way. They were not to be governed by the customs and practices of the people in Canaan. Otherwise they would be tempted to bow down before their gods. Now the same thing is happening among Christians also. They imitate the heathen at the time of their birthdays, marriages, funerals and death anniversaries. As a result they become blind spiritually. We are told clearly to live a life of utter separation and not to imitate worldly people (2 Cor 6:14-18). Do not be deceived by the practices of the heathen. If you follow their customs, you too will become blind: totally blind spiritually. We must keep ourselves wholly and solely under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and obey His Word.

JUNE 30

"Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

Faith is a fundamental, foundational principle of the doctrine of salvation. We should have faith toward God. For everything we need to have faith. For prayer we need faith. To receive His life we need faith. Otherwise whatever we do will be a failure. That is why on many occasions the Lord said to the sick, "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42). According to Matthew 9:2, seeing the faith of the men who carried the paralytic, the Lord healed him. It is by faith we can understand unseen things. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The unseen things which are real cannot be understood by the visible. However clever we may be, they are mysteries to us, but by faith we can understand the heavenly mysteries and unseen things. By faith our prayers are answered. By faith we enjoy His power, By faith we obey the Lord and follow Him.

Our spiritual life is lived by faith. By faith we bind Satan. By faith we claim the promises of God. It is by faith that we can have eternal life. That is why repentance and faith go together. Those who have no faith cannot grow spiritually. Many preachers have no faith. Even though they hold big meetings and campaigns, yet when they want money they start begging. That is where they go wrong. They have so many schemes and devices to get money. When they plan to have Gospel campaigns they start writing letters and go on giving hints for many months. That is not faith. By having a living and strong faith in our Lord we can enjoy His perfect peace and have all our needs met. Thus we see how faith is the fundamental and foundational principle of prayer life, Bible study or any other service.

JULY 1

"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

Esther was brought in favour with the great king Ahasuerus. We are told that many young women were brought before him one by one. Before they were presented before the king, they were told that whatever they desired they could ask for it and they would be given. Whether garments, gold, silver, or things for purification; nothing was withheld from them. But we are told that Esther required nothing (Esther 2:15). Other women has a long list daily. But Esther required nothing. What a miracle for a person to say, "I want nothing". I do not know of anyone who has said, "I do not want anything". Some are never satisfied with whatever they are given. You may give your wife 100 sarees, she will ask for 10 more and some more. They want something new every month. You may give them any kind of jewels, they are not satisfied. Some husbands take all their salaries to their wives. They wait for the pay day of their husbands; if the husband gives Rs. 25/- less, she will question him, "What happened? Why this month Rs. 25/- less? Where did you spend it and what did you do with it and to whom did you give it?" And the whole salary will be spent within 10 days and they want more money. They are not satisfied whosoever they are.

Here the story says, when Esther's turn came she required nothing. The result was, she found favour. Esther found favour from all who looked upon her. Not only was she brought in favour with the king, but she found favour with everyone in the palace. She became the most God-fearing queen, and through her life and faith the whole nation of Israel was saved. She learned that secret, how to be content and how to be satisfied. She knew that nothing in the world could satisfy her. There are so many men and women, who think by eating and drinking or by buying garments or gold or silver or jewels, they can get pleasure. That is why their lives are a failure. Before marriage they go on making enquiries through relations, brokers and friends, as to how much dowry they will get, or how much land they can have. They will not say openly but secretly they enquire how many children the father has and how much she will get. After making sure they will say, "Now I am satisfied". But supposing they are not satisfied they will say "We have no peace in this alliance", because their eyes are upon worldly things, or upon the girl's complexion, qualifications etc. That is why they are disappointed. Contentment makes a home happy.

JULY 2

"... he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

In the year 90 A.D. the apostle John became a prisoner in the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. There the Lord Jesus appeared to him. At that time believers were going through much tribulation. Some were scattered, some imprisoned and others were going through persecution and there was a great spiritual decline everywhere. We find the same conditions prevailing today in every part of the world among the Christians. That was the prophecy made by the Lord Jesus Christ that in the end days, "...the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). According to 2 Tim 3:5 the believers will have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. Today we find worldliness increasing among Christians and they are becoming colder and colder every day. Very few will be able to stand persecution for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some Christians want to become spiritual but at the same time they do not want to give up worldliness. Once I saw a little boy who had a dirty *jillebi* in his hands. I felt sorry for the boy and told him to throw it away and that I would give him something better. He held the *jillebi* tightly in one hand and stretched out the other hand for that which I wanted to give. He knew what he had was very dirty but he would not give it up. He wanted both. Like that, some Christians want both the world and the Lord. One cannot have both. If you want the Lord, you should love Him whole-heartedly.

John saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking between seven golden candlesticks. The Lord said to John, "I do not want a mixed multitude or a worldly Church. I want a holy Church, a heavenly Church where My life can flow freely". But we find people bringing worldliness into the Church. There are quarrels, love for money and every kind of worldliness. The Lord Jesus Christ is not satisfied. He wants pure gold. That is why He permits refining fire among His people, because gold can only be refined by fire; fire beneath and fire above. Our Lord was saying to John the apostle, "John, I have permitted the refining fire among the people to refine them". Whether we have buildings or not, it is immaterial. Whether we are few in number or more, it is not important. Whether we are educated or illiterate, it makes no difference. Our Lord wants those people in whom His life can flow and who can come into divine order.

The Lord wants us to build His Church according to His plan, not an Indian Church, or an American or an English or a Japanese Church, but His Church, free from customs, practices, rituals and worldly ways. As far as possible we try to follow God's Word, and do all things according to His will, yet we find a few falling into sin. But then we have to pray for them because they find that the world is too strong for them. That is why in Revelation 1, the Lord appeared to John the apostle as the heavenly Advocate or High Priest. As our everlasting High Priest He is willing to intercede and pray for us. We as His co-workers should do the same ministry.

JULY 3

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

In Matt. 1:20-25, we see how an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. News had reached Joseph that Mary his espoused wife was with a child. He began to wonder and even thought of putting her away privately (v. 19). Any man would have thought as Joseph thought, because he had never heard in the history of the world of a virgin being with a child. Joseph was much troubled and distressed. So God sent an angel to make him know how it hath happened. "... that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (v.20). No man would have succeeded in convincing Joseph about the Child being conceived by the Holy Ghost. Similarly, the message of salvation cannot be understood by any human being. Man may try to explain but one cannot understand, "... because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). Man with his natural wisdom cannot understand or comprehend the things of God. It does not matter how intellectual a person may be; spiritual things cannot be understood by any one easily. The very same thought is given in Romans 8:5-7. The ordinary human mind cannot grasp or comprehend the divine truth about salvation.

To understand the Scriptures we have to claim the anointing of the Holy Spirit again and again. That is why before giving the message we pray, and after giving the message also we pray and at home we pray several times. Supposing a man goes on reading the Bible the whole day and also consults very good books in the library but does not pray sufficiently before giving the message, everyone will soon know that there is no life in the message and that they are mere words. But when the preacher prays sufficiently, then they see new life. Even though we read the Bible many times it cannot be understood by human wisdom. We need the anointing every day and every time we read the Word of God. Some great scholars though they know everything, bring doubts about the Bible. They say "This part of the Bible is not true and that part of the Bible is not true". And like that they go on. But they are fools and they do not know that these things are prophesied by the Holy Spirit and they cannot be understood by the ordinary mind. Even though one may be a teacher of the Law, without the Holy Spirit he cannot understand.

It is not only study of the Scriptures, which is going to give us spiritual life, but the inward working of the Holy Spirit in our lives is also necessary. We have to pray again and again, "O Lord, open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psa. 119:18). Because it is the Word of God, and not the word of man, it cannot be understood by our ordinary, natural and corrupt minds. Do not let your human wisdom deceive you.

JULY 4

"... Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2,3).

In Rev. 1:14 our Lord Jesus Christ was seen with beautiful white hair. In Dan. 7:9 we read "...the hair of his head like the pure wool." There He was called the Ancient of days, and the white hair speaks of his eternal wisdom. John the apostle was trying to understand his problems by human wisdom, and got puzzled. When however, we receive by faith the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, then whatsoever may be the situation, we will easily get the answer. With the help of divine wisdom, we can answer all questions. "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:98-100). You may be a wise man but that will not help you to solve your problems. Yet by reading God's word and receiving God's wisdom, you will find day by day your questions being wonderfully answered. What a privilege! Things that have been hidden from wise and great men, and even from prophets, are not being revealed to us, because the Lord Himself is our wisdom, and that wisdom is received by faith. Do not depend on your own wisdom for these matters. Day by day, ask God to give you His wisdom as in James 1:5, "If

any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

One day a man came to me and said, "I have thirty-five questions. Will you answer them?" I said, "That requires lot of time. Wait a while till I call you. Put your questions on a piece of paper, and keep it with you". After three days I has some time, and called him and said, "Please bring your paper". He said, "I do not have any questions to be answered." "What has happened?" I asked. He said, "As you spoke in the meetings, the Lord answered my questions. I have torn up the paper, as now I have no question to be answered." He was born again and was baptized. It is only God's word that can answer your questions. We do not use the Word of God sufficiently. We go here and there and get no answer, -to aunts and uncles but not to God. Call upon Him for help, with confidence, claim Him as your divine wisdom, and you will find that He will answer every question, provided you go by faith and perseveringly.

JULY 5

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54).

When we testify that the Lord Jesus Christ has become our spiritual food, then by faith we partake of the bread and cup. We say, "I am satisfied. I have no more longing for worldly music, worldly friends etc." We have to say so truthfully, otherwise we will come under condemnation. It will be a false testimony. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "...he that cometh to me, shall never hunger...never thirst". Then He tells us several times how we can eat Him and drink Him to have the same experience. "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (v.51). "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (vs. 53, 54). We have a hope that one day we shall be raised up with an immortal body. The same Lord Who died for our sins and rose again is coming back to receive us unto Himself that we may be where He is (John 14:3). That is only possible when we are given the same body as He has, an immortal body, a heavenly body. Now we have that hope that one day our Lord is coming back again for us. We shall see Him and shall be like Him. Now that hope gives us great joy. Rather than taking part in the Table as a habit you should say, "My Lord is coming for me. He will receive me and let me stay with Him forever". That hope automatically takes away the desire for worldly and perishing things.

In John 6:55,56, the Lord said, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him". The proof of my taking that bread as my heavenly food and that drink as my heavenly drink is, I am living in Him and He in me (v.57). That means, we will be kept conscious of His presence always. Even though we have many earthly trials, we will be conscious of the divine presence always. Only sin can take away that consciousness. Any thought of hatred, enmity or pride can take it away. Supposing you get angry with your wife or children and then you try to pray, words will not come to your mouth. Having got angry a few minutes back, you try as you may, the words will not come to you. But when you say by faith, "Yes Lord, I grieved Thee, I did get angry with my wife or husband or children or servant. Please forgive me" and then pray, you will feel the presence of God.

JULY 6

"... the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

In these days the word "Church" is used very lightly and carelessly. People speak of the "Lutheran Church" or "St. John's Church" etc. But in the Bible a building is never called "a church". Such a usage is entirely a human idea. Whenever God speaks in the Bible of a church, He always refers to the company

of people who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. In the epistle to the Ephesians seven names are given to the church. The Body of Christ, One New Man, The Heavenly Family, The household of God, God's Building, God's Temple and The Bride of Christ. (Eph. 1:23; 2:15; 3:15; 2:19; 2:21a; 2:21b; 5:32). All these names refer only to the people of God and never to a building.

The Greek word "ekklesia", which has been translated as "Church", means "a called out people". The Lord Jesus said to His disciples: "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you". Thus we are a people who have been "called out of the world", and that is why the Lord calls us "ekklesia".

The Church of God is compared to a building. You might have plenty of stones and cement, but you would not mix them up in a haphazard way to build a house; you would have a plan prepared by qualified engineers and employ skilled workers to build according to the plan. While the work of construction is going on neither the workmen nor their supervisors would have any right to make alterations in the plan. Likewise in the Church of God the Lord Jesus Christ Who is our Master Architect, has revealed His perfect plan to His servants for building us, who are the "living stones", into a holy habitation for God: and whereas the servants of God can help and supervise the work of God, they are not authorized to deviate from the heavenly plan. We, who are God's servants, should take heed that we are faithful to God's revealed plan and not build according to a "Church of England Plan" or "Methodist Plan" or another man-made plan. He has His own perfect plan, which He will reveal to those who are willing to come under His leadership and Lordship.

When Solomon has completed building the Temple in Jerusalem, the glory of God came down and filled it. But that Temple did not last long, for it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. But the Lord Jesus Christ is now building a heavenly Temple which will contain and manifest God's glory for eternity.

Have you realized the love of God? Do you know that He needs you? Perhaps you are thinking you are of no use to God. When God called me for His service, I was so conscious of my weakness and foolishness that I wondered why He chose me. I could not speak fluently; I stuttered and stammered; I could not sing a single note of music. I had never attended any Bible college. What could God do with a man like me? Yet He spoke to me very clearly and said, "I want you". God wants you also. He will work in you and transform you into His own likeness and make you shine with the glory of God. When you go to heaven the angels of God will wonder and question. "This man was so black and ugly, Lord; how did you make him so beautiful and glorious?" God will reply, "I did it by my faithfulness!"

JULY 7

"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do...?" (Genesis 18:17).

The disciples were feeling very, very sad because the Lord had told them in a very plain way how He was going to be betrayed and crucified. They were all feeling downcast; they did not know even what to say, as they walked in the dark night in the small path leading to Gethsemane, when our Lord began to say something. Those words are found in chapters 14 to 16 of the Gospel of John. He said, "Henceforth I call you not servants;...but...friends". They thought they were being left alone and forsaken, but He said, "All things I have heard of my father, I have made know unto you."

Servants cannot understand all things about the master. But a friend can, and that is how you know divine friendship. God was trying to show the very same friendship to Abraham in Gen. 18:17. What a wonder this is! God had every right to do what He wished. God's time had come to judge the inhabitants of those wicked cities called Sodom and Gomorrah and He was about to do so. But He said: "How can I hide it from Abraham?" Abraham was not saying: "Oh God! You must tell me everything," because he had not yet understood the heart of God for him. No doubt he had been obeying God as far as he could, but so far he had not entered into the heart of God. Now God was saying about him: "How can I hide

my counsel from Abraham?" This is God's purpose also for you and me as we are redeemed and purchased and washed and cleansed by His blood. We are not cleansed and washed to live as we like. No, we have been called to be friends of God, the most high and living God. God wants you to climb that Mountain of Friendship and then you will know how God, as your friend, reveals and shows you many, many truths and mysteries. If you are really a child of God and if you are truly born again, then in your heart will be a great longing to know the Bible. This was my longing, and I went on reading the Bible sometimes 12 to 14 hours a day. But that did not solve my problem. Bible knowledge itself does not satisfy your hunger. Similarly I thought that by spending many hours in prayer I would be satisfied. I tried that too, and whenever and wherever possible I spent hours in prayer, but even then I could see defeat in my life. Then I began to long for some miracles in life and through prayer and by God's grace, I have seen many miracles also. But even that did not satisfy me, till I learned God's purpose to make me His friend, and how to enter into pure friendship with the holy, just, might and great God. Now God Himself began to speak to me and tell me things which I could not learn from any man, in other words how to be God's co-labourer and partner and friend.

JULY 8

"...he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:7).

Our old nature causes us much trouble. As long as we are controlled by that corrupt, defiled, wretched nature we cannot possess divine life. We must find a way to get rid of this old nature. But the trouble is we do not realize how corrupt the human nature inside us is and so we are not anxious to be delivered from it.

There are some diseases like gangrene which cannot be treated by doctors. If gangrene sets in on a part of the leg there is no remedy except to cut off that part. God says very clearly in the Bible that human nature is incurably corrupt. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9). It cannot be changed by any human power. Many have tried to change it by education or social reform, but have failed. By money or prosperity or even by fasting, penance and long prayers man's heart cannot be changed. The only remedy is, the old nature of man must die. Our sinful nature must die. There is no other way to get rid of it. Only then the divine life can flow into us. For that purpose the Lord Jesus had to die. He died so that we may die to sin. The Lord Jesus did no sin. (1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 8:46). No man could bring any charge against Him or find any fault in His words or deeds. He was perfectly holy and pure. At the same time He was endued with all power to rebuke the wind and storm, and make the sea calm (Matt. 8:26). So great was His power that no man could have laid his hands on Him. Yet He allowed wicked men to pierce His hands and feet and nail Him to the cross. He died to save sinners. He died to take away the condemnation of our sins. He died to take away our punishment.

Also He died to bring into us a new power which will help us to die to our old nature. This latter part many people fail to understand. No doubt they believe that first part. They believe that Christ died to take away the punishment of their sins. But they do not believe the second part that He died to take away their will power and their own wisdom to get victory over their temptations. The result is, they go on falling into sin again and again. You can never conquer sin that way. The only way is this: by faith you must take into you the power of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

JULY 9

"For we are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9).

The apostle Paul sees three things in Eph 1:17,18. The first is the hope of His calling. Our eyes should be opened to understand the heavenly calling of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we travel in bus or train or aeroplane we meet many strangers and when we start talking to them we come to know about their

business or occupation. After some time we talk very freely. Similarly anybody can question us what our business is as Christians. Paul is praying for the believers at Ephesus and also for all of us because whatever he has written is intended for the whole Church. That is the beauty of the Word of God. It can be claimed by anyone. Paul is praying, "O Lord, if Ephesian believers are questioned about their calling, teach them to give a proper answer. They may give an answer truthfully and joyfully. "...be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). God expects us to give them answer. "I am a co-worker, and a partner with the Lord Jesus Christ; we share together the same heavenly business". All of us have become equal partners to build a heavenly habitation for Him. That is the hope of the calling of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have a big business, and people question you about it you may say, "I am a qualified engineer" or "I studied in many universities". They may ask you, "What is your salary?" If you say, "Rs. 100,000" they have to believe because you have been qualified from many universities, and your job and business demands such a salary. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a co-worker with Him in building His heavenly habitation. What is your salary for this work?" You can say joyfully, "All that is the Lord's is mine".

We are partners with God and are building for Him a heavenly habitation, far more glorious than any worldly mansion. All the palaces of the whole world put together are nothing when compared to the heavenly sanctuary, because all this will one day fall down, A day is coming when all things will pass away, heaven and earth and mansions will pass away but the heavenly House now being built by the Lord Jesus Christ with our cooperation will never fall, because we have been accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ as His co-workers and partners. This is the hope of His calling for every believer. Even though upon the earth for the sake of our livelihood we might have some job or business, that is not our true business. Someone asked a poor believer "Who are you?" He replied, "I am a Christian". Again he was asked, "What is your occupation"? He replied, "To eat my bread, I am a labourer but as a believer I am a co-worker with my Lord working with Him for His heavenly habitation".

JULY 10

"... my refuge, is in God" (Psalm 62:7).

Going by the signs of the times and the prophecies in the Word of God, God's people should be prepared for the coming situations which may lead them to some more trials and afflictions. But thank God for we have a strong refuge in the Lord to which we can run for shelter, protection and safety. Among many names given to the Lord Jesus Christ in God's Word, one is Refuge. As we see in Psalm 18:2. "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower". Also in Psalm 46:7,11 we read, "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge". Those who know Him as their personal Saviour can run to Him for everlasting refuge.

In the Old Testament period the Lord told Joshua to assign six cities of refuge for the slayer who killed a person unawares and unwittingly, to flee there for refuge from the avenger of blood. (Joshua 20:2,3). This refuge was only for a short time, that is, as long as the high priest was alive. But the shelter and refuge which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ is forever. The six cities of refuge were Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan. These names help us to understand more fully the kind of refuge which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First city of refuge was Kedesh which means holy. Some people think that God may forgive some of their sins but not all because they are many. There is a constant struggle in their hearts as to how they can become holy and righteous before God. Heb. 12:14 says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord". Similarly Matt 5:48 says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect". Again in 1 Peter 1:16 we read, "Be ye holy; for I am holy".

With that longing to become holy, many people give charity, go on pilgrimage and some even afflict their bodies. Roman Catholics think that by taking part in the Holy Mass at least some of their sins will be forgiven though not all. That is how many try to become holy by some means or the other, but they become worse and worse. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our holiness. He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). He covers all our sins, past, present and future. It is a complete salvation. In many cases this truth becomes our experience after many years. The devil creates doubts in many hearts saying God does forgive some sins because He is merciful, but to have the other sins forgiven, one must fast and pray and go on pilgrimage or give charity. This is how they are deceived. Going by 1 Cor. 1:30 the Lord Jesus Christ is our holiness and righteousness. He gives us full salvation. None of us can add anything to it. We have to thank Him constantly for becoming our righteousness. Then the peace of God will come into us and we will become holy.

JULY 11

"Trust in him at all times; ... God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:8).

The second city of refuge was Shechem (Joshua 20:2,7). Shechem means shoulder. The Lord Jesus Christ is only our Redeemer and Saviour, but He is also our Burden-bearer. He says in Matt. 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He undertakes to bear all our burdens. Many people know Him as the One Who forgives sins, but never enjoy Him as their Shechem. We can put any burden upon His shoulder however heavy it may be. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee" (Psalm 55:22). We can put all our burdens upon the Lord, whether they are personal, or pertaining to our family or assembly, as His shoulders are strong enough to bear all our burdens. The same Lord Who helped us in the past is able to help us now and in the future.

Thirdly, Hebron means fellowship. First of all our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). Then we have fellowship with other believers. We must maintain our fellowship with God the Father and God the Son regularly through our quiet time, and share our thoughts, problems and burdens in prayer. Before we seek human sympathy, we must seek the favour of God. Then He will make every provision for our fellowship with other believers, not only for food but for spiritual help by sharing burdens and praying together.

When we have to go to a strange and far off place, our first concern is about fellowship. But believers need not feel lonely, as the Lord will provide helpful fellowship. When a believer is transferred or sent on promotion, the first reaction is to try for cancellation and seek prayer help. They are worried about their children's education and many other family matters. But we have the Lord Who will make every provision for our fellowship and all our needs. I have found during the past many years how the Lord has made wonderful provision for all my needs through fellowship. After my conversion in December 1929, my first prayer was, "Lord, I have been to good homes with high class furniture and all comforts but I have never lived in a real Christian home, I do not want any comfort; I only want a true Christian home". The same week a lady came to me and said, "We have heard that you are a stranger here. We have one room lying vacant. As long as you are here you can stay there", I said, "I will pray about it," but in my heart of hearts I wanted to accept the offer. When I prayed about it, the Lord said to me, "That is the home I have provided for you". After some weeks I shifted to that house. It was a happy Christian home. It was there that I read the whole Bible for the first time, and it was there that I heard God's call for His service and decided to serve Him; through them I had an opportunity to meet many good Christians. Now I thank God for all the provision He has made for my fellowship. Thus God provides fellowship in every country. In a true sense my Lord becomes my Hebron.

JULY 12

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, ...in whom I will trust; ..." (Psalm 18:2).

The fourth city of refuge was Bezer. Bezer means strong. The Lord Jesus Christ is our strength in our weakness. Many times we feel very weak and discouraged. Paul says in 2 Cor. 12:10, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong". In our weakness God gives extra strength to conquer our trials and temptations. The Lord Jesus Christ personally is our Bezer, our strength in all our weaknesses and shortcomings. I know my weakness, that I stutter and stammer. I have to claim the Lord's help for every word to be spoken. In the beginning of my ministry I questioned the Lord why He made me a stammerer. He told me that He wanted me to depend upon Him completely. In the early days sometimes I had to walk thirty miles in Punjab, North India, to take meetings. The Lord put strength in me for walking, with the bedding on my shoulders and also for taking the meetings. We have to pray with faith, "Lord, we are Thy servants. We are going in Thy will for Thy service. Give us strength". Similarly, when we have any heavy responsibility in our family, or office, we can claim His strength. He is our Bezer in our limitations and weaknesses. He is our unfailing and sufficient strength.

Fifthly, Ramoth means height. The Lord wants us to rise very high in our spiritual life. We see in Deut. 31:11-13 how an eagle makes its young one to fly high when they are small. In the same way our Lord wants us to rise high spiritually. The mother eagle comes and starts shaking the nest till it is broken. Then the eagles start falling from the nest. The mother eagle takes them on its wings, goes high and again drop them. This is repeated many times till the young birds learn to fly high. In the same way the Lord wants us to fly very high, that is, to have a deeper experience of Himself. For that purpose He must break our plans. We may go on crying. "Lord, have mercy upon us, see our condition". But the Lord goes on breaking us till we are brought to a high place spiritually where He has everything best for us. He breaks our plans to bring us into His plan. Then we enjoy all the hidden mysteries of God's Word, and know what high purposes He has in saving us (Isa. 58:14). That is God's desire for us. The more we delight in doing God's will the more we rise high.

Sixthly, Golan means circle. In a circle there is no starting point. Every point can be the starting as well as ending point. A circle stands for eternity. There is no beginning or ending, light or darkness, day or night in eternity. Day by day the Lord is preparing us for eternity. There are some lessons which we have to learn upon the earth to make us fit for heaven. Upon the earth, we want to become very clever teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers and so on. The Lord has sought us and saved us to keep us in His heavenly plan. When we go to heaven, we will know the value of the lessons which He has taught us upon the earth. That is why we can rejoice in all circumstances (Rom. 8:37,38). Whatever may happen to us, it is allowed by God to make us effective servants. Our poverty, sickness, trials and difficulties train us for effective ministry. That is how we can conquer all our temptations.

We should say by faith that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Kedesh, our holiness; our Schechem our shoulder; our Hebron, our true fellowship; our Bezer, our strength; our Ramoth, our spiritual height; our Golan, our eternity. That is how He become our perfect, everlasting, strong, refuge.

JULY 13

"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men" (Proverbs 4:14).

On the battlefield, Ahab suggested to Jehoshaphat that he wear royal robes, while Ahab himself went in disguise (2 Chron. 18:29). Ahab might have thought that he would be able to save himself, and direct attention towards Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, had become so foolish that he had even lost common sense. Apparently his brain was not functioning. Being such a wise king he should have thought, "Why does Ahab want me to put on my royal robes when he himself is going under a disguise? Whenever we disobey God, our brain will not function properly and we will behave like fools, rushing even to our own destruction.

Ahab's enemy had instructed his men to attack only the king of Israel and not any of the soldiers. So the men were specially looking for the king to kill him. When they saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they left everyone else in the armies of Israel, and surrounded Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat might have thought, "When they see my robes they will recognize that I am the king of Judah, and they will not come near me". But in the battlefield Ahab had put Jehoshaphat in the front, and the enemy was deceived into thinking that he was the king of Israel. Thus Jehoshaphat was brought into such a situation that any moment he might have been killed. We see here how the downward path that Jehoshaphat had taken, lead him to its natural end-DEATH. Any moment he might have been killed.

In the hour of crisis on the battlefield, Jehoshaphat repented, and the Lord saved him (v.31). How merciful our Lord is! After all, Jehoshaphat was a man of God, even though he had fallen under the influence of Ahab and Jezebel, which had brought so much loss and blindness into his life. So now, when Jehoshaphat cried unto the Lord, the Lord saved him. But Ahab, the king of Israel, was killed (v.33). His disguise was no protection for Him.

Like Jehoshaphat, many Christians, even servants of God, enter into contracts with worldly friends and worldly associations, and thereby bring much damage and loss in their lives. They too may come to the state when they despair of life-whether spiritually, or even literally. They wait till that last minute to repent, and then some of them find that it is too late.

JULY 14

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4).

Our loving Lord wants us to be abundantly fruitful. Such a life of fruitfulness will not be easy. You must be near to the heart of God, to bear much fruit spiritually. By abiding in Him you can be fruitful (John 15:4).

Secondly, by longing for His life to be poured into you constantly and freely, just as the sap flows into the tree and the branches, you can be fruitful. Sometimes, one branch of a tree will be withered because that branch is affected by some disease. You have to search yourself constantly to be sure that the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is flowing into you freely and abundantly. If not, examine yourself to determine what is preventing the flow, and confess such a sin and receive the Lord's forgiveness.

Thirdly, by pruning we can bear fruit. "... every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it" (John 15:2). Watch the gardener purging the branches of the vine. Every branch is cut in such a way that it yields bunches of grapes. At Hampton court Palace, near London, a vine was planted more than two hundred years ago. It is a very old vine but it is wonderful to look at, as it fills a large dome-shaped room. When it starts yielding fruit we can see thousands of branches. For two hundred years it has been yielding fruit because it is pruned very carefully. Our Lord is saying that we need to be pruned and purged to bear fruit. Only a careful gardener knows how to purge and prune. That is why God permits painful sorrows and trials to make us more fruitful, not to punish us.

JULY 15

"...walk honestly toward them that are without, ...that ye may have lack of nothing" (1 Thess. 4:12).

"And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen. 31:3). "So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him" (Gen. 35:6). There was an interval of about thirteen years between these two events. Although Jacob left Mesopotamia immediately after God spoke to him, he did not go

straight to Bethel, but halted for many years at Shechem. It was because of this partial obedience that Jacob suffered many things there. Sometimes we also, like Jacob, do not obey God fully. Jacob should have returned to his father's house earlier. But instead of depending upon God and His promises, he began to depend upon his own cleverness, and set about to deceive his father-in-law. Through his scheming, all the strong cattle became his and weaker ones Laban's. Jacob might have argued within himself that he needed wealth for his children. There are many people who say that they have large families and that is why they have to tell lies and take bribes. But whatever gain they may get by such means, it will never bring them any real prosperity or happiness. So even though Jacob's cattle increased he was not at peace. Laban's children became jealous of Jacob and talked among themselves saying that he had got all his wealth from their father by foul means. Whenever we use worldly ways to become prosperous we must be prepared to face people's jealousy, hatred and strife. We cannot put all the blame upon them for this, seeing that our own behaviour has provoked them to jealousy.

It was at this point that God appeared to Jacob again, saying, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen 31:3). If Jacob had been an honest man he would have frankly told his father-in-law what had happened, trusting God to make him to send him back happily with his wives, children, servants and cattle. Instead of this he departed secretly without Laban's knowledge. Since Jacob had got his cattle by wrong means, he must have felt guilty and uncomfortable in mind, and thus his faith was weakened. Whenever you do something questionable your faith will be weakened and you will fall an easy prey to Satan.

JULY 16

"Ye are the salt of the earth... Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13,14).

The girdle held Aaron's long, loose white robe in the proper place. The girdle speaks of faith and reminds us that we have to claim the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ day by day, and that we should not depend upon our own abilities in serving Him. We must depend upon His strength all the time, and receive His life by faith. Usually we forget to do this, and that is why we fail so often to serve Him effectively, and find at last that our labours have been wasted. It may take many such failures for us to learn to put our faith in Him. So the girdle reminds us that it is by faith we receive strength to serve Him, and not by our own talents nor by our own wisdom.

The blue robe and the ephod worn over the white robe by the high priest teach us an important lesson. In Matt. 5:13-15, the Lord compares us to salt and light. We have this two-fold thought in the blue robe and the ephod. The blue robe and the ephod stand for salt and light. We have to be like salt to our fellow-believers. When we gather as believers for worship and prayer, we help one another to enjoy God's presence. Only believers can really partake with us at such times. Thus like salt, we are useful to one another.

For unbelievers we have to be like light. The life which we live as Christians will be of great help to them. They will be blessed by the life of Christ which they see in us, and will be inspired through our testimony. Thus the blue robe and the ephod show us the two-fold responsibility we have towards believers and unbelievers. Believers are few in number as compared with unbelievers. Yet they have a powerful influence in the world, like the small quantity of salt which gives taste to our food. Believers who are comparatively few in number, form the Church of God upon the earth and show forth God's glory to the world.

JULY 17

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16).

The Lord Jesus Christ has to teach all of us much about His grace. He came into the world to bring grace and truth. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In John 1:16 we read about His fullness. He came into this world to bring us into His fullness which can be received and enjoyed by His grace. The apostle is testifying that as apostles they had the privilege of beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and this glory is described in these two words, "full of grace and truth". What they had seen and what they called glory is grace and truth. Now you see the more you enjoy the grace of God, the more you will enjoy His fullness; it is not by seeing some signs, miracles or wonders that we see the glory of God. The apostles had the privilege of seeing almost all the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. But they did not see His full glory through the miracles. When they saw the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth, they behold His glory. It is the enjoyment of God's grace that helps us to see His glory.

The apostle Paul spoke much about the grace of God. He never had the power to speak or preach except by the grace of God. In all his life and preaching we find the word grace coming again and again. In Eph 2:8 he writes "For by grace are ye saved". Man does not have the least part in that salvation. It is only the gift of God which is received by grace and grace alone.

In 1 Cor. 15:10, Paul says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am...". Others might say, "Because of his education, culture and some other qualification he became a great apostle". But as far as he was concerned, he said very clearly that he was what he was by God's grace and that is true of every servant of God. In our folly we think because of our qualification, property, nationality and culture we are what we are. But when we see our own limitations, we realize that we are nothing in ourselves. Then alone can we be His servants and serve Him in many ways. The apostle Paul says in 1 Cor 3:5-8, how we are nothing. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour". In our blindness we take pride in our gifts and talents, and because of this we think we can do this or that for the Lord. But we see clearly from God's Word that no one can serve God by His own accomplishments of any kind and all that we do is only by God's grace. By ourselves we are nothing. It is not how you work or how you preach; if it is in your own strength you will not find any fruit in your labours and that is why Paul was saying that as far as he was concerned, he was nothing. We see in every epistle which he wrote, he begins with God's grace and also ends with God's grace. That means the main message which he wants to convey to us is the grace of God.

JULY 18

"... Why do ye also transgress the command of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3).

Aaron and his sons were washed with water before the congregation (Lev. 8:6). Water in the Bible represents the Word of God (Eph. 5:26). As they were washed with water before everybody, they were showing to the people that they were being set apart for God's service for the whole nation, and they had to be kept under the Word of God for everything. Aaron was not to follow any man-made custom or tradition but only God's Word. Many people, instead of following God's Word, follow traditions, practices and customs of man. That is why they do not grow spiritually. We have instructions given in the Word of God for all our needs, problems and activities. Unless we honour God's Word fully we have no right to claim our full share in His fullness. We lose our share in God's fullness by ignoring Word of God. We have to make very strong decision and promise to God saying, "Lord, I will obey Thy Word implicitly in all my activities, ways and plans." With that vision, the Lord led us in the work in Chennai many years ago. We saw believers everywhere slaves to customs and traditions of man. We noticed that those who were free from customs of man had gone on well with the Lord, but those who were slaves to customs were blind spiritually. They cannot enjoy God's Word fully and they cannot know God's

plan and purpose for their lives. That is why, before the congregation of many lakhs of people Moses washed Aaron and his sons. It was not for the public display but for an example.

First of all, Aaron had to be blameless. By God's power he became blameless. As God chose him by His own mighty hand, he was made without any blemish. Similarly, if we try our best to be without any blemish, we will never succeed. We are bound to have some fault, failure or weakness somewhere, sometime. It is not by our human efforts we are made righteous. The Lord Jesus Christ is our righteousness and justification. He makes us complete and perfect not by ourselves but as we read in Col. 2:10, "ye are complete in him." This is very helpful and important verse. The Lord Jesus Christ is my perfection and my justification. That is why we pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowingly or unknowingly we declare, "Lord, by myself I have no right to come unto Thee, but because of what Thou hast done for me, I come to Thee." God was reminding Aaron that if he had to serve Him, he must keep himself in subjection to God's word completely in everything. He was to make it a practice daily.

JULY 19

"...we should serve in newness of spirit" (Rom. 7:6).

From God's Word, we are being made to see how each and every one of us as God's witness can become fruitful and even abundantly fruitful in God's service. All of us as fellow-believers are called by God to a high heavenly calling, to serve Him as His co-workers. In two places in the Scriptures we are called God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). That privilege is not given to angels and that is why nowhere in the Bible we read of angels as God's co-workers. Our high heavenly calling is to build for Him His glorious, everlasting, heavenly Sanctuary.

From the story of Moses we see how God prepares us for His ministry. First of all, we see that our human Zeal cannot make us useful for God. Moses tried to serve God with his zeal and met with failure. Even though he made a great sacrifice in refusing to be called Pharaoh's daughter's son, and showed much zeal to serve the people of God and help them, he came across failure. He had to run away and hide himself in a desert with his father-in-law for forty years. During that period of forty years, he forgot what all he learned in Egypt. Even though the man of God was so mightily taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds, God could not use him. To make him forget all what he learnt in Egypt, God had to take him away from Egypt. Thus he became empty, before God could use him mightily and fruitfully.

Then God gave him a definite personal experience of His holiness (Exodus 3). None of us can be useful to God by our human qualifications, wisdom, or cleverness. First of all we need to have a personal experience of the loving and the living God. "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (v.2). By living in the desert with his father-in-law for forty years, Moses became like a dry bush. Only then he could become entirely dependent upon God and God's Word to serve Him and follow Him.

Then he saw the fire in the bush, and that bush was not consumed. He was made to see how God is holy; God wants us to be indwelt by Him. In a symbolic way it speaks of the experience of new birth. We know that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18). According to God's standard, He wants us to have everlasting righteousness. Only then we can become His co-workers for eternity in His heavenly kingdom. This burning bush and the divine fire, speak of the righteousness of God - God's own righteousness. According to Rom. 10:3,4 there is God's righteousness and there is our righteousness. Moses tried to become righteous before God by his own wisdom and zeal for his people. No one could

find any fault in his life at that time. He was a man of great sacrifice. Always he had some way to help his people. That way he become self-righteous. What we do in self-righteousness cannot please God. When Moses saw the fire, he understood how he had to become righteous before God. Now having become righteous, Moses heard God's voice (Exo. 3:4). After we become righteous by God's righteousness, we have to receive heavenly, definite, commission to serve God in some capacity.

JULY 20

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

Upon this earth we can never find anyone who is perfect. All of us as human beings have the old sinful Adamic nature and hence we are bound to fall again and again. Only when we see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face, shall we be like Him. Till then all of us make mistakes, sometimes, somewhere. The Psalmist says in Psa. 130:3, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Yes, if we truly examine ourselves in the light of His Word, and before His searching eyes, none of us can stand. Even the apostle Paul said in Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." He also tells us about the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, which was going on in his heart. We too have to face such battles. But there is no need to be discouraged. Our Lord is full of compassion. Psalm 130:4 says that there is forgiveness with the Lord. The moment we go to Him confessing our sins He forgives us because He died for our sins. His love and compassion are far more than we can ever understand. Any time we fail or are defiled by thought, word or deed we must humble ourselves and by faith claim His precious blood for deliverance. Then we will be cleansed, forgiven, restored and enabled to walk in the Spirit according to Gal. 5:16.

Whenever we are defiled we must go to the Lord at once and confess, saying, "Lord, I have defiled myself. Have mercy upon me. I trust in Thy mercy for forgiveness, and in Thy precious blood for cleansing." This is how our fellowship with Him will be restored. We have His promises in Psalm 37:23,28,38,39 and also in Proverbs 24:16. In our weak moments the devil sometimes deceives us, but there is always provision for us in the precious blood of Jesus for cleansing and full restoration.

JULY 21

"..we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3).

When all the tribes had acknowledged David as king, the Jebusites also were defeated, yet there were some Philistines who refused to come under the lordship of David (2 Sam. 5:17,18). While he was pursued by Saul and was hiding in the cave of Adullam David had learned to seek God's counsel and enquire from Him before going anywhere. "And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand" (2 Sam. 5:19). Under God's guidance he was able to defeat the Philistines who came against him (verse 22). Thus we find how our human nature rebels against the Headship and the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may come under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in one area but other areas are left open.

These Philistines were very strong and they used every possible means to refuse to come under the kingship of David. But David did not depend upon his own army or his own wisdom for victory. He enquired from God how to fight and where to fight. In this case he had to wait and hear the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees before they went against the Philistines (vs. 24). That speaks of the moving of the Spirit of God. By worldly weapons of warfare we cannot defeat the enemy and come under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only by the spiritual weapons of warfare that we can defeat the enemy. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the

pulling down of strong holds): Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4,5). That is the only way by which we can defeat the enemy, and keep ourselves constantly under the Kingship and the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan has great enmity against the Headship and the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we find many people rebelling against His Kingship and becoming independent. God had to drive out all the enemies of David and then make him king over all. May the Lord teach us how to keep ourselves under the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ in every matter.

JULY 22

"And upon the first of the week...the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7).

The early believers used to gather regularly on every Lord's day for the breaking of bread. The main purpose for our gathering together on the Lord's day is to remember our Lord, the price He paid to be our Saviour, and His second coming to make us like Himself. If we take part in the Lord's Table worthily, regularly, faithfully and humbly we will grow spiritually.

We keep the table in the middle to remind us that all of us are equal in His sight and have equal access to Him. At the table we understand the mystery of the Body of Christ, that we are all unto Him equally precious, equally necessary and equally important. By taking part in the Lord's Table we testify that He is our bread and He is our drink and in Him we are fully satisfied. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst". (John 6:35). By taking part worthily we are freed from all worldly desires and worldly attractions. When we partake of the Lord's Table worthily we enjoy oneness with all believers of all classes. That is why both men and women are invited equally in the Name of the Lord Jesus to take part in worship and in the Table. All those who are born again, whose sins are forgiven, who have found true peace in the Lord Jesus Christ and are looking for His coming, can take part. But they should take part with clean hands, good conscience and pure heart.

In 1 Cor. 10:21 the apostle speaks of two tables, the Table of the Lord and the table of the devil. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of the devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils". Worldly pleasures, worldly music, worldly parties, worldly functions, worldly associations, worldly fashions and worldly books speak of the devil's table. The Lord's Table speaks of God's plan, God's Church and God's House. We cannot take part in both. If we seek our satisfaction in the devil's table we cannot take part in the Lord's Table. There are many believers throughout the world who are hungry for the devil's table - cinema, theatres, dancing, worldly books, T.V., world parties and worldly music. If that is your condition you cannot take part in the Lord's Table. You must be able to say, "The Lord is my satisfaction and I have no other desire." By taking part in the Lord's Table we testify together saying, "The Lord is my spiritual bread and spiritual drink: by faith I feed upon Him and He is my full satisfaction."

If you are defiled by sinful thoughts, deeds or words put things right before taking part in the Lord's Table, Go upon your knees and pray, "Lord, test me, prove me, examine me, search me, weigh me and help me to take part worthily" (Psa. 139:23,24). If we take part unworthily, the Scripture says, we will be doing so for damnation. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27,29). By taking part worthily we give a practical proof of the working of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ in us. Through the power of resurrection we become righteous and by the same power we go on conquering earthly trials. "...Jesus our Lord...was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"

(Romans 4:24-25). After examining ourselves we should take part in the Lord's Table, with humility and thankfulness, respectfully and by faith.

JULY 23

"... there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me..." (2 Cor. 12:7).

There is some painful thorn in every life which is beyond human understanding. We wonder why God allows that thorn in our lives. You can go to any preacher, attend any convention or read any book, you face the same questions. "Why has the Lord allowed this thorn in my life? I do not mind any other thorn, but this particular thorn is very painful which I cannot bear. Why should that thorn come through that friend? I can never imagine that a friend should become a thorn in my life?. That is where we get puzzled; we cannot understand these things. We read the Bible and other books and pray and yet we get no answer. We go to many friends and yet have no answer. Then we go on saying. "That preacher is not good, he does not answer any questions. I have a painful thorn and I wonder why the Lord has allowed that thorn in my life". Even if you go to the third heaven you will never get an answer. Whatever the thorn may be, it must remain in your flesh. We have no right to know why thorns are allowed in our lives. Only God knows. It is something in your life, through friends, neighbours, husband or wife, preachers, church elders or anyone else. The fact remains that you have a thorn and you find it extremely painful to bear it. That thorn has taken away your peace. Your hunger for God's Word has gone and you feel so puzzled, confused and perplexed. You find yourself weak and begin to search your heart. You confess your sins, known and unknown. Whenever you confess your sins, you are washed and forgiven, but the thorn is still there, because God wants to teach you about His grace. What we can never learn in any way, we will learn by a thorn allowed by God in His sovereign way. As our Creator God has every right to keep silent. You cannot command Him to give you an answer right now. He will keep silent in many matters in our lives. He will not answer all our questions. You will find that some of your questions will remain unanswered till you die. The Lord will give you an answer only when you see Him face to face. God says, "It is My way to teach you about My grace, and it is abundant grace". It is by grace we have the privilege of enjoying salvation. You may think that you know all about grace, but God has to teach you much more about grace.

Please see 1 Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you". Here Peter calls Him the God of grace. God has called us unto His eternal glory. God wants us to behold His glory, be partakers of that glory, enjoy His kingdom and live with Him and reign with Him, all because of His grace. God is thinking of eternity and His eternal kingdom and glory. Our sufferings are for a while. Though it appears to be many years, in God's sight it is only a few seconds. Do not worry about your thorn.

JULY 24

"... a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:12).

Ruth had gone to Bethlehem with the earnest desire to know more about the God of Israel. The God of Israel took note of this desire, and in His sovereign grace led her to a company of devout people, and to Boaz, a God fearing man.

See the way the servant introduced Ruth to Boaz. "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi" (Ruth 2:6). these words show that in the very short period Ruth had been in Bethlehem, people

had come to know of her devotion to the Lord and her great longing for spiritual things. The people of God had taken note of her love and sacrifice for the Lord, and were speaking about these qualities in her. If your devotion and love for the Lord are sincere, and if you are prepared for any sacrifice in order to know Him more intimately, your fellow-believers will notice this fact, and it will be a sweet savour for the Lord, wherever you go.

More important than that, Boaz noticed this sweet savour about her. Mark his words in chapter 2:12: "...the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust". Before she spoke a word to him about her great longing, Boaz understood that she had come to put her trust under the wings of the God of Israel. It was this which brought her into his favour, and eventually made her his wife.

Most of all GOD noticed the sweet fragrance of her character. Ruth had come to Israel with the desire to know more about the God of Israel. The God of Israel took note of her sincerity of purpose, and blessed her. He favoured her to such an extent that she became the grand-mother of Israel's great king, David, thus was made a link in His eternal plan to bring forth His Son into the world. God blessed Ruth, and in blessing her, many other were blessed through her. She thus proved in her life the truth of Jer. 29:13, "ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart". When we have an earnest desire to know more about the Lord, and have a hunger for God's word, the Lord will make full provision to satisfy our longing and bless many others through us.

The book of Ruth begins with a famine and ends with a note of triumph and rejoicing. If your life has become barren and unfruitful, search yourself to find out the cause of this famine. It may be that you are away from fellowship; or you are too busy with your worldly activities and you have cut short your prayer time. Whatever be the cause of the barrenness which has come into your life, there is no need for you to remain in this barren condition. If you turn back to the Lord in sincere repentance, the Lord will forgive you, and turn your sorrow into joy, and your tears into laughter. He will help you to recover every loss.

JULY 25

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not" (Hebrews 11:31).

Rahab was concerned about her own household. She requested the spies to show kindness unto her father's house, and give her a true token that they would save them alive (Joshua 2:11,12). Similarly every believer can claim salvation for his or her family, accordingly to the promise given to us in Acts 16:31. As we claim by faith, salvation for our relatives, we will be given a full share in the great Heavenly inheritance. Many people say that they are born again but when we question them whether they are praying for their friends and unconverted members of their families, they have no answer. If we also are concerned about the salvation of our relations we will have our full share in the inheritance. We must claim God's promise and go on interceding on behalf of our unsaved ones. We may have to wait for a long time before we see our prayers being answered, but without fainting we must continue in prayer and claim deliverance for the whole household.

Then Rahab tied the scarlet thread on the window. This means that by faith she came under the sprinkling of the blood. The spies might have told her how in Egypt they were delivered from the angel of death by the sprinkling of blood on the lintels and doorposts. She gathered all her people and by faith tied the scarlet thread as much as to say that she brought them all under the blood, and thus she and her family were delivered from the coming judgment. She did this straightway without wasting time in spite of the fact that Joshua and the children of Israel were still very far away. Even though she knew that Jericho was a strong city with very thick walls, and that there were many mighty men of valour in the city to fight against the children of Israel, still her faith was firm and great, and she believed in the victory of the living God. That is why without any delay she tied the scarlet thread. It is through faith,

and simple faith alone that we can claim salvation and thus find ourselves ready to receive the great heavenly inheritance.

JULY 26

"For the preaching of the cross is ... unto us which are saved...the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

For many centuries men blindly worshipped a figure of the cross and burned incense before it. See what God says; "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God... But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:18,24). Because of sin all men have become foolish before God and extremely weak. We work so hard to earn money, and then waste it afterwards. We use our hands and feet to bring sin and shame. Our lives are a misery. But God has planned to restore us, and make us all wise and strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. That wisdom and power can come only from the cross.

The Lord says, "And I, if I be lifted up..., will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). But how foolish men are! They think they can draw others by their worldly wisdom, works and money. That is why you see so much barrenness in Christian work in many parts of the world. But those who have received the cross and have come into the experience of the cross are completely transformed and they go on being transformed till they become like Christ.

The work of the cross in your life cannot be done easily. It can be done only by the Holy Spirit. It may happen in your life now or sometime later. But one thing is certain, once you understand the meaning of the cross you will never be the same person again. There will be a new person in your life. Christ died that you may die to your old nature. He rose again that you may rise with Him and become a new creation.

There is much to be said about the cross. Why did Christ die such a death? He did not die for angels, they have no need. Nor did He die for Himself, He did no sin. He did not die for birds or animals. He died for me; whether you know it or not, He died for you. Why then did He die for sinful men though He did no sin Himself? Why was He mocked by wicked men, and why did such a sinless Person die? I wish to answer these questions by giving you seven points about the cross. Firstly, He died for my sins, to free me from judgment and from the condemnation of sin. Secondly, He died that I may die to my wretched sinful nature. Thirdly, He died that I may die to the world and its deception. Fourthly, He died to put an end to the old creation. When you cut the trunk of a tree the whole tree falls down. Similarly when God Who is our Creator died, He died to put an end to the old creation. Fifthly, He died to become my living bread. Sixthly, He died to make us one body and one family. Seventhly, He died to make us entirely new like Himself. When these truths are clear to us, and when by faith we look to the cross of the Lord Jesus, we receive new life.

JULY 27

"... I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10).

In order to be fitted into God's plan we have to be kept constantly under the Headship and the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the author of the New Testament, by the New Covenant writes divine laws upon our hearts (Heb. 8:8-11). By the old covenant all men were brought under condemnation. They were made to see their absolute corruption. The Lord Jesus Christ as the author of the new covenant conquered all temptations, fulfilled all the commandments and Himself became our righteousness by the power of resurrection. By the same power He writes His laws upon our hearts. Even the weakest believer can follow the Lord through the Holy Spirit. In Galatians chapter five Paul the apostle, uses three expressions for a Spirit-filled life: walk in the Spirit (v.16); be led of

the Spirit (v.18): and live in the Spirit (v. 25). When we walk we go step by step, we do not jump. According to Prov.3:6 in all our ways we must acknowledge His Lordship. That means at every step we have to seek His help. According to Psa.37:23 our steps are ordered by Him. The Holy Spirit will govern and lead us and thus we can live in the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Chief Engineer knows the plan of the Heavenly habitation, but He will not show us the entire plan at a time. We have to receive instructions from Him day by day. It is a daily exercise. But many times we fail to seek God's help, wisdom and guidance for our daily tasks and ministry. When we are under God's perfect plan, we can enjoy the true peace of God. That is why when the Temple was being built in the days of Solomon, no tool such as a hammer or an axe was used (1 Kings 6:7). God told David that the Temple was going to be built by his son Solomon. We read in 1 Chron. 28:19 that God gave David, the whole plan in writing. The workers had to follow that plan in every detail. They used very big stones beautifully cut for building the Temple. There was no need for any instrument or hammer at the site: they were already cut to the size and shaped beautifully. Thus the work went on quietly. This speaks of peace and quietness. When we are under God's heavenly plan there will be growing heavenly peace in our hearts.

JULY 28

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

In the third chapter of Nehemiah, we find that every one was given some important task to be done, irrespective of their status, whether they were priests, nobles, merchants or goldsmiths (vs. 8,31,32). Although Shallum the son of Halohesh was the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem (v. 12) yet he and his daughters came forward to do their share of the work. The high priest, Eliashib and his brethren took a leading part in the work of the Lord (v.1).

These days we find even among servants of God that some of them do not want to take up any strenuous or hard work. Some people expect special consideration and regard to be shown to them as if they are in some way superior to or different from others. We all should take some share in the work of God no matter who we are and from what background we come. The lesson we have to learn here is willingness to serve Him and remain in divine order. In the House of God we cannot make our own choice but we have to do only God's will. His order, His command and His plan should be our aim. If people had not obeyed Nehemiah, the walls of Jerusalem would not have been built. Because of their obedience to his leadership in spite of the opposition of the enemies they moved ahead working till they had finally completed the work. This became possible for Nehemiah only as the people did not bother him with requests for special concessions or considerations to be given to them.

The Lord Jesus is our heavenly Nehemiah. He has the perfect plan for building the New Jerusalem. If we allow God's order and plan in His House, and remain under the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ and do everything as unto Him, then alone we will have the honour to see life flowing through us to different parts of the world as we go about toiling as His co-labourers. The Lord keeps a record of what we are doing and how we are doing it. Let us learn to use the secret of taking part whole-heartedly to notice how God will supply extra strength, grace and wisdom for whatever work we undertake to do. We will also enjoy spiritual oneness and love among ourselves (John 13:35).

JULY 29

"I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:18).

The joy of the Lord can be enjoyed at all times. It is not occasionally or for a short period. Our life is always subject to changes because of different circumstances such as sickness, persecution, pain,

poverty, loneliness and bereavement. But this joy can be experienced even in very unhappy situations, because it is the joy of the Lord. The Bible says in 1 Thess. 5:16 about this joy, "Rejoice evermore".

Also this joy cannot be snatched away from us by anyone, friends or enemies, relations or strangers. "...your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:22). Enemies may rob us of our earthly joy, but they cannot take away the joy which is from heaven. Some people through jealousy and enmity bring false accusations against us and try to take away our earthly joy. But this joy of the Lord "no man taketh from us". If your joy is truly spiritual and heavenly no one can tamper with it.

The joy of the Lord is a peculiar joy which can be enjoyed even when one loses all that he has. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3:17-18). In the year 1935, I myself saw how 58,000 people died in 18 seconds in the Quetta earthquake. The few believers who lived there miraculously escaped death although they lost everything they had. They were singing songs and enjoying Bible study meetings. They were least worried about what they had lost. Their joy was real, not depending upon wealth, property, position or job.

Sorrow cannot take away the joy of the Lord. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). You might wonder how there can be any joy in sorrow. But it is God Who gives such a joy. The Lord Jesus could make a stormy sea perfectly calm and quiet (Matt. 8:26). In the same way God's people enjoy great peace within their hearts even in the midst of great sorrow and bereavement, or any kind of suffering or trial. In times of sorrow we must go upon our knees and say, "God cannot make a mistake. His love never changes. His Word never changes. He is sovereign". Thus we will see that a true believer never loses his joy even in intense sorrow or grief.

JULY 30

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

In the dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a huge image, with a head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay. Then the king saw a stone "cut out without hands" and it fell upon the feet of the image, and broke the whole image into pieces. It became like chaff or dry straw which the wind carried away. Then the stone began to increase till it became a big mountain, which filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:35).

In this simple way the Lord showed how in the end all the kingdoms of the world will be broken into pieces and the kingdom of the Living God will cover the whole universe. Now the stone cut without hands speaks of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin and laid as a babe in the manger. But one day His Kingdom will be established throughout the whole universe.

If you look at yourself as God sees you, you will see that right inside your heart also there is hidden a huge image. So far you may not have realized this, but by the light of the Word of God you can see those things which have been brought by Satan into the heart. In every heart is found the love for gold (earthly glory), silver (love for money), and brass (human strength), iron (human weapons) in greater or lesser degree. Men are not able to understand the grace of God, the power of God and the way of God, because their energy is being spent either upon gold, silver, brass or iron and it is these things which hinder you from coming near to God. If you realize your own condition you will find these four forces working, and that is why you have been carried away, pulled and dragged away from God's power again and again. The devil deceives us. You think that it is quite natural to be ambitious to have more money or income. But is this God's plan for you?

God wants for us, the true gold (divine nature), silver (redemption), and brass (divine strength) and iron (divine weapons). But before He can give us that, He must take away from us the false gold, false silver, and false brass and the false iron. That is how we first receive the Lord Jesus Christ as the Rock cut out without hands. We receive Him in a simple way by simple faith. Have you felt that Rock breaking the gold, the silver, the brass and the iron into pieces? And the wind began to blow and drive out the chaff. The wind is the symbol of the Holy Spirit coming into man's heart. It is the Holy Spirit Who drives out the chaff of gold, silver, brass and iron. The Rock we are told, increases and goes on increasing. It will fill you through and through till every lesser thing will be removed and your whole heart, and being will be filled with the Lord Jesus Christ. He will become your gold, silver, brass and iron.

JULY 31

"For the LORD's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. 32:9).

We are compared to a shining pearl. "...a merchant man...when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13:45,46). Generally pearls are noted for their beauty and brightness. We have to believe that even though we are foolish and weak in this world, we are very beautiful, valuable and precious in the sight of God. A child may be very ugly, stupid and dirty, yet with boldness it goes to the mother. That child is so precious to her. Our spiritual beauty is required by the Lord to confound the enemy. Before we were born again we were like filthy rags. The same filthy rag has now become a shining pearl.

Again, we are compared to everlasting inheritance. "For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. 32:9). Great men of the world take pride in their worldly inheritance. Our Lord does not receive us as strangers. He receives us as His everlasting inheritance of everlasting value and that is why He gives us boldness to call upon Him for all our needs and burdens. The Lord does not want us to suffer any loss. He cares for us more than He cares for any angel or for the heaven and earth which will pass away. They cannot be regarded as God's everlasting inheritance. They are things of vanity. But believers are God's everlasting inheritance. All these parables help us to call upon God boldly and with right. Only those who are not born again have to call upon Him for mercy. God is gracious and He welcomes and satisfies everyone.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). We are a chosen generation that means, we are chosen by God with a very high and lofty purpose which is beyond our comprehension. In the sky the stars are so beautiful and glorious, but they cannot show forth God's glory and greatness as believers do. We are a royal priesthood. We are both priests and kings. As kings and priests, we have the boldness to go into His presence with strong faith. We as spiritual people have wonderful opportunity to show forth His glory. Even in small matters, God shows forth His grace. He wants us to praise Him even for small matters.

August 1

"... Surely blessing I will bless thee" (Hebrews 6:14).

As Jacob journeyed towards Bethel, God appeared to him and spoke to him, "...Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee" (Gen. 32:9). What a great privilege it is to hear God's voice! It was as if God was saying, because Jacob had put away all the strange gods in his household He was pleased with him and was able to love him and speak to him freely. Now God was able to bless him fully and fulfil all that He had promised some years ago. "And, behold, I am with thee, ...and will

bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28:15).

Most of us have received promises from God's Word at different times: on a New Year's Day or on a birthday, or on some other special occasion. But perhaps you feel that in your case God has not fulfilled His promises. It is quite possible that your case is just like Jacob's: firstly, there might be some strange god in your life, and secondly, you might be still far away from Bethel. Do not be satisfied with the fact that you have received many blessings in the past. It was so with Jacob; he had received many blessings already, but God wanted to give him much more.

God had called Jacob Israel, a prince, but after twenty years, judging by his behaviour he had been only a beggar. So God was speaking to him once again asking him to live like a prince and not as beggar any longer. By this time he was ready to learn to walk like a prince. This is evident by the way he put away the strange gods in his household and journeyed towards Bethel; therefore, God was saying to him, you are a prince and kings will come out of your loins (Gen.35:11,12). From that time Jacob entered into the experience of being God's prince, prophet and friend. That is why before he died he called all his sons and blessed them with the blessings of God. That Lord said to Jacob, "I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply". When you also become a prince you will know God's power in your life. You will not be a coward any more.

August 2

"... ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

If God's Word is followed as it is, then all those who are joined by Him as life-partners can enjoy God's favour and fulness. Many people want to marry only for the sake of happiness and honour. They have no real interest in the Word of God. They are more concerned about their own ideas than God's Word. In many cases marriages are a failure, because they depend upon their cleverness, wisdom, family or property. Howsoever clever one may be, one can be blessed only by obeying the Word of God. God knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10). That is why we are given God's Word for instruction, inspiration and guidance. Knowing beforehand all the problems which we have to face upon the earth, God has given His Word to us. He knows us from the very beginning of our lives. He knows us before we are conceived (Jer. 1:5). He knows all about us. He knows our past and He knows our future. He knows our name and He knows exactly what we are. Our safety is in being governed by Him by His Spirit and by His Word. We will never know what will happen tomorrow. But He knows exactly what will happen tomorrow. That is why we are given the Word of God to guide us day by day and help us in the every situation.

Marriages are arranged by God from the beginning of the creation. That is why to God marriages are very sacred. God gave to the first man dominion, power and authority over the whole creation and also gave him a very healthy body. At that time, there was no sin, sickness or curse, yet his joy was not full. So God wanted to give him a help meet for companionship, friendship and fellowship. God has planned that whatsoever He had given to Adam he might enjoy it through his companion and through his life-partner. That is why we find, to God marriage is a very sacred relationship. Those who want a happy married life must be governed by the Word of God, and not by their own wisdom or cleverness or talents or qualification. We are given this wonderful Book to solve all our problems, and meet all our needs. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God. We need heavenly wisdom to understand heavenly things, not worldly wisdom. Before we can understand the Word of God we must have the Spirit of God. See 1 Cor. 2:14. By our natural wisdom we cannot understand or enjoy the Word of God. Though we may be very highly qualified in worldly knowledge, yet we can be a failure.

With all their knowledge, wealth and fame, some homes are not happy. They may be clever in earning money and multiplying it, but we find that their homes are unhappy. There is no oneness between

husband and wife and no real happiness between them. We see this is in many parts in the world. Our living God wants us to have full joy and happiness. That is the purpose of God and that is why the LORD Jesus came into this world. See John 16:24 and 15:7. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full". "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you". God's desire it to make our joy full.

August 3

"The elders which are among you I exhort..." (1 Peter 5:1).

Those who are responsible have to find out elders in every assembly. They have a very heavy responsibility. It is after much prayer, patience, instruction, teaching and discipline that the elders are brought forward. If you bring wrong men as elders they will be a source of trouble. Many assemblies are suffering because these men have never been called by God as elders. Some have pushed themselves forward, and some are pushed by friends who are dead spiritually. So we have to pray much as believers that the Lord may give His people the fivefold gifts, mentioned in Eph. 4:11.

In 1 Peter 5:2 we read, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." The flock speaks of sheep and those who are shepherds have to be with sheep all the time. The shepherds take the sheep to different pastures. At night time they have to be protected from wild beasts. A good shepherd stays with his sheep day and night. It is only such people who can become good, loving and kind elders. But in many cases we find that they want authority and position. They do not make any sacrifice for the sheep. They only want to be seen in the front as preacher and not as a servant.

Also in the same verse Peter says that elders should serve, not by constraint not for filthy lucre. How many elders have love for money! If you have love for money, and worldly things, you do not know what God's service is. These things have brought barrenness in God's service in many cases.

Further an elder should be an example to the flock. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3). Much love and much sacrifice are required to be faithful elders. We have to pray much and with greater burden that the Lord may give His people in every country true shepherds. They are not produced by knowledge but by prayer.

Every true shepherd looks for reward from the Lord Jesus Christ and not from man, because he is called not by man but by God Himself. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4).

August 4

"...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God... to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen " (Rev. 1:5,6).

John saw the Lamb come and take the sealed book from the hand of God. "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers for saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:8,9).

In these two verses the Holy Ghost has brought in so many truths. What a great Saviour, what a great salvation and what a great, high and lofty purpose God has for us in everything! All these are summed

up in these two verses. Every word has a deep meaning. That is why the four beasts and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb and worshipped Him. That goes to prove that these four beasts are living creatures and the twenty-four elders speak of the true Church. They are saying, "Thou art worthy", because He has redeemed us by His blood. They represent the whole Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, or those who have been redeemed by our Lord by His blood, and have been purchased by Him and who have become His purchased possession. They are singing a song of praise. They had the experience of salvation upon the earth but not full knowledge, as to Who the Lord is, what great love He showed in seeing and saving them, and what mighty power He has to raise them up, and how much power they are going to receive from Him. So they are full of thanksgiving. They are so grateful to Him that they fall down before Him and worship Him.

Till the Lamb came to take the Book, the elders were sitting quietly. But when the Lamb came near and opened the Book, they knew why He sought and saved them, and forgave them. He wanted to make them kings and priests to reign upon this earth for ever. The elders were so grateful when they knew this, that they fell before Him and cried, "O Lord, Thou art worthy to receive all honour, glory and blessing" and so on. When we go to heaven we will be able to see people of every kindred, tongue and nation. Even Cannibals and uncivilised people will be there. The Lord has chosen people from every tongue and nation and sought and saved them by His grace.

August 5

"Every branch... that beareth fruit, he purgeth it" (John 15:2).

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine ... thy children like olive plants" (Psalm 128:3). This is a beautiful picture of how we as members of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ come under His discipline. The Lord wants each believer to enjoy a fruitful life. The vine needs to be pruned every year. Only then will it bear much fruit. Even so if our lives are to bear any fruit for the Lord we will have to go through trials and sufferings. By pruning the entire vine it is brought under control. The branches are not allowed to grow haphazardly.

All these lessons are to be learnt in the House of God. Psalm 128:5 says, "The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem." Zion speaks of the heavenly Church and Jerusalem speaks of the Church on this earth. The vine needs rich manure and a strong scaffolding. In the same way **when we gather as fellow-believers for prayer, worship and Bible study we are strengthened in our inner man. It is in His House that our burdens are lifted, questions are answered, and lives become more subject to His will. When we are together we feel His presence more strongly and are protected against the seen and unseen devices of the enemy.** We can conquer our trials through love, co-operation and prayer-fellowship of other believers. Our godly friends can share our joys and sorrows. Worldly friends often have a wrong motive in their friendship. If they give you a gift they always expect to get a better one in return. But God's children do everything as unto the Lord. This kind of love and fellowship bring much blessing in our lives.

When we come under the Church discipline the enemy opposes us with all his fury. The first two verses of Psalm 129 describe how God's people have to go through all types of suffering. God wants to defeat the enemy and reveal His glory and love through the Church. The Lord Himself promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (Matt. 16:18,19), hence **by being together as a church, His Body, we can be saved from the attacks of the enemy.**

August 6

"For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary" (Psalm. 96:4-6).

The new song is given to us in God's House or sanctuary, because the Scripture says, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. God's fulness is in the Church. Only through the Church can God's manifold wisdom be made known (Eph. 1:23 and 3:10). That is why when the work of the sanctuary was completed God's glory came down and filled it (Exo. 40:34-38).

The children of Israel had seen many miracles in Egypt. They had seen the cloud going before them. They had witnessed the Red Sea parting to make a way for them. But they had not yet seen God's glory dwelling with them. Only when the work of the sanctuary was completed did God's glory come down and fill it and dwell there. From that day, from between the cherubim, God spoke to the children of Israel (Number 7:89).

God's true beauty and strength can be seen only in His sanctuary, which to us is the Church, because the Lord has promised, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." That is why Satan causes blindness to so many people and keeps them away for one reason or another from the fellowship of believers and they fail to enjoy God's power and His glory.

"Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts" (Psal. 96:7,8). If you want to sing the new song you have to come into the courts of God's House and there offer your thanksgiving and praise unto God. This song has to be sung together by all God's people. When we unite our hearts to sing songs of praise together, it is more melodious and inspiring. For this purpose you have to come into God's House. Those who have been really blessed by God will love to come to the Lord's House and praise Him in the midst of His people, "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness". The words "in the beauty of holiness" can also be translated as "in the glorious sanctuary". The meaning is this, that it is only in God's House, the glorious sanctuary, you will really know how to worship.

There are some people who find fault wherever they go. Even when they go to a place of worship, they keep passing remarks, "The building here is no good, the organ is not nice, the curtains are too old", and so on. This is the song they sing even in the place of worship. We should never be like that. When you come into the sanctuary your thoughts should be about God and what He has done for you, and what He is speaking and revealing to you there. Then you will be able to see His glory. So do not be thinking about the faults of men. If you do, blindness will remain in your heart. Try to see God's glory. Keep your heart open to receive the Word of God.

August 7

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

The Psalmist came to the House of God gladly, with a willing heart, and not by compulsion. Many believers have no desire to attend meetings, they have to be compelled to go to the House of God. Some are dragged by their mothers, some by friends, and some others by their children. They lose much of the blessing because they do not come with an expectant heart. On the contrary if they come joyfully to the House of God, they will receive the best blessings. Also we must go right inside the House of God. Some people attend meetings just for the sake of attending or because they were compelled to attend. They are quite satisfied to occupy the last seat because it is convenient for them to leave whenever they want. But, when you go right inside and take your full share in every part of service you will find much joy and strength, and then you will grow spiritually.

By thus coming into the House of God we are brought into the experience of the authority of God's throne (Psalm 122:5). As we pray together we can claim God's authority to bind Satan and his power. We cannot exercise this authority alone. It is given to the Church as a whole.

Again, by coming to God's House our peace increases and we prosper in our ways (Psalm 122:7). By taking our share joyfully, faithfully and regularly in God's House our peace and prosperity will multiply.

May the Lord grant us the burden and longing to be in His House along with His people to see His beauty forever and ever.

August 8

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

Those believers who are united in marriage in God's will must be able to have true fellowship between themselves. After the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead, they had food together. "There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him" (John 12:2). Food on the table speaks of spiritual food. Just as physical food is necessary for good health, we require spiritual food for our souls. That food can be received by having fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For that purpose, husband and wife should begin their day upon their knees with the Word of God before having breakfast, and pray, "Lord, we long for spiritual and heavenly food. We want to hear your voice. Please speak to both of us". With such a desire they should read their Bible systematically and regularly from Genesis to Revelation. Then God's Word becomes their daily spiritual food. When we have food with our friends, we enjoy it more because it becomes more tasty in fellowship. Thus by reading the Word of God regularly both morning and evening and asking the Lord for His guidance, they will receive spiritual food.

These days we find very few Christian homes having regular family prayers. As a result there are quarrels in many homes. In the beginning they quarrel once a week and that too secretly, but afterwards they quarrel everyday and even before other people. Their children also become stubborn, rebellious and wayward because they do not have family prayers in their homes. So, they should not neglect family prayers. They should share their spiritual experiences whenever possible and try to help each other to overcome any human weakness and shortcoming with love and longsuffering.

August 9

"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9).

Our God is a living God, He will work on our behalf. The knowledge of God's will gives us strong living faith.

While I was in Tokyo I was planning to go the Philippine Islands. I had to get a visa for that purpose. But I had scarcely any time to do this., as I was preparing to leave for a place in the North of Japan. I was wondering whether I should cancel my visit to the North or give up my efforts to get the visa for the Philippine Island. As I prayed the Lord told me clearly that He wanted me to go to North Japan and get the visa also. Then I heard a voice, "Go downstairs". There was no apparent reason for me to go down; but I obeyed the voice. I went downstairs and walked towards the corner. I saw a man packing up things to go home. I asked him if he had any form to apply for a visa. He gave one to me. Then I asked him if he would take me to the office where I could get a visa. He replied he would gladly do this for me. If I had not gone downstairs that moment I would not have been able to get it. I went in a taxi to the office for a visa. But I did not have any Japanese money with me to pay for the taxi. I had only American money. But I knew that the Lord wanted me to go to that office that day; so my faith gave me boldness. As I went a man asked me if I could take him also in the taxi that way, as he was going in the same direction. I readily agreed. On the way, I spoke to him about the Lord and gave him my testimony. When we got down he insisted on paying the bill. In this way the Lord undertook for all my

needs. If you only wait for God until you are conscious of His presence, He will lead you Himself in His perfect way.

August 10

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

It has been the desire of God from the very beginning of the creation that man should inherit all things. When He made the first man Adam, He gave him dominion, authority and power. Because of disobedience, Adam lost that privilege. That loss was recovered fully by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to put the devil to shame, we are going to receive much more than what Adam lost. That is the mystery you will know when the eternal life begins to flow into you freely and abundantly.

Then we are reminded in 1 Cor. 2:9, "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". We can never understand these things by our human wisdom or thinking or Bible knowledge; but when you know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ increasing in a greater measure, then these things will also be understood. The devil tries to rob God's people of their spiritual inheritance. That is why you have to be very careful and take firm hold of all that the Lord has given you. Mark 13:37, "...what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Watch, and do not allow the enemy to rob you of your spiritual, heavenly inheritance. The enemy cannot take away the gift of eternal life from you. But he has the power to prevent you from enjoying your spiritual inheritance. The weapon which he uses most often is spiritual blindness, which seems to be the strongest weapon the devil uses during the end days-even spiritual darkness. He uses all kinds of rituals, ceremonies and traditions to bring that blindness into men's lives, from which we have to be free. The apostle Paul says in Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". We have to have a very clear understanding of our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to be kept constantly under the Headship, Lordship and Kingship of Lord Jesus Christ, governed and controlled by Him at every moment. The Lord says in John 15:5 (last fragment). "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit".

After my conversion, I found in my heart a great hunger for the Word of God, and I began to spend many hours a day upon my knees with the Bible. Without any struggle the Lord freed me, from all the pleasures and attractions of the world, but still I was conscious that there was something lacking in my spiritual life. So I began to pray secretly, "Lord, give me that life in fullness". It went on many months, but one night I heard the Voice of God asking me, "Tell me, how were all your sins forgiven"? I said, "Lord, I believed that I was the greatest sinner living, and that your blood was shed for me and that you forgave me". Then the same Voice said to me, "Now believe that you are the weakest person living, and you will have My Power". These words became my experience. The Lord said, "...without me ye can do nothing". I realised then how completely I was depending upon the Lord for everything; for every word to be spoken, every thought, everything to be done and planned. I had to go to Him, even for the smallest thing. That's how the Lord became real and precious true to me. I knew then that He is all powerful, and that that power is for me. We have to keep our eyes constantly upon the Lord, our highly exalted, glorious and loving Saviour. Our overcoming life depends upon that and not upon Bible knowledge, long prayers, fasting, or other qualifications. When our Lord becomes real to us. He takes charge of everything.

August 11

"He brought me forth also into a large place" (Psalm 18:19).

From his childhood Joseph had learnt to depend entirely upon the Lord. He was forsaken by his relations and forgotten by his friends. At times, he had no one to help him or show sympathy to him. He received no encouraging or comforting letter from any one. I believe during those days the Lord became very

precious to Joseph and he must have spent much time in prayer and communion with God. In this way the Lord trained Joseph for the high position he was to hold one day.

When God blessed Joseph with a son he called him "Ephraim" because he now understood clearly that God had not forgotten him or forsaken him, but had always loved him and knew what He was doing. In the same way, God wants us also to be very near to His heart. Through many afflictions, He is preparing us to hold a very high position, not only in this life but in the next one also. However painful these afflictions may be, we must always thank God for them. If you do not pass through all these afflictions, you will live only an ordinary life. But if you want to hold a high position with the Lord in His Kingdom, you must be prepared to go through the refining fire of every trial the Lord thinks fit for you.

Every believer without exception must go through afflictions. All the saints of God of whom we read in the Scriptures had to go through many severe afflictions. Having gone through many trials, David says, "He brought me forth also into a large place" (Psa. 18:19). The apostle Paul gives a long list of the forty or more difficult experiences he had to go through (2 Cor. 11:23-30). So we have to thank God for the honour He has given to us also to be prepared and trained for the great responsibilities He wants to give us later on.

August 12

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psalm 103:1).

We should keep these three thoughts together, The Lord's death, burial and resurrection. Do not try to separate them, because they all go together. Whenever you mention the cross in your prayer, or testimony or preaching, or writing, please try to keep His death, burial and resurrection together. When the apostle Paul defines the Gospel, he mentions the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3,4). If anybody questions you, "What is the Gospel" the answer is, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ...was buried, and that he rose again ...according to the scriptures." The Lord Jesus died to do the same work of death, burial and resurrection in us. He died to bring into us His power of resurrection. He died to make us conquerors; to make us immortal. For the same purpose, He was buried and rose again.

First of all, He died for our sins (Gal. 1:4). Secondly, Christ liveth in us (Gal. 2:20). He died to take away the judgement of our sins and to give us His righteousness. He took upon Himself the punishment for all our sins, of the past, present and future. He paid the full price of redemption. We commit sins in a three fold manner: by our thoughts, words and deeds. For all these sins the Lord Jesus bore three kinds of punishments (Mark 10:34). First, for our sinful thoughts He was spat upon. When a man wants to show extreme hatred towards anybody, he often spits on that person. Then for our sinful words. He was reviled and mocked. But He bore it all patiently. He never said a word. Thirdly, for our sinful deeds His hands, feet and side were pierced; His back was scourged; and His head was crowned with thorns. So remember that the Lord has borne all your sins, and paid the full price for them all, even to the smallest thought.

If you want to grow spiritually, thank Him with all your heart every day for taking all your punishment on Himself. That is the simple way of growing spiritually. Say to Him, "Lord Jesus, I thank you with all my heart for dying for my sins and bearing my entire punishment." Imagine a person in court. There is ample evidence that he had committed a crime. He has stolen many things. All the articles stolen by him are brought to the court as evidence.

It is impossible for the man to escape from condemnation in the face of such overwhelming evidence. Suddenly something happens, all the evidences disappear, and the witnesses run away. Only the judge and the accused are left. What can the judge say now, except, "There is no evidence against you. You are free!". Will not the man walk out triumphantly? That is how we all have been forgiven by our Lord

Jesus. For this purpose He bore all our sins in His own body upon the tree (1 Peter 2:24). So if you want to grow spiritually, you must be thankful and grateful to Him indeed. When we learn to thank God with all our heart every day, we will know that this is the secret of spiritual growth.

August 13

"...stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

At Jericho, Elisha is asked, "Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head today? (2 Kings 2:5). The sons of the prophets there too wanted to bring doubts into the heart of Elisha. The enemy uses the words of all kinds of people to make us doubt God's Word. Through listening to Sarah's suggestion, Abraham doubted God's promise, and then see how long he had to wait for the fulfilment of that promise. Today we find many servants of God have lost their faith because they believed in the words of their wives, relations or friends. They do not openly deny the Word of God, but in the secret of their hearts there is unbelief. Their wives make up all kinds of stories with tears in their eyes to every step. So also the devil will try to prevent us from obeying the Lord whole-heartedly. We must be strong and pray with determination, "Lord, I have decided to follow Thee all the way. Please save me from being deceived in any way by relations, or friends or others".

The next test came to Elisha at the river Jordan which speaks of death (2 Kings 2:6). He had to learn to die completely to himself. We too have to go on learning that lesson and pray again and again, "Lord, not my will, but Thine." When we want our own way we say, "Lord hear my prayer and let me do thy will." Only after much conflict and defeat do we learn to yield to Him saying, "From now on Lord, I want only Thy will." When we are willing to die to our thoughts, ideas, plans and desires, God can reveal His own plans and desires and make us His co-workers in the building of His House.

We need to be sure that our steps and our ways are ordered by the Lord, and also to learn how to "walk in the Spirit", be "led of the Spirit" and "live in the Spirit" (see Gal.5:16,18,25). When we walk, we go step by step, we do not jump. To walk in the Spirit means just that: taking one step after another as the Lord leads. If we want to walk in the Spirit, we must allow the power of the cross to bring all our thoughts, ideas and desires into death. We must die to ourselves as Paul also testifies in 1 Cor. 15:31. "I die daily".

In 2 Kings 2:10 we read that If Elisha wanted to receive the double portion of Elijah's spirit, he had to see Elijah at the time of his departure. So also we must keep our eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ if we want the Holy Spirit to control and guide our lives, and we must not let anything else distract our attention. The world offers us many attractions, and because of these we turn from God and miss our way. We must learn how to look to the Lord Jesus Christ for everything. He is the author and finisher of our faith. As we look into Him constantly for everything we can receive the double portion of His Holy Spirit and then our ministry will become effective and fruitful.

August 14

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22)

We can trust God for everything. Once when I was travelling from Bombay to Hyderabad. I went to the station to enquire at the booking office whether any berth was available in that train. The clerk replied in the negative but I told him that I would take a chance and I bought the ticket. The train arrived and I enquired at two compartments. There was no room, but God had provided. I walked to the front of the train and saw an unoccupied berth in a two-berth compartment. I enquired of one of the passengers in it and he answered me it was vacant. As I entered I asked him how he knew this. Smilingly he said, "I asked for one ticket and one berth and paid for them. I do not know why they gave me two berths. I

believe it is for you. " This is one among many similar incidents in my life. It shows how God provides for our every need.

Since I came into God's services. I do not think there has been any occasion when God has not supplied my need. Some years ago, we had a gospel campaign and had to pay a rent of Rs. 335/- for one week for a public hall. So I was praying in my room very quietly, "Lord, for Thy glory we are having meetings. We must pay the rent in time. Will you kindly send the money required within three days?" On the third day I got a letter from a man from Calicut, who wrote, "I am sending you a money order for Rs. 335/- at the request of my daughter. She has been sick for long time and unconscious for more than two weeks. When at last she opened her eyes, she asked me to send you some money. Then I said to her that we had no money in the house. So she requested me to sell her gold chain. I sold the chain and I am sending you the money." This amount was just sufficient to pay the rent for the hall.

Do not doubt the Lord. Do not question Him regarding any delay. Do not be perplexed, but believe that the Lord has heard your prayer. The Lord will see your faith and He will reward you accordingly. Some people pray, but afterwards they go about with a sorrowful face. This shows that they have not believed that the Lord has heard them. Do not be weak in faith like such people. If you have really believed that the Lord has heard you, then thank Him for answering you.

We have proved that He is our loving God Who never fails. Oh, how we doubt God and suffer much by looking to man! If we believe that our Lord died for our sins, loved us and gave all that He had to save us and redeem us, surely He will not fail us. He said, "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20), and "I will never leave thee ... nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

August 15

"... we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24).

If you say, "I believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins", then you must believe that the same Lord Who died for you rose again for your sake. That is the meaning of that fragment in Rom. 6:5. "...if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Don't think that just by confessing and saying, "I am sorry for my sins", you are going to be given salvation, or that just saying, "He died for me", and also "I know He rose again" is going to save you. It is only by His coming into you by faith that you will be saved. We have to welcome Him and receive Him, and believe that He has come in. He died that we may die to our old nature. It is the old nature which is responsible for all your trouble. There are some skin diseases, which have some deep inner root. People try to cure the disease by outward ointment. But they do not know the root cause of the disease. Unless the root of disease is cured, the disease will not go away. The same thing is true about the sinful nature. Every human being is born with a sinful nature. It cannot be changed by fasting, prayer, Bible knowledge, visions or dreams. **You have to take into you by faith the power of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.** There is no other remedy. It is only by that power that you can die to all these things, when the Holy Spirit will come into you by faith.

You cannot call yourself an Englishman simply by putting on a suit or a tie; you must be born in England to be an Englishman. In the same way you must have that divine life, which gives you new longings and new desires, and will lift you up day by day and more and more. Our Lord rose again to live in us, work in us, and work through us, and make us completely new and eventually to make us His priests and kings. He is calling us for that high purpose, and to an everlasting kingdom. The Lord is preparing His people for that Kingdom.

All our sufferings and trials are allowed for that purpose. So, for a true believer every suffering is a blessing; it is not a punishment. For sinners it is a punishment, for the rebellious it is a punishment, but for a believer any suffering of any kind is a blessing to him. By that you are being prepared for your

heavenly call or heavenly vocation, that you may have a full appreciation of the things of eternity. There is a flower in North India, which gives the strongest fragrance on the darkest night. On a moonlight night it is not so strong, but only on the darkest night its fragrance is the strongest. In the same way with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ which is stronger, more inspiring and sweeter in your trials and sufferings. At that time you are being taught many hidden mysteries. I can thank God for every suffering, hardship and trial in my past life. I never would have learnt these truths from books or in colleges. The Lord Himself has become unto me more precious and near in these sufferings.

August 16

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him" (Col. 2:12).

By faith we can enjoy fully our spiritual union with the Lord Jesus. He died many years ago and yet even now we can be benefited by it. By the power of His death, we can die to our old nature. We cannot die to it by our own will-power. For all our weaknesses like bad temper, jealousy, pride and hatred and for all our failures we should say by faith, "Lord Jesus, I see these weaknesses in me. Please take away my doubts and fears. I want to die to my weaknesses to be buried by the power of Thy burial. By the same faith, I want to receive into me the power of Thy resurrection." That is how we have to appropriate the power of His death, burial and resurrection. His death has eternal and abiding value. His words are eternal and His deeds are also eternal because He is eternal. His death benefits those who lived before Him and also those who live after Him.

Every day we receive into us by faith the power of the death of the Lord Jesus to die to our thoughts; the power of His burial to forget them; and the power of His resurrection to receive new life of victory over sin and temptation. It is for this purpose that we should be baptized, and learn to enjoy our spiritual oneness with the Lord in this threefold manner, Baptism is not a ceremony, but a testimony. Those who do not obey in Baptism live defeated lives. They depend upon will-power or fasting or long prayers for victory, but they are defeated. It is by our oneness with the Lord that we get victory. By water baptism we declare that we are spiritually united with our Lord. That is why baptism is a fundamental principle which helps us to enjoy our share in the fulness of Christ.

August 17

"...I have found David... a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22).

It is only when we enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ as the King and Lord in every small matter of our life we become true overcomers and partners with God. This is a sure test for those who come under His Kingship. In every small matter, they want to be governed by the Lord. Others want to be governed by their own wisdom and judgement. So we see that throughout his life David enquired of God. Abner was depending upon his own experience and strength to make Saul's son king. There is no mention anywhere that Abner sought God's will. He depended on his own discretion. He was seeking some opportunity to defeat David. That is why he provoked Joab to fight. (2 Sam. 2:14, 17). Even though he was beaten in the presence of the servants of David, he would not accept it. Thus we find that people who are strong and ambitious for power and authority in the House of God bring loss for personal gain. There is much spiritual loss in many assemblies because of a few men who are very ambitious for power, money, name, fame and eldership.

By enthroning the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts as the King of kings and the Lord of lords we come under His full authority. Eventually He will make us kings for ever (Rev. 5:10). It is not by their effort or ambition that they became kings but the Lord Jesus made them kings because they came under His Kingship. In the beginning they acknowledged Him as the One Who is higher than all the kings, then they were made kings and priests (Rev. 1:5,6).

Men who are ambitious for power and authority become weaker and weaker. Those who serve God with humility are eventually exalted and brought to a high position. "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:11,22). The more we humble ourselves the more are we exalted; the more we exalt ourselves the more are we abased. All those who are very much ambitious for power, authority and position in the House of God will be brought low, but those who humble themselves will be exalted.

God had put His seal definitely upon David as a man after His own heart. "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). That was the greatest virtue in David in spite of all his failures. We too have to learn the secret of doing God's perfect will even in small matters. Willingly and joyfully we should come under the Lordship and Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ and be governed, controlled, possessed and led by Him.

August 18

"... ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

In every detail of the blue robe worn by the high priest having pomegranates of blue, and purple and scarlet colours there is a spiritual meaning. God was teaching in a symbolic way at that time, how the people could enjoy God's fulness and grace in abundance. Num. 15:37-41, indicates the meaning of the blue colour. God was telling His people through Moses, that they should have blue fringes on their garments. This way they were reminded that they were God's people, that He had saved them by His grace and that they had to obey His commandments. In the same way the blue colour reminds us that we are a holy nation and a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9). If you really want to enjoy God's fulness, then learn of His heavenly calling. The call is to build a heavenly sanctuary or a heavenly Church under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Purple stands for kingship. You will remember that before the crucifix, the soldiers put a purple robe on the Lord Jesus and mocked Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (John 19:3). Only kings wear garments of this colour. So the purple colour in the pomegranates, convey the message that God wants us to come under the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be willing to be governed and lead by Him in everything.

In Heb. 9:19, we read that Moses used scarlet wool which speaks of the sprinkled blood. As co-workers of God, we need to have a clear conscience, free from guilt, and this we can receive only by being cleansed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can never be cleansed by shedding tears or by offering long prayers. If you come to the Lord humbly and pray, "Lord Jesus, I am defiled in thought, word and deed; cleanse me with Thy precious blood", immediately He will cleanse you. There is no need for you to wait for any vision or unusual experience. The moment you ask Him, you will be cleansed. It is very essential for those who are servants of God, to be kept cleansed from every defilement.

Thus the blue, purple and scarlet colours say to us that we need to hear His call, know His kingship, and lead a clean life in order to take part in building His Church and enjoy His fulness.

August 19

"... we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ " (Romans 5:11).

Paul says to the believers who were saved through his ministry, "Ye are our...joy!" (1 Thess. 2:20). When you find that others are saved by your testimony, a great joy comes into you, and your neighbours and friends will also find joy through you. Every time I find someone receiving that joy, my own joy

increases. Once, when I was in Yugoslavia, I was going in a train to Belgrade. I saw a very tall man in front of me. I began to pray, "Lord give me the privilege of speaking to that man about his soul". Then I spoke to him and straightway he was born again. What a joy came into my heart. Has anybody in your family or neighbourhood found that joy of salvation through you? Do you know the joy of bringing others to Christ?

Also by delighting to do God's will we find joy. Psalm 40:8, "I delight to do thy will". It may take you many days to find God's will, but, when you find it you will have a peculiar joy in accepting it and in doing God's will. Is your joy of that nature? Is your joy unspeakable and full of glory? Is your joy full? Do you find a heavenly song on your lips all the time? Even though I cannot sing a single note outwardly. I can sing in my soul the whole day. Oh be sure you find that joy. Right now, this moment, that joy can be yours. Only the Lord Jesus can give that joy, which does not depend upon teachers, preachers or other people, but on the Lord Himself. If we humble ourselves and call upon Him, He forgives us immediately and that experience will begin that joy in your heart.

That joy begins in heaven, "likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." It does not begin on the earth. Repentance means right about turn. Before a man repents, he has his face towards the devil, and his back towards God. By repentance he turns his back towards the devil, and his face towards God. That is called repentance. Such a work take place only by the Holy Spirit, and not any man himself. Joy begins there? Heaven is first filled with Joy, and from there that joy is poured into the person who repents. That is why no man can take away that joy. It begins in the presence of God and goes on flowing from there, and no man can take it away. "your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:22), no, not even your enemy, nor your neighbours, nor friends, nor any power on earth. Have you repented? What happened when you repented? was it whole-hearted repentance, or are you still hankering after sinful and shameful things? That is why your joy is not full. Your repentance is not complete. Your face is turned both ways. Some people are like that. They seem to be happy everywhere. When they come for worship, they are very happy. When they go into the world they are still happy. Wherever they go into the world they are still happy. Wherever they go they are happy. They are blind and deaf spiritually. They are the agents of the devil. Oh, please make sure that you are repented truly and sincerely.

August 20

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

No man can give up the desire for worldly pleasures by himself. Only when the Lord Jesus Christ enters into his heart he will be delivered. He is the One Who can set us free from our bondage. His mighty hand can deliver us from all worldly attractions and from the devil. On the other hand those who try to escape by their own efforts will soon be drawn back again into bondage. After hearing an inspiring sermon a smoker may say "I will give up tobacco". Then by great effort he keeps up to his decision for three or four days. After that his stomach begin to plead with him, "Dear Master, I want smoke. Good food, milk and sweets will not satisfy me. I must have smoke. Please give me smoke. I will die without smoke". At last he gives in and he is drawn back into his old habit as deep as ever.

It is only by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ working in us that we can be delivered from our sins. He has conquered the world, sin, death, hell and Satan. In Him and by Him and through Him, we are victorious. Paul says, "I can do all things". How? "through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Some people are not slaves to tobacco, but they are slaves to filthy books and immoral magazines. What a vast number of publications in the market are full of filth! Sometimes the titles appear decent and attractive but the filth is the same, the result is the same, the punishment is the same. Other people are slaves to money. They will tell any number of lies and do dishonest deeds to get more money. Yet

others are greedy for power and are prepared to exploit the lives of others. When Christ enters their hearts, He will deliver them from all this bondage by His mighty power.

From my own experience I can say this is true. No one ever spoke to me about salvation. One day I heard the voice of God and I was saved. The Lord Jesus came into my heart. That very moment my bad desires disappeared one by one. They became repulsive to me. Christ Himself gave me a fervent hunger and thirst for divine things.

August 21

"...that ye...May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:17-19).

In Eph. 3:19, Paul prays that the believers at Ephesus may know God's love. Individually we cannot comprehend it: even though we spend years in meditating upon God's Word, we will never know that mysteries by ourselves. In olden days, Roman Catholic monks thought that by living a lonely life, they would become more holy. In so doing they brought in many customs and rituals which made them worse, instead of better.

The secret of God's love can only be comprehended by the help of the saints, as shown in Eph. 3:17-19. His love is beyond human comprehension. All of us have to be brought together again and again. You will find our fellowship together as fellow-believers very inspiring and helpful. Unbelievers cannot have such fellowship. That fellowship will be among those who have the same experience of eternal life (1 John 1:3). So all fellowship begins for us in the Lord Jesus Christ and in God the Father. Whatever we receive in our own meditation and waiting upon the Lord, we should share together. Otherwise we will not be able to grow. That is why, the early Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.

God's love can be truly comprehended as we learn to have fellowship with fellow-believers everywhere. You have to make some sacrifice to gather with God's people for prayer, for worship, for Bible study and for service. By that fellowship we are told that we will know the love of Christ with perfect knowledge and by such love we are made to understand why God wants us to have that share in His fulness. His love is so great that He wants us to receive all that He has. As loving parents take pleasure in giving their children all that they possess, even so the Lord wants to give us all that He has. Now we are being taught how we have to be prepared upon the earth for such a privilege in heaven, to enjoy God's fulness.

August 22

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

With all their Bible knowledge believers in many parts of the world remain as babes spiritually for a long time. They have no understanding of the deep things of God. Paul wanted to share many things with the Hebrew believers, but he could not do so because of their spiritual infancy. They were like small children in the kindergarten class who are taught only elementary things.

Now the question is why they remained babes spiritually. It is because they did not have a clear and sure understanding of the fundamental principles of salvation. Paul says, "...ye have need that one teach you again...the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12). So if we are not clear and sure about the foundational, fundamental, first principles of salvation we cannot grow spiritually. A building without a strong foundation will not stand long. When storms come many buildings fall down because they do not have a strong and a deep foundation. The Lord has warned us in His Word that there will be many storms while we are upon this earth. We find many believers losing their faith when they face difficulties, troubles, and trials. They get

offended and are easily drawn away by wrong teachings or by worldly attractions. In our lifetime we have to face many storms and that is why we should be on a strong foundation.

First of all, we should make sure that we are built upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). We should make sure that we have a definite, personal, living experience of the living Lord Jesus Christ. Having made sure of our personal experience of salvation which we have in Him we must be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20). We follow what the apostles and prophets have taught us in the Scriptures. That is our heavenly order. We cannot change that divine order and heavenly plan because we have been given in a very clear way all the instructions necessary for our spiritual growth.

In Hebrews 6 the apostle speaks of six fundamental and first principles of the doctrine of salvation. The first one is repentance from dead works; and the second one is faith toward God; the third one is baptisms; the fourth, laying on of hands; the fifth, resurrection of the dead; and the sixth one, eternal judgement. We can divide them into three groups of two each, because they go together. Repentance and faith go together, similarly, baptism and laying on of hands go together and resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement go together. These principles bring us on a strong foundation.

August 23

"...God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11).

There are very small verses in the Gospels which sum up the whole life purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ. One is Luke 19:10. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost". And the other is John 10:10, last part, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". From these two short verses we can sum up the whole life - purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although we may not know it, the Word of the Lord goes throughout the world. Wherever you may go you find hunger and thirst for the Word of God. If you seek to know God, you will find Him, as you see in Jeremiah 29:13, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart". Once we have found Him, He will make every provision to give us abundant life. Then we have to labour with Him as co-workers. There are many believers who do not have abundant life, though they may say they are born again!

In the first world war many soldiers were wounded and amongst them there were about eighty-five very sad cases. They had lost both their legs, both their arms and both their eyes. They were almost like dead men, they had to be carried in baskets and they had to be fed with a tube or a spoon. Spiritually this is the condition of many believers today. Even though they say they are born again, yet for many years they remain spiritually deaf and dumb. They have no strength to work for God. The fact remains that the Lord says, "I have come to give them life and to give it more abundantly. "Now the word 'abundantly' is a word with a big meaning, and the phrase 'more abundantly' means an overflowing fulness.

If you study the last words of the Lord, before His final journey to Jerusalem, you will see that He was revealing all these principles and truths: how He Himself was going about to seek and so save that which was lost. Sometimes the lost themselves do not know how the loving Saviour and good Shepherd is seeking them. He uses many means to save them, Sometimes He burdens friends and even strangers to pray for them. He changes all their plans, until they come to His plan.

August 24

"...Jesus ...shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days" (Acts 1:1-3).

The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples ten times in forty days after His resurrection; five times on the Easter day and five times from the second day of His resurrection till the 40th day, the day of His ascension. Our Lord never appeared even once to those who did not believe in Him. Each time He appeared only to His disciples. When He was on the cross, many people mocked Him saying, "...let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42). But after His resurrection He did not show Himself to any of those people. This shows that this wonderful power of resurrection is meant only for those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and become righteous in His sight for eternity by the very same power according to Rom. 4:24,25. Through every appearance He reveals to us the great secret of appropriating and enjoying this death-conquering power which can make us more conquerors. God appeared ten times to Abraham in about 40 years to reveal to him the secret of divine friendship. In three places in the Scriptures, in 2 Chro. 20:7, Isa. 41:8 and James 2:23, Abraham is called the friend of God. Through the ten appearances of God to Abraham, we see that there are ten steps to friendship with God. Similarly through the ten appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples after His resurrection, we have a tenfold secret of experiencing and enjoying the great power of His resurrection for all our needs. By this power, the hope that one day we shall see our Lord face to face and shall be like Him, is quickened in us.

August 25

"... I delight to do thy will" (Psalm 40:8).

In Psalm 29 we find that the phrase, "The voice of the LORD" is repeated again and again in verses 3,4,5,7,8 and 9. To put it in simple language, it is by hearing the voice of God that we see every obstacle overcome, and it is because we are not hearing God's voice that we cannot find God's will. God's power is at your disposal in its fulness, so you must learn how to hear and discern His voice. God does speak. He is a living person, and we have got to believe His voice.

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah, the man of God, is very discouraged and dejected. He thought that God was sleeping. But God was so loving, long-suffering, and patient. He made a great and strong wind to pass by, which rent the mountains. But God was not in the wind. After that there was an earthquake. But God was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire. But God was not in the fire. After the fire, a still small voice! "That is how God spoke to Elijah: God never slumbers, or forgets. His ways are not our ways, but higher than our ways. God revealed to His servant, what He planned to do through a still small voice. You will find all your questions will be answered, by hearing God's voice. There is no need for you to be under the juniper tree. Do you feel discouraged and dejected? Is your mind perplexed in any way? Are the things happening around you puzzling you? Have you found any problem complicated in your home or outside? For all that, you have to hear the voice of God, and that will solve your problem.

Your understanding of the doctrine of Christ and of salvation depends upon your doing and knowing God's will (John 7:17). Otherwise your mind will be confused. As you do God's will, these doctrines of salvation will become more clear and more simple and more plain to you. You will find God's will more enjoyable day by day, and something refreshing coming out. You will be saved more and more from many wrong teachings and wrong doctrines. Your prayer life will become more fruitful and very effective by doing God's will (1 John 5:14). By knowing God's will we can suffer joyfully otherwise, when troubles come, we are downcast, full of fear, no appetite for food, and no sleep at night. Paul was ready not only to be bound but to die also (Acts 21:13,14) because he was clear and sure of God's will. Also the fulness of Christ can be enjoyed by doing God's will.

The whole life of the Lord Jesus Christ was lived in doing God's will (John 4:34; John 5:30; John 6:38; John 8:29; Matt. 26:39). The Bible says, if you have not learned that secret of finding God's will you are a fool (Eph. 5:17). Thus it is important to learn the secret of finding God's will. This is not ordinary

matter, but very important; you must think about it more wisely. Your happiness, joy and fruitfulness depend upon it.

August 26

"... faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Abraham was a prosperous and a wealthy man in the city of Ur of the Chaldees. When God spoke to him to leave that city and go to an unknown place, straightway he obeyed. Many would have questioned him where he was going. He would have replied that he did not know. He was the only man in the whole city who believed in God. But he had to face mocking. Even though he never knew where God was leading him, he obeyed Him and left the city. Because of his obedience and faith, later on God gave him the vision of the city with foundations. He became strong in faith (Heb. 11:8,9). Abraham had plenty of gold and silver; so naturally he wanted to build a house. But throughout his lifetime God never allowed him to build a house or buy a piece of land. He had to live in tents as pilgrim and a stranger. By strong, active and living faith we also are made to see the glory of the heavenly city of which we are a part. In the same way, God had kept Sarah barren for a long time. Whatever may happen to us, it is intended to give us a strong faith. Without such a faith, we will never know the greatness of our salvation (Heb. 11:13-16). God uses all such situations, circumstances, afflictions and trials to draw away our eyes from the perishing things and fix them on heavenly and eternal things.

The power of resurrection becomes more real to us as we claim it according to our need (Heb. 11:18). God told Abraham to offer his only son on the altar, to give him a strong faith. He did not doubt God. He believed that even though he slew his son, God was able to raise him up. With that faith, he bound his son and raise his knife to slay him. He knew that his wife did not have that much faith. That is why without consulting her, he went to offer his son on the altar (Gen. 22:3). He got up early in the morning, took his servants and an ass and went away. He knew that if he had told her, she would not have allowed him to offer Isaac. She would have said, "How can we offer our only son? God will never say such a thing." That is how many times we also question. Being a man of faith, without the least doubt, Abraham got up early in the morning and took his servants and son and proved God's faithfulness. Thus his faith became strong. By the ram caught in the thicket, God was showing him that He also was bound to him. So to enjoy our salvation fully we need a strong, active faith. Our share in the heavenly eternal city will become real to us by faith. We can thank God for any affliction and any trial because they give us faith like that of Abraham or David or Moses. It is a lifelong experience. We may have to go through painful situations and experiences for that faith.

August 27

"...ask, ...that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

Every word spoken by the Lord was full of grace and truth and of deep spiritual meaning. There have been many great teachers who spoke wonderful things, but the words of the Lord Jesus are unique; they can never be forgotten. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ have been written and explained in many books by great writers, but they have not yet exhausted their meaning.

According to God's Word in Ephesians 3:20, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. For instance, a sinner may come trembling to the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "Lord, forgive me, I am sorry for my sins." And the Lord says, "My child, I will not only forgive your sins, I will give you My whole kingdom. Whatever you need, you ask and receive from My hands". Our difficulty is, we do not know how to ask. Even the disciples of the Lord did not know, though they had been with Him for three years. The Lord said to them, "Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). They had been thinking that they had asked many things from Him. Once they had returned so happy, bubbling with joy saying to Him, "See what we have

been able to do in Thy Name". Even then the Lord said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." In other words they had been asking only for those things which could not make their joy full. So our Lord was saying, "Ask now, and learn to go on asking." We also need to learn the same lesson. We do not yet know how to ask God. When we do learn to ask, our Lord will give us more than we can ask or think or imagine.

August 28

"Judge me, O God, ... O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man (Psalm 43:1).

In Neh 6:8,9 because of the false and wicked charges of the enemies there came a fear in the heart of Nehemiah, the servant of God, but he immediately called upon God beseeching Him to strengthen his hand. We have had similar experiences but have seen the enemy's devices fail when we ran to the Lord in prayer at the time of his severe attack. When people accuse us falsely we need not waste our time in arguing with them to defend ourselves. Only persevering prayer can defeat all the skill and cleverness of the enemy in all his attempts to harm us. The enemy becomes completely powerless when at the time of his attack we give ourselves to prayer.

From vs. 10-12, we see that when Sanballat and Tobiah failed in all their former plans and attempts they thought of yet another scheme. They hired Shemaiah, one of Nehemiah's co-workers to give him a harmful advice to misleading him. In verse 10 we read that this Shemaiah advises Nehemiah to hide himself in the temple in order to save his life. If Nehemiah had accepted his advice and had hidden himself in the temple, he would have given room for an evil report and reproach against himself.

The enemy uses the same weapon against believers these days also. He often uses our friends and close relatives who are worldly-minded to give us wrong advice to hinder us in the working for the Lord. That is how many believers have lost their faith in God. As believers we should not consider the advice of worldly friends and relatives. When God's heavenly will and advice are available to us through prayer, then the advice of our worldly friends and relatives should not be accepted. According to Matt.12:46-50 only those believers who do the will of God are the Lord's brothers and sisters. In the work of God we should not be governed by the advice of our worldly friends and relatives. We have seen many servants of God, failing in such matters. When they are in need of money for the work of God, such as purchasing a piece of land or constructing a pandal, instead of trusting in God, they use worldly wisdom, and approach their worldly friends for financial help. They think that there is nothing wrong in borrowing money as long as it can be returned since it is only for the work of the Lord. Quite unknown to them such worldly methods of getting money invariably results in barrenness.

Nehemiah discerned that Shemaiah gave him a wrong advice. Many times some worldly people create unnecessary fear in the hearts of believers. They say that God has spoken to them to warn people about certain matters and thus they bring unhappiness and doubts in the hearts and homes of many. We should take a warning from God's Word that we should never be deceived by such subtle people. God's Word is given to us for our daily instruction and guidance.

August 29

"...And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1)

In 1 John 2:1 we read that the Lord Jesus is our Advocate, Who is always ready to intercede on our behalf. Also we read in Jer. 50:34, "Their Redeemer is strong: the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land." The children of Israel were taken captive by their enemies. Their enemies persecuted them, and would not set them free. But God intervened on their behalf and by His mighty power brought them out of captivity. In the same way, when we fall into

some sin or temptation, the enemy refuses to release us. We think by our cleverness and Bible knowledge we can overcome but we fail. We must ask, "Lord, this is my weakness and failure. Kindly intercede on my behalf and deliver me from Satan's hands." By faith we have to claim constantly the high priestly ministry of our Lord on our behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ Who lives for ever pleads for us and delivers us from our failures. We have to recognise that without Him we can do nothing. We have to depend upon His intercessory ministry till we come to His perfection. For that purpose He gave all that He had, and bought us with His precious blood. In 1 Peter 1:16 He says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy", so to be brought to His perfection we need His intercessory ministry.

In the Old Testament period, thousands of sacrifices were offered by the priests. But no one could obtain perfection through their services or ministry (Heb. 7:19). They were only a shadow of the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 8:5). Melchizedek as a priest of the most high God appeared to Abraham and brought heavenly food for him which strengthened him in the hour of temptation. But he could not help Abraham to come to perfection. By giving His whole body to be broken and having conquered death on our behalf, the Lord Jesus Christ has now become our heavenly High Priest, through Whom we attain perfection (Heb. 7:24, 25). By His one perfect sacrifice He makes us perfect through His own perfection. Everytime we fall, we can go to Him with all humility and brokenness. He will lift us up by His high priestly ministry. This does not mean that we can go on sinning, but we need to recognise our human limitation and depend upon His ministry.

August 30

"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Psalm 20:1)

Psalm 20 contains many promises. Every promise gives us courage and liberty to call upon God. They are precious, encouraging and strengthening.

"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (v.1). There may be many troubles in our lives but we can call upon God as His children and His chosen people. There is no need to go to any man for help. God is there to help us. There is great assurance that the Lord will help us, when we go to Him by faith. That is how our problems which appear to be very great and impossible to be solved can be solved through prayer by our loving God, "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (v. 1b). The same God Who changed Jacob into Israel which means a prince, can do great things in our lives. We should have such a faith. When we pray we are in the presence of the heavenly King, Who can meet all our needs. Whatever we need He is ready to give. The God of Jacob will defend us, keep us and protect us in times of danger.

"Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion" (v.2). The Lord answers our prayer when we go into His heavenly habitation. Sanctuary means God's Dwelling Place, where the great God lives and reveals Himself and receive us. When we pray we have to wait patiently till we feel His presence very strongly. Zion speaks of the heavenly House. What we receive from God is for His glory in Zion. And that is why our coming to the House of God is so important. Many people think more of feasting and gossiping at home. But when we go to God's House we enjoy His presence and are much blessed. As far as possible we should give God His portion regularly and joyfully. With much joy and great expectation we should go to the House of God.

"Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice" (v.3). All these offerings speak of the complete work of salvation which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament there were five offerings to be offered to the Lord. They were: Burnt offering, Peace offering, Sin offering, Meat offering and Trespass offering. All these offerings show us the complete salvation the Lord has given us. Burnt offering speaks of the perfect life of the Lord Jesus Christ Who was wholly and solely burnt for us. This sacrifice gives us boldness in God's presence. Whatever is needed for our salvation our Lord has

accomplished on the Cross and so we can go to Him freely. He paid all our debt. He met all the demands of God for our sake. Sin offering speaks of how the Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our sins. Peace offering reminds us how He has made peace with God by offering Himself. Now we can go very freely into His presence. Similarly, Meat offering speaks of His perfect life to satisfy our spiritual hunger. By faith, through all these offerings we have a right to call upon God freely and cry unto Him. We go to Him not because of our righteousness but because of the righteousness of God. We have nothing to give Him. The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself. By identifying ourselves with His death we can go to God. That is why it is necessary to pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lovingly and willingly died in our stead for our transgressions and made us righteous by His resurrection.

August 31

"...thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name" (Isaiah 62:2)

In several cases the Lord gave a new name to His saints. In Matthew 16:18 we read how Simon was given a new name by the Lord Jesus: henceforth he was to be called Peter, "a rock". The Lord Jesus asked His disciples. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?". Simon answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This had not been revealed to him by flesh and blood, but by the Father Who is in heaven. From that day Simon's name was changed to Peter. It is on this revelation concerning Christ that the Church is built. This is why the Lord Jesus said, "upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". If you have an inward revelation of Christ in your heart, it is not of human origin. It is from heaven. If you have it, then a new name is given to you, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against you. If you are under man-made customs and rituals it will cause spiritual blindness, confusion and strife. But true believers who are ready to give up all things which are human and earthly and corrupt, and who are seeing earnestly things which are spiritual, heavenly and eternal, they are the true Church, and their life is based on the revelation by the Spirit of the Father and the Son and they cannot be shaken (Luke 10:22).

Saul the Pharisee saw a light from heaven, heard the voice of the Lord and was saved. From that day he became a new man. He later went to Antioch and as he ministered God's Word there, he himself came to understand God's order in the Church. From that time he began his great missionary journeys. Saul had many talents of ministry, yet he willingly came under subjection to the Lord in the church order at Antioch. Then a new revelation was given to him of God's purpose and order in the Church. He was also given a new name, Saul (a destroyer) became Paul. He did not live for himself, but spent himself for the Church.

Have you learned how to come under subjection in the church? Take one common example. How many parents are ruined the lives of their children in respect of marriage: instead of bringing the matter to the church for prayer, they thought they could plan quite well themselves. Beloved, you have the privilege of receiving the love, fellowship and prayer help of the church. Do not treat it lightly. When you have learned the meaning and value of subjection in the church, not only in this but in other matters as well, you will no longer be a destroyer, but a worker in the House of God, like Paul.

September 1

"Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1)

Many believers do not understand how to take their share in building God's House. They think it is enough if they go to some place of worship on Sunday and listen to a sermon. We must learn by experience and by waiting upon the Lord, what our share is in building the House of God. It may take many years for us to learn this lesson but it must be learnt.

When the Lord builds the House and we are His co-workers and partners. He will give us many spiritual children because of our love, testimony and sacrifice (Psalm 127:4). We will be filled with joy and strength, and our joy will multiply when our spiritual children also learn to grow and walk with the Lord. The apostle Paul writes to the believers at Thessalonica, "Ye are my glory". He forgot how much affliction he had undergone when he was in their midst. "When you take your share in building God's House by winning souls, i.e. "lively stones," and bring them up in the nurture of the Lord Jesus Christ, verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 127 will be true of you also. Souls are not always saved through sermons. Sometimes they are saved through a few words of testimony or an act of kindness.

One of my college-mates was living with me in Toronto. His name was Mr. Greenway. I used to pray, "Lord, I want Mr. Greenway to be saved". One morning I asked Mr. Greenway, "Are you born again?" He replied, "Yes, I was born again two weeks ago." With joy in my heart I asked him how this had come about. In simple words he replied, "I was saved on the day you gave me the shaving cream and soap." I had noticed how he had cut his chin because he had shaved without soap. So I gave him those things. The Lord used that act of kindness to save the soul of Mr. Greenway. It was a small thing. When I gave the cream he realized that whatever I had told him about the wonderful Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was true. When we comfort someone in distress or visit the sick the Lord builds His House through us.

September 2

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..." (Jeremiah 15:16).

The Bible is the Word of God, and it has words of life for our blessing. It gives knowledge and understanding. We have the Holy Spirit to explain the Bible to us. But there are very few people who enjoy reading the Word of God.

There are three ways of reading the Bible. One way is to read it like a scholar, another like a butterfly and the third like a honey-bee. When a scholar reads the Bible, he sits on an easy chair, with a cushion at the back, a cup of coffee on a side table, with a book, pencil and dictionary. While sipping the coffee and feeling very comfortable he reads the Bible. Such people get much information but everything remains in the mind only and there is no change in their lives. They think, "If I am asked to give a message in Hebron, I can give a very good one, and my wife will appreciate it". Now the second group of people read the Bible like a butterfly, which flies from flower to flower and garden to garden. May read the Bible like that, some love to read their favourite books and chapters like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 23. They read from Matthew 5 and then jump on to something else. But some others read the Bible like a honey-bee and the Bible should be read like that. The honey-bee goes from flower to flower, with a purpose to suck honey. It sits on the flower till the honey comes out and it goes on sucking and gathering honey. It must be gathered in order to be brought to the beehive. Then they all get together after they have gathered the honey from all the flowers and it becomes nice and ripe. Then the queen bee gives order and they eat together and enjoy together. They work together diligently and faithfully and this is the real way of enjoying God's Word. Just as the bee sucks honey from flower to flower, so we should read our Bible through, systematically with much prayer. We can also enjoy the honey by coming together, in fellowship with fellow-believers. God's Word is enjoyed together as honeybees. Eat the honey together. That is why we gather together for fellowship with fellow-believers. And the more you appreciate and enjoy Christian fellowship the more you will enjoy God's Word. If you have not got the taste of Christian fellowship you have no taste for God's Word. They go together.

September 3

"... Avenge me of mine adversary" (Luke 18:3).

In God's Word in Luke 18:1-8 we are made to see the secret of effective prayer life. The Lord compares us to a widow and Himself to an unjust judge. From this portion we learn how our prayers can be fully answered by the living God. Though it takes a long time to receive answers to our prayers, surely they will be answered if we ask persistently. The secret we see here is, the poor widow is sure of her right. It was not a false case but a just one. That constrained her to go to the judge again and again. We do not know what the case was. May be she had some property which was taken away by force by some relatives or her neighbours had occupied her land unlawfully. But she had no doubt about her claim to the property and so she took her case to the judge. When we pray, we should be right in our prayers, and also we must be sure about what we pray. Then we cry to the Lord, and surely He will answer even though He may delay to do so. Those who are not born again have no claim over God. Whatever they receive, they receive because of God's mercy. They have no right. But those who are born again have a right. We, as God's redeemed children, have a strong claim over Him. We must know how to claim our right over Him and call upon Him effectively.

We as God's people have to believe that we are very precious to Him. We are God's peculiar treasure. "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure" (Psalm 135:4). We are chosen by God Himself for a great purpose. Our lives and our claims are very precious in His sight. The value of God's treasure can never be estimated by human wisdom. It is very precious because the Lord Jesus Christ purchased us to be His own by shedding His own blood. We may be weak and foolish in the eyes of people, but before God we are a peculiar treasure. With that assurance we can call upon God for all our needs and all our problems. But many of us go to Him as beggars without any assurance. God wants us to claim our rights as His peculiar treasure. Not only are we His peculiar treasure but also His hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44). As His hidden treasure we give great joy to our Lord. We ought to believe that we have the great privilege of bringing joy to our Lord, because of the great price He paid for us. We have to pray that our lives may be so lived to bring pleasure and joy to God. We are more precious to Him than all the things upon the earth and all things under the earth. Believing in the fact that we are so precious to God, we can go to Him in boldness and tell Him our problems.

September 4

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

From the very beginning of their married life the couple must bring themselves under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in every matter. He is the living Head of the Church and He should be acknowledged as such in every aspect of married life. For a happy home, those who are brought together by the Lord must accept the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. They must say by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ, You are our Creator, You have all power. You became Man for us, died in our stead and rose again to live in us. We give complete charge of our hearts, lives and plans. We will not do anything without your permission". That is how they should begin their married life. The husband should say, "Lord Jesus Christ, this is Your home. We are Your children. I do not want my will or my wife's will to be done in this home, but only Your will". In the same way the wife also should acknowledge the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and say, "Yes Lord, this is not my home. It is Your home, You have given us this home. Let not my will or my husband's will be done in this home, but only Your will". Otherwise the husband will say to the wife, "You are my wife, you must listen to me. If you do not obey me I will make you to obey. See what I will do". Then the wife will say, "I know more than you, I will not listen to you". That is how the quarrel starts. In the beginning they quarrel with doors and windows closed, after sometime they quarrel openly, even in the streets. For a happy home they must acknowledge the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, before going anywhere and doing anything. This should be their daily practice, throughout their married life. His will is the best for us He loves us much more than we can think or imagine.

September 5

"...I saw..one like unto the Son of man..." (Rev. 1:12,13).

The voice of the Lord is as the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15). "...like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty" (Ezek. 1:24). The Lord was saying to John the apostle as he heard His voice like the sound of many waters, "Oh John, I have all power". He said the same thing before His ascension (Matt. 28:18). The enemy will come in like a flood (Isa. 59:19) but He is the Almighty God and has all power over all the power of darkness. By faith we can claim that power for those who are in need, and not depend upon the worldly power or police to protect us in times of trouble.

In Pakistan there is a place called Martinpur. In 1947 the Christians were being killed in large numbers by the Mohammedans, as they did in East Pakistan. When they attacked Martinpur the Christians hid themselves in the fields. After three days, they received a message from the Mohammedans, saying, "Please do not hid any more in the fields. We have tried to attack the village for the past three nights. Every time we came near we found Someone on a white horse with a drawn sword. We know your God is with you". This is a true story. I have been there several times. There are times when the Lord sent His angels to protect His people in a seen or an unseen way. He says, "I hold My angels in My hand. They will obey Me. When I know it is best I will send My angels".

Then John saw that out of his mouth, went a sharp twoedged sword (Rev. 1:16b). "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword"(Heb.4:12). In Matt. 4:4 we see how the Lord defeated Satan by His Word. Satan was trying to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ by misusing God's Word. But the Lord by the right use of God's Word, defeated Satan. The sharp twoedged sword coming out of His mouth is the Word of God. By using the Word of God rightly we can defeat Satan. He will come to us many times bringing fear and doubt but we should say again and again, "Get thee behind me, Satan. The Lord has defeated you. He is with me. He has forgiven my sins. I know He will help me". Then claim God's promise rightly for yourself and others in need.

In Rev. 1:16 we read, "...and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength". In Mal. 4:2 we read about the Sun of righteousness. That is one of the names given to the Lord Jesus Christ. His face is like that midday sun. The sunshine has a certain quality to heal some diseases. The Lord Jesus Christ is our heavenly sunshine. By looking at His face, living in His presence and by speaking to Him, all the germs of doubt and fear will be removed, and we are strengthened and thus enjoy His favour. That is how we cannot only pray for ourselves but also intercede for others. We should pray, "Lord, bring sunshine upon me, and upon So and So. Heal me of my doubts and fears, and do the same to others also".

Thus we can have an effective, intercessory ministry. We have to intercede for those who are fallen, those who are going through temptations, those who are in danger and in lonely places. Thus you can become a co-worker with the Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time you can conquer temptations.

September 6

"I am he that liveth, ...and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

The Second Coming of the Lord is a very important subject in the Bible. There are 250 chapters in the New Testament, in which there are 360 references to this subject; and twenty-eight chapters are devoted wholly and solely to the subject; in fact, it is the only subject which is treated exhaustively in the Word of God. God has a purpose in bringing up this subject again and again. How many times this matter is referred to in the first chapter of Revelation: Chap. 1:3, last part, "The time is at hand;" v.4; "which is, and which was, and which is to come;" "Behold, he cometh with clouds ...Even so, Amen" v.7; "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending ...the Almighty," v.8.

The main purpose of the Book of Revelation is to prepare us for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we keep ourselves ready for His Coming, we can be kept free from many dangers, defilement and deception. Many people think of this subject just as a collection of all kinds of theories, and teachings and hence they have no real enjoyment of the truth. It is not a subject in which you pass an examination in order to win a prize! It is a matter which should give you abundant joy, and is the secret of a triumphant life. When the matter was brought in vision to John the apostle, it was at the time when he was somewhat discouraged. All of us sometimes feel discouraged. There are always things happening in and around, which are bound to discourage us.

The man of God, John the apostle, was the most beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is repeated six times in John's Gospel: "the disciple whom Jesus loved". The very same disciple was bound in prison, on the isle of Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, because at that time, things were happening among believers, which were beyond understanding. The same things will happen in the end days also. The enemy will become active and attack God's people as we see in Rev. 12. Only by the strength of the knowledge of His soon coming, can we be victorious. When our Lord appeared to John the apostle, He found him discouraged, so He reminded him that He is the same Who will come back again. What he could not understand then, he would understand on that day.

There is no need for us to be impatient. Wait patiently, the Lord will answer all your questions, one by one, when He appears in glory. The work of salvation also will only be perfected on that day, and we shall know the meaning of the great salvation, and the greatness of our blessed Saviour. There is a peculiar joy in keeping ourselves ready for that day.

September 7

"... feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Act 20:28).

In order to protect the believers, the apostle Paul gave solemn warnings to the elders. He told them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). He told them that the Devil would be busy: God's people would be attacked by false teachers whom the apostle likens unto "wolves", and they would be deceived by perverse men: that is why the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. The apostle Paul remained in Ephesus and taught the people himself three years, and that with great earnestness and tears, to make sure that these elders were God's chosen workers.

We who are living in the last days, know from God's Word that this is the time the enemy will be more active than ever before. Believers will be attacked with all kinds of weapons devised by the enemy, such as wrong doctrine, false teaching and deceitful workers, persecution, suffering, poverty, and internal strife. So if we do not protect God's people by giving them proper teaching, we are actually failing God in a great responsibility which He has given to us.

Paul was not only an apostle, but also a prophet, evangelist and pastor. In spite of this, he needed the help of many other servants of God. But there are some preachers nowadays who seem to think that they possess all the necessary gifts and can also look after their flock single-handed. As a result they fail to protect the people of God. It is better for them to realize their limitations and pray that God may send to them many other gifted servants of God through whose ministry the believers can be strengthened and protected.

If you do not understand God's plan for building up His people then take care you do not hinder God's work. If God has not called you for the ministry then it is better for you to stand aside and not interfere in the work of God. God will not accept any work which is against His heavenly plan.

September 8

"...these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

If you go to Denmark, you will not find any poor man there, everybody is prosperous. Nobody is unemployed. Everybody has a good job. They have a sanatorium but no patients. whereas in India, you have a waiting list for the sick for many, many months. Yet in Denmark with all their knowledge and skillfulness and prosperity, they have a large number of suicides. Every day you find young people and old people committing suicide. Those who depend upon their possessions for their happiness are disappointed. But the man of God says in Hab. 3:17-18 that even though he may lose everything which he possesses, yet he will rejoice in the Lord. For the believer there is a joy which is not dependent upon land or buildings, or prosperity, or any kind of wealth or possession. Have you found that joy? It is for such a purpose the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, and now, so lovingly, He is offering that joy to all people in any part of the world. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). "Rejoice evermore" (1 Thess 5:16). That joy will not go away, whether you have good health or ill health, whether you have many friends or enemies, whether you are in your own home or away from home. There are many people who get home-sick. They think that their joy depends upon their home. This joy is not like that. Wherever you may be the joy is there. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy..." (Rom. 15:13). Our Lord was saying these words to the disciples, because they were feeling so sad and discouraged. Our Lord was saying, "The time has come. I must suffer, be reviled, mocked and killed for your sake". They could not understand why our Lord with so much power and authority must suffer like that. "These things (about His suffering and dying) have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full", He suffered for your need and mine; He did not suffer to get sympathy; but He suffered and died to make your joy full, that wherever you are, you may have that joy.

Not only so, but this joy will increase day by day. "...the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:52). They were going through extreme suffering, (verse 50), they were persecuted, hated, falsely accused, and expelled from their coasts. Yet, they were filled with joy. None of these sufferings and trials lessened their joy. But in our case, perhaps even a small trouble will take away our joy, and it will take you many many days to recover it. If somebody tries to accuse you falsely in a small matter, you will be feeling very very hurt and wounded for many months. That is human nature. But, the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to make our joy full.

September 9

"...hath he said, and shall he not do it?" (Numbers 23:19)

If we want to face our enemies in the world it does not matter how strong or how many they are, we cannot fight against them with our own knowledge, argument or other strength. Many people can defeat us by their arguments and cleverness. They can twist and twist our words in many ways. By our arguments and wisdom we cannot overcome them and prove who we are. If our lives are like a rod yielding blossoms, buds and almonds, then we shall put a stop to all murmurings, hatred, jealousy and rebellion of our enemies.

We know beforehand that there is going to be much murmurings against us because of the new birth or our obedience in baptism; because of our desire to follow the Bible, and the determination to refuse to follow the world; because of the refusal to put on gold ornaments, jewels or other things or to take part in heathen customs. Surely, there will be murmurings against us, but we must not fight against them

by arguments. We must learn to pray by faith and say everyday, "Oh Lord, make me like Aaron's rod. Lord, I want to blossom and yield fruit".

In Jer. 1:11,12 God Himself gave His servant the meaning of the almond rod. "I will hasten my word to perform it". In other words it means that whosoever receives God's Word by faith, even though he may find it hard to understand the meaning of the Word or message, will find one day that, that Word will bring forth fruit. God says He will do it, and God's words are eternal. No power on earth can change the Word of God (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; Matt 5:18). Whatsoever God has said must come to pass; it must be fulfilled. If we believe God's Word and receive it by faith, one day the same Word will be literally fulfilled. Pray by faith, "O God, fulfil Thy promise in my life, verify and fulfil Thy Word and give me faith for my healing, for my strength, for my wisdom." Claim the promises you receive from God's Word, and you will find that God will fulfil them. Some promises may be hard to believe, but still you must claim their fulfilment.

September 10

"... your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20).

Benjamin means, "son of my right hand" (Gen. 35:18). When Rachel was in great pain and was dying, she called her newborn son, "Benoni" - "son of my sorrow". But Jacob changed his name from Benoni to Benjamin, "son of my right hand", meaning that Benjamin was going to receive power and strength rather than sorrow. It is the right hand that is most useful for every job. Only a few use their left hand. So when Jacob said "Son of my right hand" or "Son of my strength", he meant that this son would finally have more strength and more joy because of the sorrow in which he was born. Benjamin's mother died in childbirth and so he did not know mother's love. But it was through Benjamin that his brothers were brought into favour with Joseph later on. Although Joseph was hated by his brothers, his heart melted when he saw Benjamin and he not only forgave them but even rewarded them.

Thus we find that Benjamin speaks of those sorrows which bring us to God's right hand. Sorrow is a precious and costly experience which brings us close to God and makes us enjoy His strength. The Lord may take us through experience of extreme sorrow. He may take away our parents at an early age. He may take away our children, our husband or wife, or someone whom we love. We may not understand why this should happen to us. But through the sorrow caused to us, we will be brought into divine favour.

Through very painful experiences we learn how to bear other peoples burdens and this in turn, qualifies us to come to the right hand of God and into divine favour. Your sorrowful experiences may not all be caused by the death of loved ones. They may be caused through misunderstandings with friends and relations from whom you expected love and comfort, and who on the contrary, have disappointed you and even betrayed you. All these experiences are allowed by God to bring us to His right hand : from the experience of Benoni, "son of my sorrow", to the experience of Benjamin, "son of my right hand".

September 11

"Give us help ... for vain is the help of man" (Psa 108:12).

The Psalmist writes, "My help cometh from the LORD" (Psalm 121:2). In Psalm 120 we see how David could not get help from any human source. Instead of finding help he had found trouble and strife. "Woe is me...My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war" (Psalm 120:5-7). Then we find how in his desperation he called upon God, and God confirmed him.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Psalm 121:1). In other words David stopped looking unto men for help and focused his gaze on the mighty and loving God Who has all power in heaven and on earth. Then he found by experience that "...he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalms 121:4). We have to learn to call again and again upon God Himself for help in every situation for our lives. In the world we shall have many tribulations, trials and temptations. Therefore we must learn, by prayer and waiting upon God, to seek His help for every step we take. When He helps us we shall be kept from stumbling.

I know some clever doctors who pray before they perform any operation. Some years ago I met a famous eye specialist in North India. He performed many operations a day and yet he never depended upon his own skill or past experience. Before each operation he would pray, "O God, help me, guide my hands and give me skill." Then he would perform the operation with full confidence that the Lord would certainly help him. God honoured his faith. As a result he became not only a successful surgeon but also an earnest soul winner. Patients watched the specialist praying for operations as well as for other needs and saw that God answered his prayers. The doctor's testimony helped many patients to find the living God and accept Him as their Saviour.

September 12

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:10)

In Neh. 5:14-15, Nehemiah says that he did not accept any gift from the people for 12 years. He accepted not food or money even though he was a governor. From a worldly point of view it would have been perfectly alright for him to accept gifts, as others in his place prior to his coming depended much upon the people for their supply of food and wine. They worked for the sake of money, name and fame while Nehemiah worked in the fear of God.

God's servants also should not be governed by money and desires for comforts. If we do not learn to trust God for our needs we remain spiritually barren. If we serve God faithfully and depend upon Him for all our needs, without the least murmur or questioning, our ministry will be abundantly fruitful. Many servants of God say that they are living on faith. But actually they live on the faith of others. So God's servants must receive a warning that they abstain from serving God for the sake of food, money and comfort. They should do everything only as unto Him. If we learn to depend upon Him, in course of time we will find Him supplying all our needs. God never fails to look after us in a wonderful way, but He has His methods of instruction and increasing our faith. If God's servants cannot live and demonstrate a life of faith, they cannot be examples to other believers. When God's servants become beggars, God's work suffers much. If they cannot live a life of faith, it is far better for them to quit, for they are doing more harm than good to God's work. Such people do not deserve to be God's servants, because they only bring reproach to His Name. Our God is a loving and faithful God. Through our ministry and life of faith we should be in a position to bring joy and satisfaction to His heart.

September 13

"... his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (Rev. 1:16).

Many names are given to the Lord Jesus Christ in the Word of God. He is called the "Sun of righteousness" in Mal. 4:2. In Matt. 17:2 we read "...his face did shine as the sun". How many blessings we receive from the sun! As a matter of fact, all that we receive from the earth depends upon the sun.

Without the sun there will be no rain. In the same way, the growth of the trees depends upon the sunshine. The leaves are so green, because a substance called chlorophyll absorbs the sunshine and the trees grow and the fruit ripens. In this country there is plenty of sunshine, but we do not know its value. There are countries where they do not see the sunshine for many, many weeks. And if they happen to have a sunny day, it is a day for happiness. Even those who are miserable look happy on that day and you find crowds going here and there, because of the sunshine.

The doctors say that every germ of every disease can be killed by sunshine. There are hospitals in Switzerland where many diseases are cured by sunshine. No pill, no injection, no medicine. The sun is allowed to shine upon the patient at different angles at different times. God's word says that "the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings". Let that Sunshine upon you and you will find all diseases being cured automatically; your spiritual diseases can be cured by the Lord Jesus Christ, by spending sufficient time upon your knees every morning, mid-day and night in His presence. Very few believers spend enough time in God's presence. Their quiet time is a formality or habit. They do not spend the time with real joy in His presence. Many people are too full of fear to spend long hours in prayer.

Many years ago, two of us went out for open air preaching. We walked miles that day, to give the gospel from house to house and from street to street. In the evening both of us knelt down to pray before sleeping. I was on one side and other man on other side. It so happened that I was very tired that evening. I finished my prayer in a few minutes. I turned round and looked at the man on the other side. He was still on his knees. I said to myself, "What will that man think if I lie down?" So, again I began to pray. But I was very tired and sleepy and again I turned round after some time. He was still praying. The third time I looked and he got up. Then I felt happy. I could sleep now. That was compulsory prayer! There must be a longing and a joy to be in God's presence. Psalm 16:11 says, "in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore". You will not get such joy anywhere else, not even in the company of your most beloved friends or relations. Have you learned the secret of enjoying yourself in the presence of God, and of feeling the sunshine of His face entering into your being, refreshing you and healing you and giving you peace? Just as the sunshine makes the trees to grow, and bring forth fruit, in the same way, you will find the sunshine of His face will make your joy multiply and bring forth fruit.

September 14

"For the Son of man .. gave ... to every man his work" (Mark 13:34).

God wanted Moses to be His partner and co-worker for two great purposes. He wanted to deliver His people from the bondage of the Egyptians and to bring them to the land flowing with milk and honey. God saw that His people were in great affliction and bondage under cruel taskmasters. They were working hard the whole day and received no pay. The Lord saw the affliction of His people, heard their cry and wanted to deliver them from the bondage. He wanted Moses to be His co-worker for that great deliverance to be wrought through him. Secondly, God wanted Moses to bring His people into Canaan. "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exo. 3:8).

Even though God may not call us like Moses for a very big task like that, yet He does call everyone of us for some task. Whatever work He gives us, it is equally precious in His sight. To everyone of us our job looks very big like a huge mountain. Zerubbabel felt the same way. If you want to grow spiritually, you must be willing to hear God's call and obey Him. You can pray, "O Lord, please show me which way I can serve Thee, obey Thee and be of some use to Thee". Then He will guide you and help you day by day. But you must be conscious of the call of God that He wants to use you for His glory, for the deliverance of those who are in bondage and lead them to their inheritance. Those who are in bondage

should be delivered through us, and after being delivered they must come into the possession to enjoy their salvation. We find that more than seventy-five percent of believers do not enjoy their salvation. They live just an ordinary life, coming for the meetings and going away. They do not have any understanding of the deeper truths of salvation. If we understand God's purposes, then through love and fellowship we can help such believers.

When God was calling Moses to be the great deliverer of His people, he was saying, "Lord, who am I? I am nothing. I know my weaknesses, and my failures, my shortcomings and my limitations. How can such a man be useful unto Thee?" By knowing our nothingness and by understanding God's purpose in saving us, we become unto God more useful.

Now in Exo. 3:6 and 14, God gave His four names to Moses to prepare him for his great task. "... I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob... And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you". God called Himself the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob and I AM that I AM. Through these four great names God was preparing Moses for a very effective service.

September 15

"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exo. 3:6).

The Name, God of Abraham has a double meaning. First of all, Abraham began to see the true meaning of righteousness. Here you have the true meaning of the Name, the God of Abraham. God appeared to Abraham twice in Genesis 12 and then chapter 13. In chapter 14 He appeared to him, in the form of Melchisedec. Then He appeared to him in chapter 15 and then in chapter 17 by which time he was 99 years old. Only at that age, he began to believe in God's wonder-working power to give him a child. Before that he was hoping to have a child in his own strength, but when he became very old, that is, when he was a hundred years old, when both he and Sarah passed the age of child-bearing, when they had the least hope of having a child, then God opened his eyes. God provided a new power, a death-conquering power, to be poured into him to make him righteous and that is the power of resurrection. Only with that power he became righteous and it was imputed to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:20-22). He could not glory in his own self or energy. We do not become righteous before God by our bible knowledge, rituals and activities. By receiving into us by faith the power of resurrection, we become righteous for ever. And that is the meaning of new birth, which is a great experience. It is by that new life and death-conquering power that day by day we have to serve God, by becoming righteous in His sight. "... Jesus our Lord ... was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom 4:24,25).

The second thing we learn through the Name, the God of Abraham, is how Abraham became the friend of God. "...Abraham...was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). We read in Gen. 18:17, "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do...?" God could share with Abraham all the secrets from that time onwards. By sharing our personal secrets, problems, shortcomings and failures freely, we also become God's friends. Talk to Him like a Friend. There is no fearing in telling Him our personal secrets, temptations and failures. Share everything with Him as your best Friend. Then wait patiently for His answer. Similarly, ask God to show you His own secrets, His heavenly mysteries. Friendship becomes thicker when we share secrets. And that is how God could speak to Moses also and He could carry out His task. As we talk with God like a friend we have the privilege of serving Him more fruitfully.

September 16

"... the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exo. 3:6).

In Isaac we have the symbol of resurrection. The power of resurrection is for all those who obey the Lord. That power works in a threefold way. First of all, we become righteous by the power of resurrection (Rom. 4:25). Secondly by the power of resurrection we conquer all our earthly trials and temptations (Phil. 3:10-14). Whatever may be our trials and temptations, weaknesses and shortcomings, we can say by faith, "O Lord, in myself I am weak and helpless, having so many failures. Will you kindly pour in me Your power of resurrection and make me an overcomer? I depend upon You". That is the second way in which the power of resurrection works in us. Thirdly, by that power one day we will be given immortal bodies (Rom.8:11). When the Lord Jesus Christ will come back again, by the efficacy of the precious blood and by the power of resurrection we will be given immortal, glorified, heavenly bodies.

The third name is the God of Jacob. When God first met Jacob he was full of fear. He was fully transformed after going through many years of severe trials. Then he became Israel. i.e. God's prince (Gen. 32:26-29). Then the God of Jacob became the God of Israel. God has given us a high heavenly calling in the Lord Jesus Christ to be kings, but very few believers enjoy it in experience. Many believers live as beggars rather than living as kings. Instead of having faith they are full of fear, doubts and anxiety. Now upon the earth we are being prepared for our kingship. Those who are washed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will sing the same song in heaven as we read in Rev. 5:9,10. One day we are going to be with the Lord Jesus Christ as heavenly kings, as His co-workers for ever and ever. Thus if we believe from the heart that my Lord, my Saviour and my Redeemer, has redeemed me by His precious blood to be His king to reign with Him, first upon the earth and then the new creation for ever, then we can thank Him for every trial in our lives. Our trials give us the training for our position in heaven as heavenly kings. Thus we can overcome every trial, every difficulty and every hardship in our lives.

In Exo.3:12,14 the Lord called Himself by any another Name, I AM THAT I AM. The meaning of that Name is, the Lord will never change. What He said, He will do. What He has desired and declared, He will fulfil (Num. 23:19). In the case of Moses, God proved His faithfulness and fulfilled His promises. In the same way, we too need not depend upon our own courage or qualification, but claim God's promises day by day and prove His faithfulness.

God prepared Moses for the very hard task of bringing God's people out of bondage, by revealing His four Names to him. We are also being prepared in the same way for an effective ministry. Believe in Him as the God of Abraham and be His friend, sharing all problems with Him. Know Him as the God of Isaac, and claim from Him the power of resurrection for all your needs. As the God of Jacob let Him prepare you for the high position of becoming His kings by your earthly trials. Finally, know that the "I AM THAT I AM", the living God, the faithful God, will always keep His promises. Whatever He has said in His Word, He must, He must fulfil it. By experiencing all that, you will become unto Him more useful and fruitful.

September 17

"...the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi...budded" (Num. 17:8).

God has made the power of resurrection available for every believer. This is a very wonderful thought, but many of us do not understand the full meaning of such a great truth. The stories in the Bible are recorded in order to help us to understand deep eternal truths. From the beginning God has shown His people the truth about this same wonderful power. In Numbers 17:1-13, we have an illustration of this. By the budded rod of Aaron God is showing how His servants are chosen by Him, and are able to serve Him only by the power He gives them. If we believe in this power we must believe also that even barren and unfruitful lives can at the touch of God, be like the rod that budded and blossomed and brought forth almonds. God wants each child of His to be such a rod. First, only a dry rod, but having been

chosen by the Lord for a purpose, a rod that began to yield buds, blossoms, and almonds. In other words, the branch of an almond tree.

Today you may be like a dry stick or a dry rod, but when you come into God's hand (i.e. God's sanctuary), when you are brought to the place where God reveals to His people His Word, then you will see how the power of God works deeply, fully, abundantly and freely and wherever you go, people will see the same dry rod budding, blossoming and bringing forth almonds. If God had so desired the very same rod could have yielded only almonds. but first it budded, then it blossomed and finally brought forth fruit. That is the common course of nature, and in the same manner the Lord will make His Word bring forth fruit in your life, the fruit of your faith and obedience and through your faith the very same rod will go on yielding almonds in many villages, towns and cities.

We can pray to God saying, "O Lord, Oh God, make me such a rod, which can yield much fruit. Even though my life has been barren, and dry, and unfruitful, or even though it may have brought some fruit it is not good fruit, but now Lord, from today onwards I believe Thy Word can make my life fruitful for Thee".

September 18

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, ... then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

When Nehemiah heard that the city of Jerusalem and its gates were burnt and the walls were broken down, he started to pray with tears and fasting. He began to remind God of His promise made to the children of Israel (Lev. 26:40-45). To begin with he confessed his own sins, the sins of his father's house and the sins of the people of God.

The condition of many believers these days is very similar to that of the children of Israel in the days of Nehemiah. There is a sad barrenness among them because they have not given the proper place to God, His Word and His House in their lives (1 Cor. 3:1-6). Only when we humble ourselves and turn to God, with true repentance, and honour Him whole heartedly can we obtain His rich blessings. When we tremble before God and confess our sins, God hears our prayers and forgives us of our sins and blesses us. Believing in God's promise in 2 Chro. 7:14, Nehemiah started to pray with mourning and fasting for certain days. When we humble ourselves, and pray to God, we can recover our first love for Him. Then God also starts working in us by pouring out upon us the spirit of prayer and intercession. Then our lives become fully fruitful. Once more we obtain God's blessings which we had enjoyed initially.

When Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and saw the condition of the city in a very sorrowful state he informed others also (Neh. 2:17). Many came forward to help when the work began. He also told them that God's hand was upon him (v.18). Even these days we need men like Nehemiah about whom people should be able to say, "Truly God's hand is upon this man." When people saw that God's hand was upon Nehemiah they also joined in the work of God. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian heard about it, they laughed, and scorned and despised them. Thus we find that when we want to take any share in the work of God, we are bound to be ridiculed and opposed by the enemies of God. That is the first weapon which the devil uses to discourage and frighten us. During Nehemiah's time these three were the most influential men of the city. We come across men like Sanballat and Tobiah in every country who powerfully oppose the work of God. Such people very successfully hinder us from following the Lord if we do not pray sufficiently for God's strength. Nehemiah overcame all these obstacles through prayer. He did not take notice of their railing, but kept his mind fixed on God. That is why he was able to say with great confidence, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build" (v. 20). Those who are not born again and are worldly minded, appear to be very clever but they have no part in the work of God because they have not been called by Him. Many people obey God, but when difficulties come they place more trust in seeking the

favour of rich people rather than trusting in God. God's people should not depend on ungodly and worldly people under any circumstance. By the help of prayer and complete obedience to God we can very definitely defeat the enemy, who tries to obstruct and frighten us when we take a bold stand for the work of God. Thus by depending on God through prayer Nehemiah not only withstood the opposition of the enemy but defeated him also.

September 19

"Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people (Psa. 96:3)".

You will find that when you try to be true and faithful and loyal to God, people who do not know God will hate you and ridicule you. Just because you do not want to tell lies and take bribes as they do, they will become your enemies. Because you do not want to take part in their worldly pleasures they will make fun of you. If you remain faithful to the Lord and trust Him alone, the very same persons who contended with you, reviling and injuring you, will come bowing at your feet and will apologise to you and say that God is with you (Isaiah 51:1,2,7,8; 49:25,26).

King Abimelech and his men tried to take away everything from Isaac, but he bore it very patiently. God spoke to him not to get involved in dealings of strife and hatred with them. He had many servants with him, but he refused to strive with Abimelech. The Lord brought Isaac to Rehoboth. Then Abimelech and his men came to Isaac to apologise and make peace with him. Isaac said to him, "Why do you come to me now, seeing you hated me and sent me away from you?" He replied, "We saw certainly that the LORD was with you" (Gen. 26:26-28).

In the same way we also have to declare our salvation. The heathen may try to revile and reproach us, but we should not take any notice. We refuse to use any worldly weapon. For a time we might have to suffer earthly loss, but one day the very same people will come to us and say, "Certainly, we have seen that the Lord is with you?".

We have proved the faithfulness of God in our lives, how able He is to help us in our needs. There were times when no man could help us and then the Lord Himself came to our aid and solved all our difficulties. Thus He has given us a new song. Those who have no new song will murmur wherever they go; they will find fault with everyone and everything; they will carry tales and spread scandal wherever they go. But those who have the new song will go on declaring God's glory to the heathen and His wonders among all people. Has God given you that new song? Are you singing that new song everyday? Are you showing your neighbours His wonderful works?

September 20

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

Although Asa accomplished much we notice that he did fail in just one thing; he did not remove some of the high places in the land, and people continued to sacrifice to other gods upon those high places (2 Chronicles 15:17 and 1 Kings 15:14). This showed their disobedience, blindness and stubbornness. King Asa allowed some of these high places to remain. This weakened his faith and brought about his downfall. Baasha king of Israel came to fight against Judah. King Asa turned to the king of Assyria for help instead of trusting in God (2 Chron 16:1-6). Although by this means Asa succeeded in defeating Israel, he brought upon himself the judgment of God. It was this time that the words of 2 Chronicles 16:9 were spoken by God through the prophet Hanani: "... the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him...". In these words we have a promise which brings us much comfort, inspiration and strength. As long as we continue to put our trust in God, and seek to honour and obey Him implicitly, His eyes will run to and fro throughout the whole earth on our behalf; and no matter what our danger, need, problem or

temptation, He will cast down our enemies, meet every need, solve every problem and give us victory over every temptation.

Because King Asa had failed in a small matter of obedience and faithfulness, the Lord was not able to fulfill his promise for him and in the second part of the same verse the Lord had to tell him. "Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars". In this we have a warning for ourselves, that if we fail as Asa failed, we also will forfeit the promise of God. Sometimes when people fail to get a promotion in their job, they are persuaded by their friends to give bribes in order to secure it. They argue, " We prayed to God and waited long enough, but He did not answer our prayers; so we were compelled to use the usual method". They succeed in getting the promotion which they longed for, but they lose their faith in God. As a result, they end their lives, like Asa, without peace or joy.

Thus although King Asa began his life well, with faith in God, he ended it in misery. What a great lesson this is to us all! You too, might have begun your spiritual life well, but now because of your trials, perhaps you are being tempted to give bribes or submit a false statement. If that is so, you would do well to take a warning from the life of King Asa.

September 21

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:28).

The Lord says to us believers, "You are very precious to Me". We also say, "Yes Lord, You are also very precious unto us", He is more precious than father, mother, husband, wife, children, job, position, property and everything. Only those who know Him by experience and are looking for Him, are ready for Him, love His appearing, can say these words. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb 9:28). "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim.4:8). And that is why we are expected to love Him more than father, mother, husband, wife, children, relations or any earthly possession of any kind. Such a testimony must come from our heart.

True worship comes only out of a pure heart. Those who are born again have become righteous with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been washed and are being washed by His precious blood day by day, can worship Him saying, "Yes Lord, we are looking for Thee; we are ready for Thee, longing for Thee". We are purchased by the same blood, that is why we are unto Him equally precious, equally necessary and equally important. We can say truthfully that we are all one family in the Lord Jesus Christ. No more rich or poor, high or low, white or black; all are one in Christ. To help us to maintain such oneness our Lord ordained the Testimony of Breaking of Bread. By eating the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ we testify that we are abundantly satisfied. He is our spiritual meat and heavenly drink. Day by day we feed upon Him and are fully satisfied. We no longer hanker for worldly pleasures, and worldly activities. With that boldness, we will welcome our Lord with joy when He comes again the second time, "Even so, Lord, come quickly".

For the same reason, we examine our hearts, search ourselves, put things right and then take part in the Lord's table. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor.11:28). Before we take part in the Lord's table, we should keep the following portions of the Scripture in mind - 1 Cor. 5:6-13; 10:16-22; 11:23-32. It is not a ceremony to take part in, it is a testimony. All those who are born again, having good conscience, looking forward to the Second coming of the Lord Jesus with joy and gladness, can take part. Those who are not born again, who do not have the assurance that their sins are forgiven, have not found true peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, should refrain from taking part. Those who are born again, and are defiled by some sin or habit of sin also

should not take part. If you find in your heart any bitter root of hatred, enmity, jealousy, suspicion, impurity, greed, or hypocrisy, ask the Lord to pull it out. We have to put all things right with God and man. If God shows any matter, promise Him that you will put things right, and then participate. If you have been careless and negligent in giving God His time, or tithe, and have failed to honour Him by not giving your testimony, ask God's forgiveness and then take part. If you have lost your first love for God, ask Him to help you to recover it. If your hunger and thirst for the Word of God has become less, ask God to help you to recover it. If you have denied, or failed to confess Him, ask God's forgiveness, then you can take part worthily. And thus after searching your heart, examining yourselves and putting all things right before God and man, you should take part with good conscience, pure heart and clean hands. Then you are blessed.

September 22

"... his eyes were as a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14).

Many things can be said with eyes. A story is told of Napoleon, Emperor of France. There was in his army a company of soldiers who were rebelling against him. So Napoleon pitched his tent and gave an order, "Bring those rebellious soldiers into my tent one by one". The Emperor sat in his tent, and according to command, the soldiers were brought before him one by one. He did not say a word, but he just sat and looked at each of them one by one, from head to foot, and sent them away. From that day none rebelled against him. Napoleon did not speak. He did not say, "Look here, you have done something wrong". The soldiers could see from his eyes that he was very angry. So they feared him and said to themselves. "If we do not obey him, he will punish us".

A wealthy man in America had one good eye and one glass eye. The glass eye was so beautifully made that nobody could tell which was the glass eye and which was the real one. One day he called a child and asked it, "My child, which of my eyes is the real one and which is the glass one?" The child at once pointed out the glass eye correctly. The man said, "How do you know?" The child answered, "Because there is no love in it." The glass eye was only shining but there was no love in it. In God's Word I see the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are full of love: divine love, eternal love. In Jeremiah 31:3 we read "... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." The fire in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ is not to terrify you but to pour His love into you. He wants that divine fire to come into you. God wants you to be holy. But how can we be holy? It is by looking into his eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ and by seeing Him face to face. In the beginning it is not pleasant, because the fire will burn away every dross of sin in you. But as you continue to look into His eyes, divine love will be poured into you.

September 23

"... without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

The ministry of the Lord Jesus as our Heavenly High Priest becomes more effective through faith. All that has been said in the first ten chapters of Hebrews becomes clearer through faith. By faith only we can enjoy all the spiritual blessings. "NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1). As human beings we are more interested in the things seen than the unseen. When we receive the life of God, unseen things become more real to us than the seen things. Real faith gives us more and more affection for heavenly things, such as the Word of God, the kingdom of God and our share in it (Col.3:2-4). "For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Heb 11:2). By faith great men of God could live a life that was pleasing to Him. Whatever God showed and declared they believed and obeyed. Our faith also becomes strong when we obey implicitly.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (v. 3). According to God's Word, He created everything out of nothing. Those who do not believe in the Bible have many theories about creation. Some say, it took many years to create all things. But God's Word says that by one word of the Lord Jesus all things came into being (Ps. 33:6). If we try to understand it by human wisdom or knowledge or science, we will be all the more confused. Those who have not received the life of God believe only in man's theories. For them unseen things have no value. But we believe what the Bible says. God took the dust of the earth and created man. Also, without sowing or tilling all the vegetation came into existence (Gen. 1:12). Without the sun and the moon, light came into existence by the word of God. As we read in Genesis chapter 1, "He said and it was so." By faith we understand this and by faith we believe it. Those who do not believe are full of fear and doubt and fail to understand what God has kept for them.

September 24

"... the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61)

Peter had told the Lord, "I will never deny Thee." But when temptation came he denied the Lord three times, and the third time he began to swear and curse, "I know not this man, of whom ye speak." No doubt that was a very difficult moment for Peter. We may not be able to imagine it. He was surrounded by wicked men who were the enemies of the Lord Jesus. So now he was filled with fear. Yet he had said before, "I will never deny Thee." Most of us also say the same thing, and yet we deny Him. Some people will not even carry their Bibles with them. They say, "What will my neighbour think? What will my officer say? Perhaps they might say, Even this man has become very religious!" They are afraid, and when they do carry their Bibles, they hide them under their coats or somewhere else. They are ashamed of what people may say. Others feel too shy even to say a few words about our Lord. It is very easy for us to condemn Peter. But what about ourselves? Have we not miserably failed Him and denied Him so many times?

The Lord Jesus Christ loved Peter and He used a cock to show it. We do not know how it came, but we know that the Lord did not command an angel but a cock, and used it to tell Peter that he had denied Him. And the cock obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ and said, "Cookaroo, Cookaroo." Then Peter remembered the Lord. The Lord can use even a cock if He wants to. He is not depending upon preachers. Sometimes preachers preach for hours and no one repents. But that morning a mere cock which obeyed the Lord made Peter repent. When the cock crew "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter" (Luke 22:61). Peter also looked at the Lord. His heart became softened, he remembered the word of the Lord and he wept bitterly.

Peter looked to the Lord and obtained victory over his temptation. Now the Lord is saying to you, "Look unto me". Whatever your sins may be, whatever your failures may be and however shameful and great your sins, He is saying the same words, "Look unto me. Do not look at your preacher, or your friends, or even at angels. Look unto Me and be ye saved." Whenever you look at the Lord, tears of repentance will start falling. Do not refuse to feel sorry for your sins today. The Lord is calling you to look unto Him no matter what your fears, troubles or afflictions may be. We tell you with authority, all your afflictions, troubles and trials will disappear provided you look at the One Who loved you and dies for you. Showing His wounded hands and feet. He says, "Look unto Me and see what I done for you. How much I have suffered for you to forgive you and to transform you and to take away all your fears, afflictions and trials."

September 25

"But we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23)

There is a great deal of wrong teaching prevalent these days concerning the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. When people go through suffering they say, "This is my cross, I have to bear it". When one is unable to get on with one's wife or husband, or when one has to struggle with poverty, they think it is their cross. Some Christians have crosses everywhere, inside and outside their churches and homes. They carry them in their pockets, or wear them on their necks. They make the sign of the cross several times a day and think they get many blessings thereby. No amount of cross-wearing and cross-bearing and cross-worshipping can bring the power of the cross into our lives. Only the power of the cross working in us can bring victory and blessing into our lives. That is why we should understand and claim our oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

We have to understand the meaning of the cross spiritually by revelation. That is why the apostle Paul says, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Again in Gal. 6:14 he writes, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus...". He does not glory in "tongues" (1 Cor. 14:18), or in visions, or in being caught up to the third heaven or in his having wrought signs, wonders and mighty deeds (2 Cor. 12:12). He does not glory in the number of churches he established. He says earnestly, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord...". The cross was the daily experience of the apostle, and his life was strengthened by it. The power of God came into him constantly because he understood the meaning of the cross. The understanding of the cross, and the experiencing of it are both necessary. God's power can come into us only in and through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:18). Our Lord Jesus died, was buried and rose again that we might enjoy that power fully in our own lives.

God has made available to us a great power when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus. Paul explains this power in his epistle to the Ephesians (ch. 1:14-23). He prayed that the Lord may open the eyes of their understanding, so that they may comprehend the exceeding greatness of the power that was put into them. It is exactly the same power that God used in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead. This same power is now available for every believer. If you believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins and rose again, then you must also believe that it is for your sake that He did all this. He rose again to live in you and manifest the power of resurrection in and through you constantly.

September 26

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but ... of the household of God" (Eph 2:19).

One of the fundamental principle of salvation is laying on of hands (Heb. 6:2). In the Bible laying on of hands was used for different purposes such as showing relationship, oneness, equality and identification. The first mention of the laying on of hands is found in Genesis 48:14. "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." Jacob laid his hands upon his grandsons and blessed them. Joseph had become a very great and wealthy man in Egypt; he was next to Pharaoh, and yet he brought his sons before his poor father Jacob so that he might bless them. He did not bring them for a worldly blessing. Materially Joseph was much more wealthy than Jacob yet he brought his sons to his father Jacob because he knew that God had promised a sevenfold blessing to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:2-3).

There are many believers who are deceived by worldly people. They walk in the ways of the world. They are more interested in dinner parties and picnics than in the things of God. That is why they do not grow spiritually. As believers we cannot have any fellowship with worldly people. We should not have any share in their worldly activities. We can be kind and polite to them, but our fellowship should be only with God's people even if they are poor or illiterate, because they are our people. So by laying on the hands after baptism, we declare together that we are identified with God's people.

I remember an incident in my life. During my college days I had a very good friend. When I returned to India from Canada, I went to see him. By then he had become very wealthy. He requested me to spend a few days with him. He was very kind to me, and made me very comfortable, but I felt only like a stranger in his house. I could not pray with him or talk to him about God. I could not even find a proper place for my quiet time. So every morning, I used to go to a nearby field. One day after finishing my quiet time, I heard some singing from the other side of the field. I went in that direction and saw a very small hut made of mud and straw. I stood there and heard the family singing a Christian song. Seeing me standing there, a man came outside and asked me, "Sir, do you want to see someone?" I said, "No, I am a Christian. I heard a Christian song being sung and my heart is drawn towards you." He said, "Come inside please." I went inside. It was a small hut. There was no furniture. I sat on the floor, but I was very happy. Though my friend was so very good to me, his house was furnished with costly furniture and everything was so wonderful, still I felt like a stranger. But I met this man for the first time. I did not even know his name. He was very, very poor, earning hardly Rs. 10/- a month, yet I was happy with him because we sang together and prayed together. I said to myself. "I have found my people". We belong to God and His people. Those who are attracted by their worldly friends do not grow spiritually.

September 27

"...happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee" (Ps 128:2).

In Ephesians 5:17 to 31 we are given seven secrets of a very happy married life or the secret of a happy home.

The first secret of a happy married life is given in Eph 5:17. "...be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." This is a simple Scripture verse which can be remembered or learned by experience. If you want success in your home, job, business, or any other activity, that verse should be remembered; understand what God's will is. If anyone questions you, "Do you know how to find God's will?" What will you say? Can you prove that you have found God's will? Just saying, "Let thy will be done" is not sufficient. God's Word says, you have to understand what God's will is. That is why we should have the gift of the Holy spirit to help us to find God's will, otherwise, we will be wasting our money and energy on things of nought.

In 1932 many times I wasted my time, energy and money on shameful things. But thank God, one day He taught me that I am not my own and He taught me also to find His perfect will in every matter. We are told in Rom. 8:14, how we can find God's will. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". We must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. To be indwelt by the Holy Spirit we must be pure and holy. God is holy. He says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16). That is why we have to have our sins forgiven before we can receive into us the Holy Spirit. To those who come to us and ask us to help them in arranging their marriages, our first question is, "Are your sins forgiven?" We are not concerned about their family, wealth, property or education. We are only concerned about their experience of new birth and whether they have received the gift of eternal life. Then we ask them, "Do you know how to find God's will? Did you pray to find God's will before consenting to this marriage?" That is the first foundational condition to be fulfilled for a happy home. We thank God, He is willing to forgive any sinner and give him the gift of eternal life.

The second condition for a happy home is given in Eph.5:18, "...be filled with the Spirit". For a happy home, you should be willing to be led by the Spirit not only for the marriage but also for every step of your life. In all things you should be led by the Spirit. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psa. 37:23). Every step you take before going anywhere, taking up any business or making any plan for building a house, you should find God's will, and do all things in accordance with God's will. That is the result of being filled with the Spirit. As believers we have

privilege of going to the Lord Jesus to find everything from Him. He is the living God Who rose again and we as believers in Him have the right to go to Him, to be led by Him every day for every matter. We have the great joy of going to him because He is our Creator.

September 28

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22)

The third secret of a happy married life is, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). The third condition for a happy home is to express your thanksgiving by songs. But some people are filled with murmurings and complaints. If you are really happy, there will be a song in your heart throughout the day. According to Psa. 40:3 we have a new song of thanksgiving which enables us to thank God for all that we receive from Him. Some people thank God for lunch but not for breakfast or tea. Some thank Him only for good things but not for all things. If you know God by experience, you will praise Him for everything, for His love, mercy, kindness, favour, gifts and guidance. Thank Him for the way He sought you and saved you. Thank Him for everything. Usually we say "Thank you" to people for everything. In one hour we say "Thank you " forty-five times. For everything we say, "Thank you, thank you". Those who have received God's grace will have a song of praise in their hearts all the time. We can thank God even for every trial and temptation. It is only the song of praise and thanksgiving which will give you heavenly joy. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph.5 :20). Note the words, "always for all things". Begin the day with thanksgiving. Before you have your tea or coffee or anything else, spend some time in thanksgiving, and end your day with thanksgiving. Remember what you have received from God's loving hands in so many ways and thank Him from the very depth of your heart.

The fourth condition for a happy home is given in Eph.5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God". Maintain divine order in your home. Those who should be respected must be respected. Those who should be honoured must be honoured. Elders must be honoured. That is God's order. If you do not respect elders, you will not enjoy divine favour. Wife should be in subjection to her husband. (Eph.5:22). It is simple thing but many wives find it hard to obey their husbands. We cannot change God's order. Your husband may be P.U.C. failed or B.A. failed, yet he is your husband. You must obey him, whether he is rich or poor, educated or illiterate you must obey him in the Lord. You cannot go against the Word of God. But if the husband asks you to go with him to cinema you should not obey him. Obedience is only in the Lord. This is a simple lesson to learn. We cannot twist the Word of God. Some wives change God's order and His Word. That is why, they are unhappy in their married lives (Eph. 5:24). Divine order must be maintained. In some homes wives earn Rs. 700/- while the husband earns only Rs. 120/-. So the wife may say, "You have to obey me, because you are earning only Rs. 120/-. You wash the baby's napkins and I will go to the office". This is not divine order. Husband must be given the right place. He is responsible for the family. He must bear the family burden as a man. Then, there will be subjection and divine order.

September 29

"... heirs together of the grace of life..." (1 Peter 3:7).

The fifth condition is, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). This is very, very important principle for a happy home. It is repeated four times in these few verses (Eph. 5:25, 28a, 28b, 33). God knows beforehand that many husbands are selfish. They want good food, every comfort, every convenience and especially they want obedience from the wife but no love. They say "You must obey, you must obey". That is all they want. They are hardhearted husbands. They only demand certain things. Again and Again Scripture says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church". How did He love us? Not because we deserved it. We had no

virtue in us. We were totally ruined by sin and defilement, yet He loved us. By grace we are saved. As we came to Him, He loved us. When we humbled ourselves, He forgave all our sins and goes on loving us. His love will never change as it says in Jer. 31:3. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love". Many husbands regard lust as love. God wants pure love coming from heaven. It does not depend upon physical beauty or qualification or position or property. It is the gift of God. The Lord Jesus Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. We can feel His presence. When we go to Him He receives us. Such a love is necessary. But I am sad to say, very few husbands have such a love. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28). We take much care of our bodies, especially when we are sick or have some pain in the body. Also we spend much time and take much care to keep the body clean and healthy. Even so, husband must be equally concerned about his wife. Then there will be oneness.

The sixth condition is, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). Do all things with one mind. True spiritual oneness must be maintained by the husband and wife to enjoy divine favour in married life. There is no need to argue about anything. By praying together, you can come to one mind for all family problems. No need to waste your time in arguments for hours together. Go upon your knees and find God's will for all your family matters and problems.

The seventh condition for a happy home is given in Eph. 5:31. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh". This is a very, very important principle. When you are married, live separately from your parents, whosoever you are, otherwise there will be quarrels between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. They quarrel with each other. The mother-in-law waits till her son comes home. When he comes home, she takes him aside, and tells him that his wife said this or that and so many things. The same thing happens the next day. Then the husband takes action against his wife. Live separately whosoever you are, if you want a happy home. Even though you have to live in a small room, it will avoid quarrels between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Otherwise, there is bound to be quarrels. The mother-in-law is bound to be jealous. Divine law cannot be changed. Live separately. Then you will be happy.

Many wives depend upon gold, silver and expensive garments to look beautiful. All these things cannot give true beauty. It cannot bring true satisfaction. But learning to serve others with all humility and love, give more beauty. "...the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4). In the same way, according to 1 Peter 3:6,7 all the burdens must be borne by the husband. That is how they can show love and respect to each other and thus become true joint-heirs of the grace of life. Then they can share together all their spiritual experiences. That makes a happy home.

September 30

"...he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

As our heavenly High Priest the Lord Jesus has fourfold ministry. Firstly, He intercedes on our behalf. Secondly He has offered one perfect sacrifice on our behalf. Thirdly, He helps us to find God's will. Fourthly, as our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus gives us heavenly food.

Melchizedek appeared to Abraham as the High Priest in Gen. 14:18. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." No one knows from where he came. He was without father and without mother. He was without beginning and without ending. He was made like unto the Son of God. That proves that God Himself took the form of Melchizedek and brought heavenly food for Abraham. This was the prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ how He would offer His body and shed His blood. By eating that heavenly food Abraham got extra strength to overcome the temptation brought by the king of Sodom. We need heavenly food by which we get spiritual strength. The Lord has made provision for victory over every temptation which we have to face during childhood, youth and old age. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to

man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). That victory is made possible by receiving the heavenly food from the hand of Melchizedek. Our Bible knowledge and will power cannot help us at the time of temptations. The Lord Jesus Christ is our merciful and faithful High Priest. If we go to Him by faith according to Heb. 2:17,18 and derive strength through His ministry as the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He will give us victory over all the devices of the enemy. Those who depend upon themselves or upon their Bible knowledge, fasting and long prayers will remain spiritually defeated and barren. But those who know how to be benefitted by the High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ become spiritually strong day by day. We first know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Then we know Him as our Lord and King. Then we know Him as our great High Priest. May the Lord teach us how to appropriate His High Priestly ministry in our day to day life.

OCTOBER 1

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock" (Psalm 40:2).

The Church or Ecclesia means drawn out. Suppose a magnet is brought near a huge pile containing various articles of gold, silver, iron, brass and precious gems like diamonds and rubies. Only a dirty and rusty nail is drawn out by the magnet, and the lovely, expensive articles are left behind. In the same way, Christ attracts the poor, lost and unclean sinners who have repented; but proud and wealthy people of the world are not drawn to Him. The word Ecclesia means "drawn out". It refers to those who have been drawn out of the world by Christ. Even though they may be illiterate and have no qualifications such as are esteemed highly in the world, yet in God's sight they have become most precious. Of such people our Lord says, "I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

Do you belong to this Church? Can you truthfully say the Lord Jesus has drawn you out from the world? Do not think because you have a Christian name or you have much Bible knowledge you belong to the Lord. There must be a change in your heart and your life. When you are drawn out by God's mighty hand, worldly pleasures lost their power of attraction for you. You have no need to struggle and strive, but because Christ has come into your heart, darkness has disappeared and you are delivered from the power of sin. Unless this has happened to you, you cannot say that you belong to the Church. Many Christians, so-called, long for worldly pleasures occasionally. They would like to go to the cinema and see "good pictures" only two or three times a year. They do not realize that poison could be deadly whether you have a drop of it or a bottle full. The small T.B. germs can kill your whole body. One spot in the eye can cause blindness. Make sure that the Lord has delivered you totally from every worldly pleasure and made you a member in His true Church.

OCTOBER 2

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11).

According to God's plan He gave fivefold gifts to the Church for the spiritual maturity of the believers (Eph. 4:11-16). He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the Body of Christ. That is how believers can be brought to maturity. It is necessary that all these gifts should function for the growth of believers. When the apostles went as a team to preach the Gospel all these gifts were manifested as we see in Acts 14:21-33; 15:32; 20:28 to 36. First of all the gospel was preached by the apostle and his workers with authority and then they were able to stay with them for some time to build them up and confirm them in the faith. Thus the believers were shepherded and brought to maturity. Then they ordained elders everywhere. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to

the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). So after much prayer and waiting upon the Lord they found out who were fit to be elders. Through 1 Peter 5 we see how elders have to function.

First of all those who are chosen to be elders should be very humble people. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1). The apostle Peter says he is an elder as one of them. He is not seeking any glory as an apostle. Thus he takes a very humble place. Unless a man is really humble, he will not be able to feed His flock. People who take pride in themselves and seek self-glory cannot function as elders.

Secondly, Peter says that he is a witness of the sufferings of Christ, (v. 1). If a man wants to be an elder he must go through some suffering, some hardship and some persecution for the sake of the Gospel. Those shepherds who have gone through sufferings will be able to bear the suffering that will come later on.

Thirdly, Peter calls himself a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed (v. 1). Peter had a clear heavenly vision of the second coming of the Lord. When we accept the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we enter into a sevenfold spiritual partnership. So the elders are those who have a clear heavenly vision of their heavenly calling and ministry.

OCTOBER 3

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

We are the material - "lively stones" with which the Lord builds His Dwelling Place. The day we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, His life is poured into us. Our Lord Himself says, "Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life." We are called lively stones because we have everlasting life. We are called stones because God uses us as the building material of His Spiritual House. Unless one has everlasting life he has no right to be called a Christian, nor can he become a part of God's House. Not only does God want us to build Him His Dwelling Place, but He also wants us to be that Dwelling Place. Just as human beings long to have a home where they can live and love and be loved freely so also God longs for a spiritual home, where He can live and love and be loved by us. God is love. Love is God's main characteristic and it is everlasting, universal, sacrificial, unchanging and beyond our human understanding. It is not wonderful that He should want us to build Him and to be build by Him as His Everlasting Habitation?

When stones are used in building of a house, first they must be quarried from the rock-bed, then chiseled to fit in with each other and for the right purpose. The Lord also has to quarry us and chisel us so that we fit into the main pattern. If we learn to submit to His loving chiseling, we shall be able to live in harmony with other "lively stones." Many believers find it hard to live peacefully with other believers. They can live peacefully and be happy by themselves in their secluded corner. But they find it difficult to get with others and quarrel for the least thing. When we live in harmony with other believers we are in a better position to understand God's plan for His House and our labour becomes more fruitful.

OCTOBER 4

"...we will not forsake the house of our God..." (Neh. 10:39).

Before we were saved we were self-sufficient, happy to live all by ourselves and for ourselves. But now is changed and we have received a desire to be with God's people to enjoy fellowship with them. As members of God's family we get a longing to share each other's joy and sorrows. We desire to get

together and worship the Lord Who has bound us together in His love. By such a fellowship we are strengthened more and more spiritually. With this experience David says in Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." We too, as we take one step ahead in this spiritual life, get an increasing longing in our hearts to spend as much time as possible in the House of God in prayer and worship along with our fellow-believers. Those who despise the fellowship of God's people and love worldly activities are bound to remain poor spiritually. They miss the strength and encouragement which is the portion of those who regularly meet together for Bible study, prayer, fellowship and service in the House of God.

That was the secret of the growth and strength of the early Church. We read in Acts 2:42 that the believers continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayer. By honouring God's Word thus, they were able to safeguard themselves against the attacks of the enemy. In these end days we know that the enemy is more active. In 2 Tim. 3:1-13 there is a list of different kinds of sins that will be prevalent in the end days. If we want to overcome these we must stand together in close fellowship with God and His people. We cannot conquer any situation by ourselves. You may spend hours together with your Bible at home. That will not strengthen you as much as time of fellowship spent with the believers. In olden days monks and nuns retired to lonely places in jungles and spent their time in meditation and prayers hoping that thereby, in the end, they would be strong enough to overcome the enemy easily. But they became worse and weaker after being all by themselves. Many believers are defeated for the same reason and are weak spiritually. They allow worldly activities and worldly friendships to prevent them from coming to the House of God for fellowship. We need to learn well that the more we have regular fellowship with the believers in the House of God and the more we take part in any service in the House of God the stronger will be our spiritual life.

OCTOBER 5

"And I beheld, and, lo, ...a Lamb as it had been slain, ...and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Rev.5: 6,7).

As the Lamb of God the Lord Jesus Christ had prevailed and had power to take the book and open its seals. John was an apostle and the disciple whom Jesus loved. These words occur six times in the Bible. He was in heaven itself, but could not understand what he saw. There are mysteries which we can never understand. We think we know, but it is sad that what we have not understood. These mysteries are hidden from us. We see in God's Word that many have longed to understand those mysteries but could not. "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matt. 13:17). "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). We do not know anything, yet we think we know everything. It is only when we do not know anything, that we think we know everything.

God's Word is full of divine truths. Even though a man may spend many years in reading it he cannot exhaust it. In the eyes of people John was a great apostle, but in heaven he did not understand much. There are some people who think they know everything. Because they know something of the Bible, they are proud that they know everything. In my early days I bought an Oxford dictionary. I was the only boy in the village who was learning English. One day I carried that book under my arm. I only knew simple words like cat and dog. One man saw me and asked, "Can you read this big book?" I said, "Yes I can". Then the man said, "Please read one page". So I opened the book and rattled something and the man said, "How clever you are!" That is how we think we know everything. But when we get older we know how much we have to learn. That is why John was crying in heaven. It is quite true, when we grow older we realise how little we know our Lord Jesus. If you know the Lamb, and how to feed upon

Him, be washed in His blood and keep your eyes upon Him, you will have true wisdom, true understanding and true knowledge of all these heavenly mysteries.

As far as God is concerned He has purposed from eternity to reveal all these mysteries to us. That is why He calls us friends. "...I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made know unto you" (John 15:15).

OCTOBER 6

"...God is able to make all grace abound toward you" (2 Cor. 9:8).

Those who are married in God's will must appropriate the power of resurrection for all their trials and difficulties which they may have to go through in their married life. Lazarus was in the grave for four days, and was stinking, but at the Lord's command he came out of the grave. He is the symbol of the power of resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For every trial, temptation, hardship and difficulty that power is sufficient. Whosoever you may be, rich or poor, high or low, educated or uneducated, as human beings you have to face some problem, weakness, limitation, temptation or hardship common to all people. The secret of conquering them is to claim the power of resurrection. The couple should say by faith, "Lord Jesus Christ, we are facing this difficulty. We have no capacity to face it. Please give us Your power of resurrection to conquer it". By that power they can overcome all situations. They should not depend upon their own strength, but depend upon the power of resurrection. The apostle Paul says in Phil. 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". He refers to the power of His resurrection. In Phil. 3:10 he says, "I may know him, and the power of his resurrection". It is by that power that they will be able to conquer all their afflictions.

OCTOBER 7

"...planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

Our Lord draws the attention of the apostle John to some important matters in Revelation Chapter 1, and in verse 4 He draws his eyes to the throne, "seven Spirits which are before his throne." In verse 13, He makes him see the glory of the seven golden candlesticks, which indicate the kind of the Church our Lord is building. So many people think of the Church in terms of members, buildings and activities. Even though it is such a simple but important subject, people do not know the meaning of the Church. They spend so much money and energy on the building and the furniture, and on the activities of the building. Yet they do not know what the Church really is. These seven golden candlesticks tell us what the Church really is. We see our Lord as the great heavenly and everlasting High Priest walking between those candlesticks. We see our Lord in a new glory; His hair like the white wool, His countenance like the beautiful sun. His eyes are like the flame of fire. From His mouth goes out a sharp two-edged sword; His feet are like burning brass, and in His hand the seven stars; His voice is like the sound of many waters; His garment is very long and beautiful, and girded with a golden girdle.

These few details tell us something about the beauty and grandeur of the Saviour Who died for us. There is a message for you and for me in all the features of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can spend many hours in meditating on the meaning of these mysteries. Our Lord knew that John the apostle would find it hard to understand the meaning of the mysteries; and that is why He said in verses 17 and 18, "...Fear not; I am the first and the last... I am he that liveth." There lies the great secret: "I am he that liveth." Unless we have felt the experience of the Living Lord Jesus we cannot understand what He is saying in this book of Revelation. That is why many people find it hard to understand. They want only to know the meaning of these things. That want only knowledge and facts and things like that. They do not enjoy these truths. Unless we have a real experience of the living Lord Jesus, whatever is being said in this

Book of Revelation will not help us. In the same way, if you want to enjoy the truth of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, it becomes more enjoyable and more real by coming into a personal experience of Him. Can you say like Paul in Gal 2:20, "Christ liveth in me"? No doubt you know this in theory, but not by experience, and before you can go further into these things, you must have a deeper, fuller and richer experience of the living Lord Jesus. Without this, you will never be satisfied; but when the Lord becomes real to you, whatever may be your discomfort, inconvenience and handicap, or whatever be your situation, your joy will be abundant and your life will be triumphant and victorious. To make this possible our Lord rose again to live in us.

OCTOBER 8

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

The Lord Jesus died not only to take away our judgment and forgive our sins, but also to make us die to our old sinful nature. The Psalmist says that we are born in sin. "...in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Right from the first son of Adam, Cain, all men have inherited a sinful nature from their parents. We cannot help sinning because of this sinful nature. Supposing you question a snake, "Mr. Snake, why are you so poisonous? Why do you go on biting everybody? What will the snake answer? He will say, "I am made that way. There is poison in my fangs, and when I bite, I poison people". A snake may look nice and harmless, as a child and yet it will bite anyone who touches it. It is made that way. What would you say if you were asked, "Why do you sin?" You would answer, "I cannot help it; I am made like that". All of us are born with a sinful nature. It is that nature that make us sin: we cannot help it. We are born that way. As long as that nature is in you, you will go on sinning again and again. You will never conquer sin unless you die to that old sinful nature.

There are certain skin diseases for which you may apply many bottles of ointment externally, and you will get only temporary relief. To be cured of such diseases, the root of the disease has to be discovered, and suitable medicines taken. In the same way, if you want to be cured of your disease of sin, first of all, you must realize that your inward old nature is responsible for all your sinful deeds, and that you cannot remove this old nature by mere education, or even by acquiring Bible knowledge, or by performing good works.

Once there was a professor in London who tried to change the nature of his pig. He put the pig in a beautiful room with electric fan and all modern conveniences. Every day a servant washed this pig with hot water and scented soap. After continuing this treatment for some years, he took the pig on a chain and went out for a walk. As they went, the pig saw a dirty drain, and immediately the pig tugged hard at the chain, and pulled away from his master. Then it went and wallowed in the dirty drain. The owner sighed disgustedly, and said, "For ten long years I laboured patiently to change you, my pig. All my efforts are in vain. A pig you are my nature, and a pig you will remain". In the same way education will not change your sinful nature. What you need is an inward change. Otherwise the old nature will make you more and more corrupt. In fact, education makes a man more cunning in covering his sins. So it is necessary that you should die to your old nature. To do this, you must take into you by faith the power of death of the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith you must say, "Lord Jesus, I see all the bad things that are in me: my bad temper, jealousy, and other lustful weaknesses. I cannot conquer them. So I want to die to myself today. Will you kindly put the power of Your death into me? Only then you will be able to die to your old nature. The apostle Paul had this experience, and he could say, "I am crucified with Christ". Christ's death worked daily in the apostle's life, and then he received Christ's resurrection life. Dying to self should be our daily experience. Thus Paul was able to say, "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31).

OCTOBER 9

"...the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish" (Proverbs 14:11)

Onesimus was a slave in the house of Philemon. At one time he was greatly tempted and he robbed his master and ran away to Rome. There he spent all his money and became penniless. In this condition he must have gone to Paul the apostle for help. Once he was a thief and a rogue yet Paul received him, and gave him the Gospel, and he was wonderfully saved. He also became very dear unto Paul as his assistant as well as a servant of God. Paul sent him back to Philemon for two reasons. It was to ask forgiveness from his master and secondly to take a letter from Paul and to explain it. At that time Paul was writing the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. Most part of these two epistles teaches great and hidden truths of the Church.

Onesimus must have looked after the aged Paul by washing his clothes and doing other household jobs. At the same time he went on listening to and learning from his talk with others. Thus he learnt the fuller meaning of "the Church". Now he went back to the house of his master as a Bible teacher. Paul is quite sure of the forgiving spirit of Philemon and writes, with confidence "...receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant...If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself....refresh my bowels in the Lord. Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say" (vs. 15,17,20-21). That is why Philemon's home became a home of equality, of oneness, of service and a home of fellowship, and of forgiveness. It was a home where God's Word was honoured and was given the first place and where many were comforted and refreshed. It was not only a home of refreshing but a home where there was obedience, where the Lord Jesus Christ was given the first place, and where His voice was daily heard and His will was fully accomplished. Paul could say joyfully, "I know you will do more than I say". It was a home of sacrifice, home where many became friends. Philemon did not fall short of Paul's expectation. As a family they showed God's love and manifested His power. As a result many were converted and transformed in Philemon's house and worshipped the Lord. So it was a real Christian home and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ was established in their home. We pray much that our loving God may give such a home to all His people where love may be showed, and the work of salvation may be wrought by love, testimony and sacrifice.

OCTOBER 10

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well" (Genesis 49:22).

God made Joseph fruitful through affliction. Jacob refers to this fruitfulness of Joseph while blessing him; "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. 49:22). How did Joseph become fruitful? When he was a young lad his own brothers hated him because he refused their company and would not be a partner with them in their bad habits. Their father Jacob loved Joseph, so they were jealous of him. They wanted to kill him, but ultimately they sold him as a slave. Thus he was brought to Egypt and he became a slave in the house of Potiphar. Here, he was falsely accused and put into prison and forgotten entirely for two years. These afflictions lasted for about fifteen years together but when he was thirty, the Lord lifted him up and brought him into favour with Pharaoh. These fifteen years of affliction were not wasted. God used them to prepare Joseph for a very high position. Joseph was able to supply food not only to Egypt, but to other nations as well, throughout the seven years of famine.

In Psalm 105:16-22, we read how Joseph suffered as a slave and then as a prisoner. Finally he was set free by the king and made "lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom". Generally officers become corrupt and dishonest. No doubt Pharaoh was not able to trust his officers because of their corruption and dishonesty. So he gave full authority to Joseph to punish the corrupt princes and senators. These men must have been rich and powerful. How was Joseph to bring them under discipline? It was a very difficult task, but Joseph had been disciplined by his afflictions, and he was able to teach wisdom to these proud and stubborn men. To qualify Joseph for such a difficult task God had to take him through fifteen years of suffering.

OCTOBER 11

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne..." (Rev. 3:21).

All those who are redeemed by the precious Blood are given the privilege of being part of the LORD's BODY, but only those who are found faithful and are true overcomers will have the privilege of sharing His throne (Rev. 3:21) - the high position of governing the new creation. Paul declares in Eph. 3:10, that by the true Church the Lord Jesus Christ is going to reveal His manifold wisdom to powers and principalities in heavenly places. Similarly God's fulness is going to be contained in the true Church. Nobody can understand what God's fulness is, but first of all we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's fulness. "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9) and that fulness is to be contained finally in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Eph. 1:22,23, we read that God's fulness is in the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ and that Body is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by understanding the real meaning of the Church that we understand what the Church is. Some people call a building the church. Wherever you go you find these names given, St. John's church, St. Luke's church, and so on, all man-given names. But in the Bible nowhere do you find these names given to a building. People have become blind by their own interpretation. They say, "I am going to church", which means they are going to a building. But we do not see anywhere in Scripture, any single reference where a building is ever called a church. That is why these believers do not seem to enjoy their right and privilege as members of the heavenly Church, but live in spiritual barrenness and infancy. When we could be kings, we live as beggars. When we are in trouble we start crying over a very small matter. We worry over our small temptations, and we fall; and the enemy can deceive us by wrong teaching. That is why Paul, the apostle, in Ephesians, is trying to show the believers their true heavenly vocation. We can be saved from many temptations, if we exercise our right as God's children, as God's co-worker and God's witnesses.

If you are going to be a king, then behave as a king. But many of us behave as beggars. There is no need to behave as such. We as God's children must behave as sons of God. Then you will find that you will have more liberty and authority in your prayers because of the One Who has given us the boldness and privilege to approach His throne of grace.

OCTOBER 12

"...before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).

"Simeon" means "God hath heard" (Gen. 29:33). God has promised, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24). There is no need to wait for signs and evidences. Believe His promise and start thanking the Lord for hearing and answering our prayers. The Lord Himself said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). The faith that the Lord hears and answers us is the secret of effectual prayer. Do not doubt God. He will do things which we think are impossible. The life of faith is life of joy. You can trust God for everything.

In our own experience we have found this to be true many, many times. Let me give one instance. We were lead to arrange Holy Convocation gatherings at Guntur, for the first time in 1954. God had spoken to us clearly and we fixed the dates. However, we had not yet been able to secure suitable buildings and premises for such gatherings. We expected about 5000 people to attend and we knew it would not be easy to find a place large enough to accommodate that number for nine days. Yet we believed that the Lord would provide, and we had not the least doubt about it. One morning a brother in the Lord came to me and suggested that we go into the city and look for a place. We drove three miles and reached a compound which we understood belonged to one Mr. Chowdhry, a Hindu gentleman. We went in to see him and explained to him our desire to conduct Holy Convocation gatherings in Guntur.

Immediately he put his hand into his pocket and offered us Rs. 25/- for the expenses. We told him that we had not come to collect any contributions, but we needed accommodation. He was very pleased to give us the whole compound of several acres and also offered us several of spacious rooms in his bungalow, a three-storeyed building. The secret of blessing we received is that we believed the Lord even before He supplied our need. Financially, when we started the preparations we had with us Rupees ten only, yet we fully believed the Lord would supply all that was necessary to feed the 5000 people whom we expected. The Lord honoured our faith and fully supplied.

OCTOBER 13

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord..." (2 Cor. 6:17).

When Jacob obeyed God and put away all the strange gods in his household, the first result was that the terror of God fell upon all the people round about. His neighbours began to tremble when they saw him. The people of Shechem had tried to draw Jacob and his family to their side. They had offered to enter into marriage alliances with them (Gen. 34:9,10). When Jacob's sons took a strong stand against such a relationship Jacob was offended, and he was afraid that because he and his people were few in number they would be destroyed.

The enemy has gained entrance into many believing homes through fear, and as a result the influence of worldly associations and friendships has brought ruin upon them. Jacob was tempted to settle down at Shechem. Having fled from Laban, he now wanted to live in peace at Shechem. But God told him that that was not the place of his rest. Even though Shechem appeared to be a wealthy and comfortable place, God told him to leave it and go to Bethel. Jacob obeyed and put away all the strange gods in his household. That was why God made His terror to fall upon all the people round about Jacob. No one dared to do him any harm. When we faithfully obey the Lord, He will watch over us and bless us.

There are several reasons for which people keep away from the House of God. Some keep away for the sake of their business. Their argument is that because they have more children they need to earn more money to feed, clothe and educate them. Beside keeping away from the House of God, they also cut down their time of prayer and devotion. At one time they might have taken part very happily in the service of the House of God. But now something has happened, and some strange god has come into their heart. In this way, they have brought upon themselves not gain but loss. Naomi thought that by going away from Bethlehem she would get more food and be happy. Instead of that she lost her husband and two sons. It was only when she came back to Bethlehem, the house of bread, that she was blessed again. Away from Bethlehem she fell into sorrow and worry; but when she came back to Bethlehem she became the happy grand-mother of Obed and the blessed great grandmother of David, the king of Israel. So do not let your worldly wisdom keep you away from the House of God. However busy your life may be, God has the first claim over you.

OCTOBER 14

"The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty" (Psalm 29:4).

There are golden bells between the pomegranates, on the hem of the blue robe worn by the high priest. They were not copper bells or steel bells but golden bells producing heavenly music. As the high priest moved here and there, these golden bells produced a peculiar sound. The sound of these golden bells represented the sweet sound of the voice of God. Just as the sound of the golden bells is unique and entirely different from the sound produced by copper, steel or other bells, the voice of God is entirely different from man's voice. When we hear the voice of God we know by experience that it is not the voice of man but it is the voice of God. It is the still small voice. It is the heavenly voice. It is a sweet voice and it is a loving voice with authority. Joy comes to our hearts as we hear His voice.

The golden bells proclaimed that only by hearing the voice of God we can take share in building the Church of God. Nowadays people think that by spending much money and great activity they can build the Church. They forget that unless they hear God's voice constantly, and understand God's plan for the Church, they are not qualified to take a share in the work of building God's House. So through these golden bells God reminds us, that if we want to be His co-workers in building His everlasting sanctuary, we must first learn to hear His voice. That is why we have to stay upon our knees for long time and say, "Lord, speak to me, give me Thy message, let me hear Thy voice; show me Thy way; keep me in the right path, carry me through, strengthen me and give me Thy grace." Those who are not born again can never hear the voice of God nor can they be co-workers with God.

OCTOBER 15

"...if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

In Heb 6:2 we read about the doctrine of baptisms. Why it is written "baptisms"? When we are born again we are baptized into one Body, by the Holy Spirit. That is the first baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). The second one is the water baptism.

In the Bible the word baptism is never used for fullness. Baptism means washing or dipping or bathing. When we take bath we wash our whole body. If we wash our hands or feet only it is not a bath. In the same way, in baptism we are immersed into water by which we testify that the Lord Jesus Christ has completely washed all our sins away.

Secondly, through baptism we declare our union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death... For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:3-5). As we have already seen, when we are saved we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, which means we are joined in Him. We become members of His Body and His life begins to flow in us. In water baptism we declare this spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Creator, He gave us His life. In other words our life was in Him. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). That is why when He died, we died with Him. When He was buried, we were buried. When He rose again, we too were raised with Him.

Our union with the Lord Jesus Christ can be explained like this. If a woman who is about to deliver a child dies, the child in her womb also dies. When she is buried the child is also buried. If by some miracle that woman is brought back to life, the child in her womb also is made alive. Our life is in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we are united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. To declare such oneness with our Lord we are baptized.

OCTOBER 16

".. the love of Christ... passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19).

When a husband goes to some distant place on some business, he usually thinks of his wife and tries to bring something nice to her. He goes from one shop to another to get something beautiful, which will make her to say, "I have never had anything like this before!" Our Lord Jesus loves us much more than we ask, and quite often gives us things we have never asked Him at all. This has been my own experience. We are objects of His unique love and favour. In this sense we are His Bride.

We read in Rev. 21:4, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". Almost every wife knows how to weep, and it is the husband's privilege to wipe away her tears. The love and comfort which the Lord gives to us excels that which any husband can give. He has received us as His bride. He will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and heal every wound in our hearts. He says, "My Beloved, I have bottled up every tear which you have shed. I know your hardships and your sufferings. Now, let me comfort you". Those loving words of His will make us to forget all our past. In this sense also He is our Bridegroom and we are His Bride.

There is a custom in Punjab that the bride should not wear any of her old clothes. After her marriage she must wear only those given by her husband. The Lord also wants to cover all our ugliness. He wants to give us His own virtues and His own glory. He wants all things in us to be new. Such love is so wonderful. He wants us to be perfectly one with Him, never to part again. He wants us to be His Bride. Do not despise such a wonder love. Receive it and see how great will be your joy afterwards. Then you will be worthy to be called His Bride.

OCTOBER 17

"And the manna ceased...they did eat of the fruit of the land" (Joshua 5:12).

As long as the children of Israel were in the wilderness, God supplied them with Manna daily. After coming to Canaan it ceased. They had to work hard for their food from now on. In order to come to spiritual maturity we must become active partners with God. In the beginning of our spiritual life for a short time God will look after us and watch over us in a special way. But as we progress in spiritual maturity God expects us to exercise faith to a larger extent and call upon Him for help, for producing more difficult spiritual fruit. He wants us to find out His will and bear our responsibilities and face trials and difficulties, which are common to all, with confidence and with God's help. This way God wants us to learn to claim His victory by faith.

The apostle Paul, sometimes expounded many mysteries in the Word of God to help his followers in spiritual matters. Then, while he was away, he wrote to them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). So for a short time God will give us shepherds to feed us, teach us and lead us. Afterwards we have to learn to work by ourselves. We must learn to read the Bible and to meditate upon it and be able to hear God's voice through it. Some believers remain as babes for too long a time. They want other God's servants to feed them with milk. They do not grow in understanding nor have capacity to digest the strong spiritual meat in God's Word (Heb. 5:12-14). May the Lord help us to learn more and more how to hear His voice and find His perfect will and no more continue to be babes spiritually.

OCTOBER 18

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

The Lord offers us His fulness in abundance, not in a small measure. He is a God of abundance, and He wants to give us all things in abundance. Whatever we may receive from Him, whether it is life, peace, truth, joy or power, He offers in abundance. The fulness of the Holy Spirit, all things of the earth and also of the new creation, are given to us by faith. It is said, "All things are yours", all the things of the new creation but not of the old creation (Rev. 21:7). But we must learn to overcome our doubts, fears and unbelief, and then go on claiming all things of the new creation. For all that we require there is abundance of divine wisdom. That is why the apostle Paul prays in Eph. 1:17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." The Ephesians were highly taught in the doctrines of salvation, because men like Paul, Apollos, Timothy and John, apostles and mighty men of God, were sent to teach them. Yet Paul prayed for them,

that God should give them still more knowledge and wisdom, that they might enjoy all that God had purposed and planned for them. All of us require that wisdom, divine and heavenly wisdom, which is from above. With that wisdom we can understand the things of God. We receive it by faith. The Lord wants us to have this, so that we may be filled with His fulness. It does not matter what our past failures, shortcomings and weaknesses have been. Once we are purchased by the precious blood and become His purchased possession, we can claim every privilege that He gives to believers. Eph. 1:3 is a promise for every believer not only for a few, chosen believers who are serving God, like the apostle Paul. Our loving God wants every believer, to receive all these spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. We have to exercise our right and claim our portion. We do not deserve it. The God of love offers these gifts to show His love for us.

OCTOBER 19

"Buried with him... risen with him..." (Col. 2:12).

It is very necessary for us to learn the secret of appropriating the power of resurrection day by day for all our needs. The Lord Jesus Christ becomes our personal Saviour when we believe that He died in our stead to bear judgement of all our sins, shed His precious blood to cleanse us from our sins and rose again for our justification. Through such a faith we recognise we are planted together in the likeness of His death and burial and in the likeness of His resurrection. These days the best fruits like mangoes, apples, oranges and peaches are being produced by grafting. A tree yielding small and sour fruit can be made to yield nice, large, sweet and juicy fruits. One seedling of a bad tree is grafted into a tree yielding good fruits. By grafting, the seedling receives the nature of a good tree yielding nice and juicy fruits. The apostle Paul uses the same phrase for our union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. By the power of His death we die daily to our old nature and by the power of His resurrection we become new creatures. In the Lord Jesus Christ all things become new as we read in 2 Cor. 5:17. The Lord expects us to enjoy his power day by day by appropriating it with simple faith according to our need.

Even though Paul the apostle was mightily used of the Lord to establish many churches and also he had the privilege of being called into the third heaven and hearing words which could not be uttered in human language, yet he longed more and more to know the Lord, and the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10). In the early church also the believers gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ with great power, and great grace was upon them all. Thus it is very necessary for us as believers to learn to appropriate this wonderful power of resurrection.

OCTOBER 20

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous" (1 Peter 3:12).

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). God's love is so great that His eyes are running to and fro throughout the whole earth, working on our behalf. His loving eyes run to and fro, like a mother watching over her child. Even though she is at work in the kitchen she keeps her eyes on the child, lest the child falls into danger. If we keep our hearts perfect towards Him by doing His will then we know that Lord's eyes move on our behalf to give us many friends, brothers and sisters, and to show us many favours.

Again we read, "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zech. 2:8). The eye is very delicate organ. You can touch any part of the body but if you touch the eyes, they will say to you, "Don't touch me, don't touch me." So God is saying, "If anybody touches you, I will say, 'Don't touch him, don't touch him, he is my child, he belongs to Me.'" We are so precious to Him, that He will not allow any man or power to harm us.

The Psalmist says, "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Ps. 34:15). The Lord keeps His eye upon us to save us. Furthermore in Ps. 32:8, we read, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." You can say many things with the eyes. The Lord says, "I will guide you with Mine eyes. I will tell you where to go and when to go". The eyes of the Lord protect us from all dangers and guide us, as we continue looking unto Him.

OCTOBER 21

"...an anchor of the soul, ...which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus" (Heb. 6:19,20).

The apostle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as the anchor of our salvation in Hebrews chapter six, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:19). Paul and his fellow passengers had to face a very furious storm in the sea on their way to Rome (Acts 27:28,29). They were in danger of falling upon the hidden rocks. So they cast four anchors out of the stern to keep the ship steady. We too have to face many storms and temptations in our lives. At times the attacks of the enemy are very severe both within and without. In such situations the Lord Jesus Christ is our true anchor. He will never leave us nor forsake us. We have to say by faith, "Lord, You are my anchor." Even in the most difficult situations we have to lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our true anchor.

In Heb. 6:14 the Lord says, "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." God used the storm to take Paul to the island of Melita to preach the Gospel there. The people of Melita had not heard the Gospel. Through Paul's preaching many were born again there. They loaded Paul and other people with all necessary things when they were leaving for Rome. Thus we see that the storms of our lives are used by God to bring us to great and multiplied blessings.

Many people are satisfied just with receiving forgiveness of their sins and have the hope of occupying some corner in heaven. But the Lord's desire is that we should go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1,2). We must not remain babes spiritually but long to go on to perfection. We should not glory in our past experiences however wonderful they may have been. We must believe God's Word fully, and with His strength and wisdom reach up to His standard.

The God of perfection has a great desire to bring us into His perfection by the intercessory ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our everlasting and faithful High Priest (Heb. 7:11,25). All of us try to overcome our trials and temptations in our own strength. Then we realise how weak and feeble we are. To be able to overcome trials and temptations we have to appropriate the intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. He is our unchangeable, everlasting High Priest (Heb. 7:24). That means He is constantly interceding on our behalf knowing our weaknesses, trials and failures. But unless we take His ministry by faith it has no value for us. For example, just by saying that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, we do not receive salvation. When we say by faith that He died on the cross even for me; He took my place; He bore my punishment and my judgment; then His sacrifice becomes effective in our lives. In the same way, we have to believe that He is our everlasting, unchangeable High Priest, Who lives for ever to intercede on our behalf. If we appropriate by faith His death, burial and resurrection as our death, burial and resurrection and also His High Priestly ministry, we shall be helped. The very second we are defiled, we call upon Him and claim His intercessory ministry by faith.

OCTOBER 22

"...for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

A Christian lady doctor known to me had an income of Rs. 40,000 a year through her practice. Her friends advised her to declare a lesser amount of Rs. 25,000, because if she gave the correct figure, the Government officers would still think that, like others, she also had given a false figure, and was actually getting much more. She came to me for advice. I told her that she was a Christian and so should never tell a lie but should give the correct figure even though the officials might harass her, saying she must be getting much more than that. In the end, the Lord would honour her. In many subtle ways we will be constantly tempted to go against our conscience. We should not be deceived by the hope of some earthly gain to surrender our moral integrity.

King Asa was given God's message of warning through the prophet, But instead of accepting it thankfully, he became infuriated with the prophet (2 Chro. 16:7-10). So he put the prophet in prison. However this did not change God's message, and Asa was troubled by wars for the rest of his life. He had forfeited the blessing of God. Jehoshaphat was the son of King Asa. He also began very well like his father (2 Chron. 17:1-12). As long as he obeyed God he went on prospering. But later on, although he knew how his father had failed the Lord and brought loss upon himself, he also succumbed to the subtle devices of the enemy and brought destruction upon himself.

Jehoshaphat chose Ahab's daughter Athaliah for his son Jehoram and in this way he and Ahab became great friends. The result was that much worldliness entered into Jehoshaphat's life. The same calamity has befallen many believers. At first they showed much zeal for the Lord. They always carried their Bibles with them and witnessed and preached very boldly. Then the time came for them to arrange the marriage of a son or daughter. Tempted by worldly gain and prosperity they made alliances with ungodly families. When some servant of God took courage to warn them and show them God's Word, like king Asa they became very angry with him. As a result now they have fallen into sorrow and shame. All this is a warning to us not to allow worldly friends like Ahab to deceive us; not to be attracted by worldly pomp and glory to make marriage alliances with ungodly people; and not to get angry with God's servants who give us God's Word. On the other hand we are exhorted to obey God and honour His living Word at all times and at any cost.

OCTOBER 23

"... for we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices" (2 Cor. 2:11).

When Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem heard that Nehemiah had eventually succeeded in building the wall of Jerusalem, they wanted to do some harm to Nehemiah himself. When the enemy fails to hinder the work of God and when he sees that God's work is progressing, his next weapon is to bring trouble upon His servants. Throughout our service to the Lord we have had to face battles very often. We who are in His service should be prepared for all kind of battles, which we have to face day by day.

To start with Sanballat and Tobiah tried to draw Nehemiah away from his responsibility of completing the wall (Neh. 6:2,3). In the same way when we as God's children are engaged in His work, worldly people invite us for worldly functions with the bad motive of keeping us away from His work. At times they will even offer the believers positions of honour so that they may be attracted by self-glory. In some place we have seen that when a newly born again person takes much interest in the things of God, they are invited to take up some responsible position such as a chairman or as an elder. It is quite unscriptural to make a newly born again person an elder in the Church. According to 1 Tim. 3:1-10, and Titus 1:6-9, no one should be made an elder unless he is proved and tested. This is another way in which the devil deceives the newly born again people and hinders them from growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a newly born again person shows zeal for Word of God and desires spiritual growth they invite him to go and give speeches. Gradually other people also get the desire to become popular and thus many good people are deceived and misled and become ambitious for high positions. Generally those who are ambitious are the ones who cause much trouble. People can

see that their own family life is not exemplary. Their children are rebellious. Such people have no burden for prayer. But they want to be elders and if they are not given a chance they begin to create trouble by false propaganda.

OCTOBER 24

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).

Jericho had great strong walls and all the gates were shut for fear of the children of Israel. Inside were mighty men of valour. The very sight of the high strong walls would have frightened anyone, but such was not the case with Israelites. The Lord had promised them that He had already given Jericho into their hands along with all inhabitants (Josh. 6:2). So even before they came near Jericho they already had the strong confidence that the victory belonged to them. The king of Jericho and his mighty men point to the devil and his angles. We have to fight against evil powers (Eph. 6:12). But our Lord Jesus Christ had already defeated Satan and has put him to shame (Col. 2:15). He won that victory on our behalf. So by faith we too can claim His victory over every attack of the evil one.

God could have destroyed Jericho by using His angels, had He wished so. But He wanted the Israelites to be His co-workers. To become His co-workers, we need to have strong faith. For that reason the Israelites had to believe in the promises of God and they had to obey His commands without any doubt or question. If the Lord desired, the Israelites could have gone round the city of Jericho just once and the walls would have fallen down. But we see they had to go round the city thirteen times. Every time they went round, their faith was strengthened more and more. They were instructed not to pay any attention to any people who might have been watching them from the top of the wall. Perhaps these people were also laughing and mocking at them. On the other hand through the blowing of the trumpets, the children of Israel were rejoicing in the victory from the Lord. Their eyes were drawn away from the city and its inhabitants and were fixed only on the Lord. It was only by this strong active faith in the words of the Lord and implicit obedience to His commands that they could enter into the promised land and possess it.

They had to go round the city of Jericho for seven days. That points to the fiery trials which are allowed in the life of a believer to give him strong faith (1 Pet. 1:6-7). Gold is purified when it passes through fire seven times. To enable us to have the full portion of our heavenly inheritance God will take us through several painful situations.

OCTOBER 25

"For our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20).

In Eph. 1:22 God's people are called the Church. In Greek it is called "Ecclesia" which means a people who have been pulled out or drawn out. As long as we live in sin, we are like a person who has fallen into deep horrible pit, which is so deep that no one can draw us out of it. We require a mighty hand, or a great power to pull us out. Sin is also likened to miry clay. If you go on some parts of Assam, you will find miry places. Some time ago we went there for Gospel work and we had to go through jungles and streams, to get to a certain place. As we were walking in one place, I suddenly found my feet sinking in the ground. I sank so deep that my friend had to pull me out. Nobody can ever come out by himself. If he tries to get out he will only sink in all the more. In Africa, many tigers and lions die in the miry clay. The miry clay sucks the animal inside, and however strong it may be, it cannot get out by itself. The Psalmist says, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Psa. 40:2).

The world can also be compared to a 'horrible pit' or 'miry clay' and none of us can come out of the world by ourselves. The people of Israel, even though they had been brought out of Egypt and had seen many miracles, yet were longing for the things of Egypt. In the same way many who are born again do not know their heavenly calling; they long for worldly pleasure. It is surprising how many believers watch movies, read worldly books, and wear fashionable clothes. At the time of marriage all worldliness in people comes out by their worldly clothes, worldly movies, worldly conversation. Judging by their clothes, habits and conversation, nobody will think they are born again, because worldliness is there.

Read 2 Cor. 6:14 or 18. Suppose a man has become a Christian from a Hindu background. He no longer goes to the temple everyday but decides to go once a month or once in three months; would you accept him as a Christian? It would be impossible. In the same way how can we have fellowship with worldly people when we have been drawn out from the world? By conversation and habit, by clothing or association, we must be peculiar in every way. How sad it is today to see worldliness among believers, who say they are born again. That is why they do not know their heavenly calling or vocation. We are heavenly people, we must keep our eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

The right understanding of the word Church, will free us from all temptation to imitate worldly people. By our conversation and habits we have to prove that we are His people, His Church. In the same way, we read in Col. 3:1-2, our affection should be for heavenly things. The true Church consists of those who have been pulled out, or drawn out by the Lord Jesus Christ from the world and worldly things. So wonderful is this experience and fact, that even though we are hated and despised, we do not go back into the world, but thank God for the privilege we are given to bear reproach for His Name's sake.

OCTOBER 26

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Cor.3:9).

Among the many names given to us as believers, one is "Labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9). The same is found in 2 Cor. 6:1, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." If God had so desired He could have used some heathen people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, or He could have used the same king Cyrus to send his army with materials to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem or God could have used the king Artaxerxes and his men to rebuild it in a very short time. But He did none of that because He wanted to reserve that privilege and responsibility exclusively for God's people. Only those who are truly born again and have received the gift of eternal life have this privilege to take part in building God's House.

However, we are not saved to build a denomination or a group. We are called by His Name to build God's Habitation. God's Dwelling Place, a heavenly House. According to Eph. 2:22 we are brought together as believers to become God's everlasting Habitation, God's Temple. "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." This temple is not made of bricks, stones, mud or wood. It is an everlasting spiritual habitation, and the privilege and honour of building it is out of reach of worldly people. This privilege is not even given to angels, but it is given exclusively to those who are purchased by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

OCTOBER 27

"Now faith is the ... evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5 : 22, 24). It means that whenever God called him either during the day or the night he was ready to go to Him. He never questioned Him. He pleased God and not himself. By the same faith he was translated. A mother taught her daughter the story of Enoch. Afterwards someone questioned her- "How did Enoch go to heaven?" The child said with simple faith, "Enoch and God were

good friends. Every day they went for a long walk. One day while walking, God said, 'Enoch, let's go home'. He said, 'Yes Lord, I am ready'. So they both went to heaven." There are some who question as to how such a thing could happen. Whatever God says in His Word, we must accept with simple faith. Phrase like "God said", "And God spake", appears 558 times in the first five books of the Bible and nearly 2000 times in the Old Testament. That proves that each verse in the Bible is God's Word and not man's Word. After my conversion, these phrases helped me to believe that the Bible is God's Word and they gave me a new love for His Word. One day a man came to me with a doubt and asked me, "Do you believe that from cover to cover the Bible is God's Word?" I replied, "Yes." Again he asked, "Do you believe that Jonah was in the fish's belly for three days?" I said, "I strongly believe. And if the Bible says that the fish was in Jonah's belly, I will believe that also. I may not understand many portions of the Bible but I will never doubt it." God uses small phrases of His Word for salvation of people. By reading the Bible slowly and systematically upon our knees we receive many blessings. As we read we should pray, "Lord, speak to me according to my need." Then by quiet meditation upon the Word many hidden mysteries will be revealed to us. Some truths of the Bible are revealed to us in sickness, trials, troubles and loneliness. It is God's Word and the Holy Spirit is our best teacher.

Many people doubted the record of the flood in the Bible in Noah's time. But when fossils of sea animals were discovered on many high mountains, they believed that once upon a time these mountains must have been covered with water. When God commanded Noah to build an ark, he immediately believed in the coming judgement and obeyed (Heb. 11:7). He never questioned God. His workers must have mocked him, but he believed God and was made righteous, because of his faith. We too may have to face many mockings for the sake of our faith, but such experiences will only give us strong faith.

OCTOBER 28

"They go from strength to strength" (Psalm 84:7).

When we are born again we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, but after many years of battle and victories we begin to acknowledge Him as our King. In some cases it takes one's entire life to come under the Kingship and Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tribe of Judah was the first to come under the kingship of David. Judah means praise. Those who begin to praise God and magnify Him, accept the Lord as their King. As we learn to praise the Lord, worship and magnify Him we learn to acknowledge Him as our King.

In 2 Sam. 3:1 we read, "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker". Joab was fighting on behalf of David, and Abner was fighting on behalf of Saul's family. In that battle David and his men did not use force. As David began to obey God's will he became stronger and stronger, but Saul's house became weaker and weaker, because they wanted self-exaltation. Abner and his men were governed by false loyalty to Saul. In our time also we find that a battle is going on. Because of human sympathy we like to have a man to be our king. Those who want power, authority, and self-glory refuse the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. But those who are definitely on the Lord's side, want Him to be their King. Because people do not give the proper place in their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ as their King, they live a life of defeat and failure. There is a conflict going on among many believers everywhere. On the one hand they

are people who want to have full authority over everything. They have an ambition to become elders and get position and power. They want to be kings themselves. There is a constant battle for position and authority in the work of God. On the other hand there are people who are definitely desirous of giving, the Lord Jesus Christ the first place in their activities. In 1 Peter 5:2-3 we read about different motives of people in serving the Lord. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock". Some are ambitious for power, some for money and some for position. But there are very few who want to serve the Lord Jesus as servants. First we have to enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ as King in our lives, then we begin to see our true position as His co-workers. It is only by coming under His Kingship, Lordship and Headship that we begin to realise our partnership with Him.

OCTOBER 29

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

In the letter to the Colossians the apostle Paul says that having understood our spiritual union with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection we find a new life coming into us (Col. 3:1-3). Our affections for earthly things have now decreased, and we have a longing to know more about God's kingdom, to live a pure life, to know God's will, and to understand heavenly mysteries and to serve the Lord more fruitfully.

When a wound become infected it gets filled with pus, but when it heals you find the old flesh getting dry gradually and new, clean flesh forming. In the same way when the life of the Lord Jesus comes into us, old things like hatred, malice, jealousy and enmity, dry away and new attitudes appear in their stead (Col. 3:8-10). That is why we read, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (verse 12). These virtues come by themselves when the power of resurrection works within us.

When a seed is sown in a garden and watered daily, after a few days a little plant comes out from the earth without any sound or noise. Later on the leaves appear, and in due time the flowers and the fruit. But all this happens very quietly. In the same manner the life of the Lord Jesus will also work in you and you will find in your heart patience, meekness, humbleness, long suffering and forbearance. Every one who has wronged you, you will have a desire to forgive just as the Lord did. You will remember how many times the Lord has forgiven you and the same love will come into you and make you forgive others and will keep your heart free from bitterness and hatred. Heavenly peace will fill your soul. Your heart will be full of gratitude to God and you will end every day with thanksgiving as you constantly remember how the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for your sins and forgive you.

As we see in Col. 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." At one time you might have been wasting your time with novels, magazines, cinemas and such like things, and you have no hunger for the Word of God. The new life of Christ brings in you a great hunger for the

Word of God and a great love for the Saviour. The divine life you receive fills your heart with spiritual songs which you love to sing any part of the day or night, and they bring peace and comfort to your heart.

OCTOBER 30

"O SING unto the LORD a new song" (Psa. 96 : 1).

The Psalmist is full of gratitude. He is inviting the whole earth to join him in his song. His joy was so abundant, else he would not have done this. The writer of this Psalm had gone through much hardship. Yet in spite of all this suffering, he was singing the praises of God. Is not that unusual? Generally, during the days of suffering, a man would not feel like singing. Yet, here we have a person who was rejoicing in the midst of extreme suffering with joy which is so great, abundant and wonderful, that he wants everyone to join him in it. How did this singer get such a great joy and such a wonderful song? It was received by his knowledge of God and the experience of His great salvation. Everyone who has received the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour will receive such kind of heavenly joy, which will go on multiplying day by day, and which they can share with the whole world and even with the whole universe.

Why is the song called a "new song?" This indicates that it has not been sung before. It is not like the good old songs sung in different parts of the world. It is entirely new in its language, meaning and music. It is a new song unknown to earthly men. Some people think only of an experience which they had some time ago. They have no fresh experience and so they live only on the past experience. We thank God for every happy experience of God we have had in the past. But we cannot go on living in these experiences always. If we do, our song will not be a new song any more. Some believers go on repeating the same old words in prayer and worship week after week. Of course, such are better than those who never sing or pray or worship at all. But their joy would have been more if they had learnt to sing "The new song", through fresh experiences of Christ received from time to time.

In order to help us have such fresh experiences, God sends trials and difficulties in our lives, so that we may prove His faithfulness again and again in new ways. At such times some people are overwhelmed and discouraged. They are full of complaints and tears. But those who learn by faith how to get victory over their trials can sing, "I stumbled and the Lord raised me up; I was in difficulties and He helped me." In this way they can show forth His salvation day by day.

OCTOBER 31

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2 : 12).

God's heavenly plan is to bring us to a high position through suffering. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). Before we can receive glory we have to go through much suffering (1 Peter 4:12,13). Gold and silver have to go through fire before they are made so shine brightly. A small piece of gold is more precious than much iron. If we want shining gold, it has to go through purification. There is no comparison between gold and iron. Iron becomes rusty after sometime, but gold remains the same always. Even a small particle of dirt will obstruct gold from shining. That is why the goldsmith goes on purifying gold till he sees his face in it. In the same way, believers have to go through purification. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psa. 119:67,71). Most of us miss God's way and go in our own ways. But to come to the

right path we have to go through some suffering. "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried...For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Psa. 66:10; Heb. 12:10). What we think beautiful, is filthy in God's sight. God wants us to have His beauty. He gave us everlasting life through His everlasting love, and now wants us to have His own perfect beauty. Whenever He takes away what we have, it is with the purpose of giving us double.

God took apostle Paul through many sufferings in Rome. Peter was crucified upside down. We see from God's Word that every hardship, calamity and suffering is for our good. We have to thank Him and praise Him for His goodness. Whatever happens in your life, think that it is for your own good. He wants us to be members of the Heavenly City whose builder is God Himself. That Heavenly City is very great and very strong. If you are not born again, you cannot enter into Heaven. Have you received the forgiveness of your sins? God never rejects those who come to Him. Take the decision now. Believe from your heart that the Lord Jesus Christ forgiven of your sins. The work of forgiveness will be done in your life the moment you repent of your sins and seek His forgiveness.

NOVEMBER 1

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

Whatever our Lord has done is of eternal value. His death has everlasting effect. So you also can say, "I claim into me the power of the death of the Lord Jesus". This is the way of victory. But if you try to conquer sin by yourself you will not be able to do so. The apostle Paul says in 2 Cor. 4:10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." This must become your experience also. Perhaps for sometime past you have been trying to conquer sin by your own will-power; but you will soon learn that this does not succeed. Then you can pray sincerely, "Now, Lord Jesus, will You kindly use Your method? Pour into me Your power of death and help me to die to all my desires and weaknesses which are so hateful to You and to me also". That is the only remedy.

Do not think you will become perfect in one day. In fact, no one is perfect. As long as we are in this body we are bound to have some weakness or infirmity. But when you are troubled by the old nature, go straightway and tell the Lord Jesus, "Lord, I am troubled by this old nature; will you not please come into me and pour into me the power of Your death, burial and resurrection?" This is our only weapon.

The Lord Jesus died to forgive us our sins and also to bury our sins, out of sight, for ever. We find this spiritual truth in Col. 2:12 and Rom. 6:4. The devil digs up our past sins to discourage us, specially when our faith is wavering, or when we are in trouble. He will tell you, "Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ died to forgive you. But are you sure He has forgiven ALL your sins? What about THAT sin? Don't you think you are being punished for it now?" At such times, pay no heed to the Evil One; but believe from your heart that ALL your sins are forgiven, and that every one of them is buried for ever. So we can rest assured that God will never again look at our sins. You rebuke the enemy saying "Get thee behind me, Satan, It is written, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins"

(Isaiah 43:25). Yes, when God forgives He forgives us for ever. The burial of the Lord Jesus Christ gives us this assurance.

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes into us He becomes our life, and so imparts to us His divine nature; His love, righteousness, peace, joy, strength, wisdom and holiness. Thank Him daily for forgiving your sins, and burying them, and also for making you a partaker of His divine nature.

NOVEMBER 2

"Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause" (Jeremiah 50:34).

In Numbers 16 we read that 250 princes rebelled against God's chosen vessels. They began to say that Moses and Aaron were not the only people who had been given power or authority by God. Just as Moses and Aaron claimed to be servants of God, so these princes also claimed to be God's servants. They were leading men and princes among tribes, and surely what Moses and Aaron could do, they also could do. They had no understanding whatever of the authority God had given to Moses and Aaron. These two men were not trained by men, nor did any man appoint them, but they were chosen and trained by God. They were servants of God, specially anointed and prepared for His service. That is why God was able to work through them so mightily. But those princes were utterly blind to the meaning of the anointing and power of God. They were going only by human qualifications and it is in the same way that many Christians have only a human conception of the power of God. The real test of the power of God is evidence of God actually working in us and through us.

Moses and Aaron were on the one side and the 250 princes were on the other, representing all the tribes of Israel. Two hundred and fifty fighting against two people. "Who is Moses and who is Aaron"? they asked. They are making false claims. "We are also men of God and servants of God". Moses and Aaron were both men who were humble and meek before God, and rather than take revenge on any man, they fell upon their faces before God. That is the right way to fight with people who are jealous. We should never try to fight against such people by worldly weapons. If you are one whom God had chosen, then through jealousy your enemies are going to say many things against you. They will find fault with you, and it does not matter how careful you are about your life, they will do their utmost to provoke and annoy you. But you must follow Moses' example, and not argue or fight with them, not be afraid or worry. Like Moses you must pray and call upon God, for God knows how to defend you and vindicate you (Num 16:17, 20, 22, 30, 31). The Lord will surely judge all those men and their households who try to bring false witness against God's servants. Let them say what they like against you. They may spread many stories, but God had His own time and way to defend His own people. But you must not yield to the temptation to speak ill against those who try to harm you nor must you be troubled or worried when they spread stories against you, because they are saying all these things only through jealousy. There is a difference between yourself and them. They can see the light of God shining upon your face. They know that some change has taken place in your life and they also know that the power of God working in and through you, but because of jealousy they are saying all these things. Their words cannot do any harm. In due time our Lord will judge them, so there is absolutely no reason to be afraid of them. Even though for the time being you may lose your job, or suffer loss, do not be disturbed. God Himself will surely defend His people.

NOVEMBER 3

"...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11).

We have to lay a good foundation in the lives of the believers. We cannot do this unless we ourselves have a deep, abiding and living experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Chief Corner Stone. When we receive Him into our hearts we are born again. After that we need to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. What they have taught us, as we see in the Word of God, we have to practise ourselves and then declare to others that which we have fully obeyed. We cannot be governed by our own ideas and traditions, however good they may appear. Our safety lies in obeying God's Word. In the Bible God has given us a complete plan for all our needs. Just as God raised up and sent forth apostles and prophets in the Bible days, even so now also God will raise up anointed vessels if only we seek the Lord in prayer.

Believers should be taught to read the Bible with reverence and expect God to speak to them; to get their questions answered and their problems solved through the Word of God. They must take God's Word along with them wherever they go and ask God to help them to answer from the Bible every question that is put to them. Some people are very lazy and irreverent. They sit comfortably in a chair with a cup of coffee in one hand and a Bible in the other. That is the way they read the Bible. We teach people that they should go down on their knees and read the Word of God with reverence and prayer. God's servants should faithfully, lovingly and perseveringly teach these things to believers. Then they can enjoy this wonderful book, the Bible.

God's people have to be shepherded, controlled and governed by the elders and God's servants. We read in Acts 14:22, 23, that Paul and his co-workers went from place to place, "Confirming the souls of the disciples". These disciples were taught by faithful servants of God. They were well shepherded by the apostle Paul himself, or by men like Titus or Timothy who were left behind for this purpose. When the people had been fully taught, according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit received through prayer and fasting, elders were chosen from among them and ordained for their ministry. This plan received from God was followed by the apostles and their co-workers. In this way the believers and elders of the early Church were properly instructed in the Word of God. Therefore they were able to withstand the terrible persecution which arose later, and they still remained strong.

NOVEMBER 4

"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy" (Leviticus 20:26).

We are so weak that we need God's grace every moment and in every situation. We fail Him and grieve Him many times a day but God is very gracious. In His grace He forgives us and lifts us up every time. If we are not given a cup of tea in time we lose our temper and get angry. We easily take pride in what we are, what we give, and what we can do. We can be delivered from all these weaknesses, and transformed fully and finally into God's image and into His glory and beauty by the grace of God alone. Whatever blessing we receive is entirely by His grace. So on no account should we take pride in ourselves. We are only worms

before God; yet He has lifted us up from our low estate and given us a place of honour. As we realise this, we cannot help thanking God constantly for the abundant grace He is showering on us day by day. That was the message conveyed by the mitre worn by the high priest.

Over the mitre was placed a golden plate (Exo. 28:36) on which were written these words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." This should be our daily motto, to keep us holy to the Lord. Our God is a holy God : He is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). How can weak creatures like us stand before Him? (Mal. 3:2,3). He wants us to be partakers of His holiness and to become like pure shining gold. For this purpose, He has to chastise us constantly (Heb. 12:10, 11). These chastisements are to us like many refining fires. When the work of refining has been completed. We shall show forth His holiness, not only upon this earth, but in heaven also, and that for ever and ever. Thus finally we shall be made partakers of God's glory and God's beauty and be filled with God's fulness.

NOVEMBER 5

"...pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt 5:44).

Every believer purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will have to face battles. According to Eph. 6:12 our Christian life is a great warfare. Those who overcome will inherit all things. That is why God permits many trials in our lives. As believers, we have to face some conflict or the other throughout our lives. Sometimes, we will have trouble because of our own failures. But many times, God allows some difficult situations because He has some purpose in our lives. As God's people, we have to face many troubles and trials.

In these last days, many believers have to go through some battle. A godly man like Job went through much suffering. He used to give sacrifices to God even for a sinful thought of his children. Yet, God allowed him to go through many sorrowful experiences. Within a few hours he lost everything through various calamities. Some building fell and all his children died. All his sheep and cattle were destroyed. Scripture tells us that everything happened with the knowledge of God. He was a very great and a rich man. He lacked nothing. He had everything in abundance. He never did any harm to any one through his thoughts or deeds. Yet God permitted so much sorrow in his life. God knows the end from the beginning. He also knows our needs and how these needs can be met. God taught him to pray according to His will. Job's body was full of sores; he had to go through all sorts of painful experiences. Every member of his body went through severe suffering, right from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. His own wife abused him. Even his relatives and intimate friends accused him that he might have committed some sin and that was why he was suffering. No one showed him sympathy. Job was relieved from all his suffering when he prayed for his friends.

"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as had before... So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning..." (Job 42:10,12). God gave him twice as much as he had before.

Very often we pray only for ourselves. How much time do we spend in praying for our enemies? God wants us to pray for everyone. We are not judges but God's co-workers. Think of your enemies and pray for them. When we pray for others, we are much quickened and blessed.

NOVEMBER 6

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

In Deuteronomy 13:1-5 also, we have a solemn warning from God to His people, to protect them from false prophets. In these end days we come across many such people. Whenever God speaks to anyone He speaks in accordance with His Word. We are given the Bible for the same purpose, that is, to understand all the mind of God (2 Tim. 3:14-17). In verse 16 we read, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". The whole Bible is inspired by the Spirit of God. When the Lord rose again from the dead, He referred to the Scripture to show to the disciples travelling towards Emmaus, the purpose for which He came into the world. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,... which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:27,44). The Lord Jesus Christ used the whole scripture. Those who are false teachers and false prophets take a few verses and apply them to suit their teaching.

I thank God He saved me in the beginning of my Christian life from false teachers who were going about to deceive new believers. I never knew who they were but they were so kind to me. They invited me to their homes for tea and food. Later on I discovered that they used those means to deceive me and misguide me. When I found that they repeated the same verses from the Bible I knew something was wrong. I was not carried away by their dreams or visions about which they spoke to me. I wanted to meet those people who used passages from the whole Bible in their testimony, ministry and service. There was another thing that protected me from their deception. I found that the whole life of the Lord Jesus Christ was lived in doing God's will. By doing God's will in every matter we can please Him and serve Him. I began to put the same question to those people. "How do you find and know God's will?" They had no answer. They could only tell about signs and miracles. When they said, "God spoke to me" it was only a lie, because they could not prove it. Just saying "God spoke to me" is not sufficient. Scripture says in Rom. 12:2, we have to prove how and when and where God spoke to us and what the evidences are of His showing His will to us. It is by these tests that we can make sure it is God's voice and not man's voice.

All revelation must be in accordance with God's Word. We have to compare Scripture with Scripture to any subject. We know in the end days there will be many false prophets trying to deceive people by dreams, miracles and visions. But we should not be carried away by them. We have to make sure that they know God's mind, will and Word. Our safety is in loving the Word of God, trying to find out the proof of everything, finding God's will and making sure of it by every possible evidence. Take warning from Matt. 7:22, 23; 24:11.

NOVEMBER 7

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

It is necessary for all those who believe in the Lord's second coming to have a torch in their hands as the ten virgins had. The "torch" is a symbol of the Church. A torch is often made of filthy rags and mud, and appropriately represents us, because, as sinners all our righteousness is as a filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). As members of His Church we are His shining torches, and if our lights are burning we will be qualified to go with Him into His inner chamber. We must be willing to be governed and controlled by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). God is willing to give us a full measure of His Spirit. We should not be afraid to go and ask Him (2 Tim. 1:7). However small and insignificant you may be to men, you have the right to go to the Lord day or night.

I believe that the ten virgins, both the wise and the foolish, represent born again people. The word virgin cannot be used for unbelievers; secondly unbelievers have no light; thirdly, unbelievers cannot have the Holy Spirit; and fourthly, unbelievers will neither long for nor desire to see the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes. It is only those who born again that will long to see Him and go forward to welcome Him. But there are many believers who are like the foolish virgins. They do not make the necessary preparations to receive Him. So the Lord warns us that He may come at any time. Nobody has the right to question Him. On the other hand we should be always ready for Him with plenty of oil in our lamps and vessels. Oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Having enough oil means having a life governed and controlled by the Holy Spirit, Who alone can keep you ready all the time.

There are some wrong conceptions regarding being filled with the Holy Spirit. Some think that to be filled with Holy Spirit one must shout in a special way and talk in tongues. If we are believers, we already have the Holy Spirit, and we should keep on praising Him, even in the smallest matter, always asking Him, "Lord, what is Thy wish?" Some people seek to be governed by the Lord only in big matters, and not in small matters. These people are like the foolish virgins. They will not be ready to welcome the Lord at His second coming, neither will they receive the warm welcome that will be given to overcomers.

One day I lost a small stopper in my bath room. It was a small thing, but it was needed to keep the oil from spilling. So I prayed, "Lord, I do not know how to find this stopper. I have looked everywhere. It is not of much values, but it is useful to me. Please let me find it". After three days I found it! This experience became very precious to me. Again I learn how the Lord is interested even in small things which we need. So we must learn to go to Him often, and walk very close to Him; and then, our very lives will prove that we are really carrying oil with us. That is the only way we can be ready for His coming. Let us ask God to forgive us for our negligences and failures and make us ready for His coming.

NOVEMBER 8

"...shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Chapters 14-16 of John's Gospel, contain the last messages of our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples, before He was crucified. These three chapters can be summed up in three short fragments. In Chapter 14, the Lord speaks of **My Peace**. In chapter 15, **My Joy**. In chapter 16, **My Victory**. By these three short fragments

He answered all their questions. They were wondering in their hearts, why their Lord, though having much power and authority, should suffer like this, and His answer was that He wanted them to have peace. It is a very common longing in the heart of every human being to find true peace. Some struggle for many years, but cannot find peace. Our Lord is saying, "My peace I give unto you." Another longing in the hearts of men is to find true joy, but they cannot get it. Our Lord is saying in John 15:11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." No earthly means can give this joy. Whatever you may acquire, or possess, or do, you will not find that joy. Yet here our Lord is saying, "I am going to die and suffer, that My joy may come into you and that your joy may be full."

Again men want power in their lives, but they are defeated. Yet our Lord is saying in John 16:33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." That victory is for you and for me to make our lives fully victorious, fruitful, triumphant and full of power. Our Lord had to die and rise again to give us His peace, joy and victory. So real Christian life can be summed up in these three simple words. Peace, Joy and Victory.

NOVEMBER 9

"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6:12).

Though the Lord Jesus Christ blessed the five loaves and two fishes, the disciples had the honour to go and distribute them. He did not ask strong sturdy men to serve. Only the disciples are mentioned. Others could not be co-workers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only those who are truly born again and follow the Lord, can be His co-workers.

The disciples were carrying the bread blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and only the Word which is blessed will satisfy. Many have much knowledge and can argue very effectively and yet when they speak they do not do good, but harm. Other people say only a few words but you get strength and inspiration from their broken words, because every word which is being spoken is being blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ. You must pray every morning. "Lord, anoint my lips, tongue, and throat today. I acknowledge my foolishness. Lord, I would like to help So and So, so help me to give the right word for the people." Then you will find throughout that day somebody is given the bread of life through you. Even a few words are sufficient to answer the questions of a seeker provided the Lord Jesus speaks it. Whenever a hungry soul comes to you, try to satisfy their hunger with the Bread of life. There are some who come with a small problem and some with large and many problems, but we must be prepared to answer every questions, and to satisfy everybody. Have patience to hear their story; it does not matter how long it may be, because, though to you the trouble may not be serious, it is very important to them, and we have sufficient food to give for all their problems.

"...and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full" (Matt.14:20). From this we learn from them that our Lord does not like wastage. If we as disciples of the Lord Jesus have to satisfy the hungry, and especially the hunger of the multitude, then we must learn that lesson. There should not be any wastage in our life. Yet we waste many things. We waste our time, our energy, our food, and many other things, and that is why our lives are not satisfying the hungry people. God does not like wastage.

Can we say sincerely that our time is being profitably spent, or do we waste the time in ordinary conversation or in things of little value? Supposing you have one or two hours to wait for a train, or a bus. Do you spend it by reading magazines or books, or looking at the walls or seeing people going by? Can you say you make the best use of your time? Whether in the bus station or railway platform, time should be spent profitably either in reading the Bible or in giving testimony or in some other useful way. You must make the best use of every second because there are hungry and needy people who need to be satisfied spiritually.

NOVEMBER 10

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

Naphtali means "wrestling" (Gen. 30:8). Jacob wrestled with God and said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26). Abraham interceded with God for Sodom and Gomorrah with much reverence. We also have the privilege of going to God to travail and intercede for God's people and God's servants scattered in different parts of the world. We cannot go personally to every place, but we can pray (Eph. 6:18). Such intercession is wrestling with God. When we come to know the needs of different people, their sufferings and their problems, we should begin to wrestle with God for them. As our prayer circle goes on widening we will find that we are drawn closer to the heart of God.

I have found travelling by train very helpful for prayer. I have spent whole nights in praying for people all over the world; for their salvation, safety and anointing. While travelling in crowded trains, without any reservation even, we can spend time profitably in prayer. Thus we shall forget our discomfort, and shall rejoice in praying for others. That is how we are drawn near to the heart of God.

Many years ago I was in Victoria, Canada. I received a message from an old lady who fractured her spinal cord and was encased in plaster of Paris. She was in much pain for most of the time. When I went to see her in the small room where she lived, she told me, "I am thankful to the Lord for keeping me in bed like this. This gives me plenty of time to pray for many of the Lord's servants. " Several years before, she wanted to become a foreign missionary but for some reason had been unable to do so. "But now", she continued, "when I am in pain and unable to sleep, the Lord reminds me to pray for one servant of God and another in different parts of the world." This was the ministry given to her by God. Victoria is a sea port and ships from many parts of the world halt there. Thus missionaries from many countries pass through this town. This sister had a list of all servants of God who also passing through and she would invite them to come and see her. Someone informed her about me and so she gave an invitation to me also. When I went to see her, her face was shining with happiness. She told me how she had been praying for me for many years. Only in eternity shall we know the great things which God has done in answer to her prayers and in and through the lives of all the saints, and servants of God for whom she had been interceding. We all can have this privilege of wrestling in prayer.

NOVEMBER 11

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The apostle Paul describes two kinds of believers in 1 Cor. 3:1; spiritual believers and carnal believers. Believers who remain babes in the things of God are called carnal believers. Those who grow in the things of God are called spiritual believers. To many believers, God's Word comes in power and in authority; still they remain very weak spiritually. The apostle Paul calls them carnal believers or spiritual babes. Among such people, there will be strife, divisions and party feelings. Such believers have no appetite for deep and true things of God, and no capacity to receive strong meat. i.e. deep truths of God's Word. But God wants all believers to come to spiritual maturity.

In order to be spiritual believers, we need to understand the meaning of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul was interested in knowing exactly the personal experience of the cross among the Corinthian believers. Without the knowledge of the cross they were quarrelling among themselves like children. They were full of jealousy, strife, party feelings and quarrels. That is why, Paul said he wanted to know about their experience of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mere words and phrases are not sufficient for spiritual growth. We have to receive into us, the power of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ performed many miracles for three years. But even those who were healed by Him were in the end shouting, "crucify Him, crucify Him". It is possible for anyone to see many miracles and yet remain in darkness. The power manifested in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus changed many lives. He died according to the Scriptures, and was buried according to the Scriptures and rose again according to the Scriptures. Thereafter He sent His disciples to go into the world and preach the Gospel. Then many were transformed through their teaching and preaching because the power of the cross had come into them. Paul knew the importance of that power. We have to appropriate into us the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He manifested on the cross. When He died we died with Him, when He was buried we were buried with Him, and when He rose again we rose with Him. According to God's Word the Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator (John 1:3). He is not only our Creator, but He gave His very life for us. By faith we can see ourselves in Him on the cross.

Only when we realise our oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death on the cross, will we have the power of His resurrection. Just by shedding tears for His sufferings we will not get that power, because He did not die to win our sympathy. He did not even die as a martyr. He gave Himself willingly. He wants you and me to believe that He died in our stead, and was buried for our sake and rose again to live in us. It is only such an experience that gives us victory, as the real power from the cross comes into us (1 Cor. 1:18). The power to transform us and to lead us to victory can come to us through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and that will make us spiritual believers. Then the Holy Spirit also will work freely in us. In 1 Cor. 3:16 Paul says, "...the Spirit of God dwelleth in you". When the Holy Spirit comes into us and occupies us wholly and solely, we become spiritual.

NOVEMBER 12

"... keep thyself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22).

The Holy Spirit creates a hunger in the heart of a believer for the things of eternity. The spiritual man responds to it. His longing increases for the Word of God and the House of God. He desires to understand more and more, the ways of God and to extend His kingdom. The apostle Paul's exhortation, "set your

affection on things above" is a reality in his life. But a carnal believer is much more interested in the perishing things of this world such as land, buildings, fashions, silver and gold than in the things of God. The attraction for the things of eternity is the proof of your spiritual growth.

Also a spiritual man has a longing for holiness (1 Peter 1:13-15). This longing increases day by day and the least defilement in the spirit, either by word, deed or thought will trouble him and rob him of his inward peace. He is like the people who must take at least one bath a day, and will be uncomfortable and ill at ease if for some reason they are unable to take it. Whether they are suffering from cold, or whether the water is cold makes no difference to them. They want clean bodies, clean clothes, and everything clean in the house as well. But there are some people who are quite at ease and absolutely unconscious that their bodies are dirty all the time. In some house the drawing room will be clean and attractively furnished, but the kitchen and the bathroom will be untidy or even dirty. Even so, outwardly we may appear spiritual, but there may not be inward purity and holiness in us because of some defilement. The Holy Spirit helps us to become holy by convicting us of our sins, and bringing us under the cleansing of His blood. Therefore, if you are defiled by thought, word or deed, straightway claim His precious blood to cleanse you. This is the only way, there is no other way of being holy. A deep longing for holiness is another proof of spiritual growth.

NOVEMBER 13

"...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

When the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that He would be leaving them shortly to lay down His life they were sad. They might have said to Him, "Lord, for Your sake we left our homes and business. Now if You leave us we will be forsaken, like orphans". But the Lord answered them, "I will not leave you comfortless", or "orphans" as in the margin of the Authorised Version (John 14:18). The Holy Spirit, as Comforter, pours God's love into us. When we are lonely and unloved we can taste this love and protective care, and the feeling of being orphans is gone. So there is no need for us to say, "I have no father or mother, or brother or sister to look after me. I have no home to go to". Those who have a home may say, "I can go home to my parents when I am ill or in need and they will look after me". But God has promised not to leave us but has sent us the Comforter Who will bring His love into us in fulness (Rom. 5:5).

The Holy Spirit brings divine love into us to comfort us, and the same love gives us a burden for perishing souls and a loving concern for the backslidden, and the sick and suffering. On hearing of someone's troubles or sickness our hearts reach out to them in love and sympathy, and we desire to comfort them by writing to them, visiting them and by praying for them. We do these things not as a matter of formality but because the love of God constraints us (Rom. 12:15). The privilege of being comforted and of comforting others by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God is proof of a spiritual believer. Also the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the truth and opens our eyes to see great and hidden mysteries of God's Word. There are many believers who know little or nothing of Science., History, Geography, Philosophy or Botany, but they do understand and enjoy God's Word, because the Holy Spirit of Truth reveals things to them which are hidden from the wise and the prudent (Matt. 11:25, Luke 10:21). Carnal Christians enjoy singing hymns and lyrics and prefer to hear moral sermons, but when the deeper things are shown from God's Word they fall asleep. It is not because they are tired but just because they

can neither understand them nor are they interested in such spiritual things. But a spiritual believer is eager to learn everything the Holy Spirit will teach him, and is hungry for more and more God's Word, and can understand and enjoy the hidden mysteries of God. This hunger for, and the ability to understand the truth of God's Word, is also a proof that a believer is becoming spiritually mature.

NOVEMBER 14

"...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15)

The spirit of sonship gives us boldness to enter into the holy presence of God. A servant will not enter his master's room without permission, and even when he does so, it is with a certain amount of fear, but a son comes boldly to his father, and if he is a small boy, he might even put his hand into his father's pocket. That is his privilege as a son. In the same way we can say that God is our Father, and so we can go to Him boldly, at any time, for any need. We can go to Him for any trial, for strength when we are weak, for love and sympathy when we are depressed, and for the right answer to all our problems. The carnal believers, on the contrary, look to man for help. They will say, "I need money. Let me go to my uncle and ask him for Rs. 100". Then they will approach their uncle with tear or flattery and ask for what they want. But a spiritual man knows from his heart that his heavenly Father can and will help him when no one else is able to do so. He trusts implicitly in God's promises and knows that He will not turn him away, nor refuse to help him. This knowledge gives him boldness in prayer under all circumstances. As sons of God we are co-workers and co-partners with Him. Only as we grow spiritually do we enjoy this boldness in a great measure.

The spirit of power (2 Tim 1:7) enables us to bear our burdens with joy and patience. We all, without any exception, have some burden or the other. It may be in connection with the family or business or the church. Only His grace can enable us to bear our burdens and come out victorious. We know from personal experience how God give us, again and again, extra grace for every stress and strain. This Spirit-filled man also come forward voluntarily to share the burdens of others whereas a carnal believer will grumble at his difficulties and blame others for them. When a believer has no strength or faith to bear his own burdens how can he help his neighbours and friends to bear theirs? The spiritual man depends upon God and His precious promises and says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The ability to bear burdens lovingly is a characteristic of a spiritual believer.

In the early Church false teachers were going about deceiving and misleading Christians with wrong doctrines. Their motive was only to make money (Rom. 16:17,18). Carnal Christians will be easily deceived, but a Spirit-filled man can discern the truth because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Therefore he is careful and watchful against the subtle devices of the enemy to mislead him and thus he is protected from false prophets. The ability to discern between Spirit-anointed teaching and false teaching is also a proof that a man is spiritual.

NOVEMBER 15

"...planted together in the likeness of his death" (Romans 6:5).

We find these days many people saying that they are born again, but when we see their lives, we doubt what they say. They have no peace and no joy in their hearts, and no power in their lives. They live defeated lives. If they fail sometime there is some excuse because no one is perfect. But if they live defeated lives continually there must be something wrong. The only reason is they are not saved and do not have the power of the Holy Spirit. They are dry rods which never bud, blossom and bear fruit. The power of God has not entered into them.

In Romans 6:5 we are told how we are planted together in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection". The Lord Jesus died to take away the condemnation of our sins. Also He died to bring into us a new power which will help us to die to our old nature. This latter part many people fail to understand. No doubt they believe the first part. They believe that Christ died to take away the punishment of their sins. But they do not believe the second part that He died to take away their sinful nature. So they depend upon their will power and their own wisdom to get victory over their temptations; the result is, they go on falling into sin. You can never conquer sin that way. The only way is this; by faith you must take into you the power of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says in Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". If we want to have the experience of the second part we must have the experience of the first part. Many like to say, "Christ liveth in me", but they are not able to say, "I am crucified with Christ". That is the reason why they are still living in darkness. Let us examine ourselves truthfully whether we are dead to our old sinful nature or not. When Christ was on the cross many said to Him, "If you are the Christ, then come down from the cross and we shall believe you". If the Lord had so desired, He could have come down, but He did not. Mohammedans say in their books that the Lord Jesus Christ was never buried in fact He never died, but He came down from the cross and in supernatural way He went up to heaven. This is the devil's teaching. "...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" (1 Cor. 15:3,4). He died to take away our punishment; He died that we may die to our sinful nature. This power of His death will go on working in us every moment to deliver us completely from the old nature. That is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily". So it is a daily process by which the death of the Lord Jesus Christ works in us.

NOVEMBER 16

"...I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1)

On the second stone on the breast-plate worn by Aaron, the high priest was found the name "Issachar" which means "God is my reward", or hire or wages (Gen. 30:18). This name teaches us not to seek any earthly reward or look for any man's favour. Whether you do an act of kindness to anybody, or whether you do a job in the House of God, do it without expecting a reward from any man because our Lord Himself is our reward. Do all things as unto the Lord (Col. 3:23).

There are some school teachers who work very, very hard one week before inspection. The rooms are kept very tidy and clean. The students are taught nicely and when they are questioned by the Inspector, the children answer correctly. The Inspector will be impressed greatly and pay compliments to the teachers and to the school administration. But after the inspection, things are left to themselves, the school becomes untidy and the children are not taught well. They do all things for the school Inspector.

There are some people who pray for a long time in meetings and hardly three minutes at home. Some do things to please men and there is no reward for them. Do every job lovingly, faithfully and sincerely either in the office or in God's House. Learn to be faithful even in small things (Luke 16:10). Whatever we do or say let it be only unto Him and for His Name's sake. Have a longing to do all things faithfully. This will draw us nearer to God.

NOVEMBER 17

"...for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8).

If we humble ourselves, confess all our sins and obey His words, trusting in His mercy and compassion, He will forgive us and restore us. Just as new joy came into the hearts of God's people on their way to Jerusalem and increased more and more as they went up higher and higher, even so, our joy will increase more and more as we go on overcoming every temptation and trial.

When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour we must believe from our hearts that He Himself is our righteousness and has put away the old man on the cross. Then God will not allow ungodly people to harm us (Psalm 125:3). He Himself may punish us but He will not allow the ungodly men to touch us. We see in the case of Balaam in Numbers 23:1-9, how Balak the king had promised Balaam a great reward if he cursed the people of Israel. Even though they rebelled against the Lord, the Lord did not allow Balaam to curse them because, as a people, the children of Israel had come under the blood. The day the Israelites left Egypt, at God's command they had sprinkled the blood of the lamb which was slain, on their door posts and lintels. By the shedding of the blood and by faith they became righteous. So the Lord would not allow Balaam to curse them from even though they were disobedient.

Thus you find God will punish us for our folly and disobedience but He will not allow any ungodly people to harm us. They will try many ways to do so but God's people have the assurance that they will be well protected (Isaiah 54:17). God may chastise us as a loving Father in order to make us partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:9-10), whereas the ungodly show their hatred and enmity against us by trying to harm us. Let us claim the righteousness of God as our righteousness, and at the same time thank the Lord Jesus for His precious blood by which we are cleansed, and say, "Lord! we are Thy people even though we have failed Thee and grieved Thee. We confess our sins. Please punish us Yourself, but do not allow the ungodly to do so." Our safety is in committing ourselves into God's hand. This is what David did (2 Sam. 24:14). He said, "let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." What a great privilege we have as God's redeemed people when we become righteous in God's own righteousness. "THEY that trust in the LORD shall be as a mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Psalm 125:1).

NOVEMBER 18

"For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began his reign well in the fear of God. He was a good king who sought to walk in the paths of righteousness like his father David. Not satisfied with such personal devotion alone, early in his reign, he sent out his princes along with the Levites, into all the cities of Judah, to teach the people the statutes and commandments of the Lord. Because of this zeal to honour the Lord, the Lord blessed him abundantly. But slowly, Jehoshaphat began to turn his eyes from the Giver to the gift itself. Slowly, love for these same material things began to gain ground in his life. This is a snare about which we too have to be very careful. Love for worldly possessions will creep into our lives so subtly that we will hardly be aware of it.

There is a fort near Bellary designed and constructed many years ago by a French engineer for Tippu Sultan. When this fort was completed, the engineer took Tippu Sultan proudly around it. They came to a part of the fort from where Tippu Sultan noticed a hill just outside the fort. He rebuked the engineer and said, "You foolish engineer why did you leave that hill outside the fort? You should have included it within the walls. Now the enemy can mount that hill and from there attack the fort, and easily capture it". Much labour and money had been spent to build the fort, but because of one fundamental mistake, it was made practically useless. The engineer was so heart-broken at his lack of foresight, that he committed suicide. A few years later, from that very hill, the British forces captured the fort. The enemy of our souls also is watching to find the weak parts in our lives, from there he can gain entrance into us and destroy us.

Jehoshaphat was tempted to do more business to increase his wealth. Evidently love of money was his weak point, and through it the enemy gained entrance into his life. We see the same weakness-love for money in the many believers and some preachers also these days. They are not satisfied with what the Lord gives them, but wish to increase their income by doing some side business. They are very busy during the months of November and December selling calendars, for the discount they will receive from such sales. They profess to do it all as unto the Lord; but in their hearts they know that it is the money they are after. Love of money is the cause for the downfall of many.

NOVEMBER 19

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27).

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2,3). Barnabas and Saul were being sent by the Church. They were not going on their own. By laying hands upon them, the elders were saying, "You are going on our behalf. We are going with you. We are standing by you in prayer and fellowship."

The laying on of hands is not a ritual. There is nothing in the hands. When we shake hands after baptism to greet people we show that we are good friends. To show our spiritual equality, oneness and identification, we lay hands on behalf of the whole Church scattered all over the world and declare that

we belong to one family, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bought by the same precious blood, and so we are equally important and precious to Him.

In 1 Cor. 12:18-21 we read about the mystery of the Body of Christ. In the human body every little member and gland is necessary. Even the head cannot say to the feet, I do not need you. God has made us so. In the same way every believer in the heavenly family is equally necessary and equally useful in God's sight. The laying on of hands should not be taken as a ceremony but as a testimony. Baptisms and the laying on of hands go together. If we really follow God's order, after baptism we should lay hands and pray for those who obey in baptism. These days there is spiritual darkness everywhere and may ignore these divine truths.

NOVEMBER 20

"...God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Cor. 6:16).

God wants a home where He can give and receive love, and that is why He said to the children of Israel through Moses, "Build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst". You might be employed in a hospital, school or college, or in a Government office. Your office might be a grand building, and your seat very comfortable and convenient with electric light and fan, and occasional cups of tea; yet you would never call it your home. In spite of all its attractions, it is only your office, and as soon as the clock strikes you will say, "I am going home!" Actually, your home might be only one small room, which is sitting room, bed room, kitchen and bathroom all combined, without any space for a table or a chair; it might have only one tea pot with a broken spout: yet you call it your home! Why so? It is because your wife and children, or father and mother are there. Walls, tables and chairs do not make a home, love given and love received makes your home a very sweet place. God is love, and He loves us and He wants us also to love Him. In that sense God wants us to make a home for Him, and He says, "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may come and live among them".

The trouble is that even though God loves us, we do not know how to receive His love and love Him in return. There are many children who love their parents only for the sake of money and other good things which they receive from them. While I was in London I became a slave for many evils. Whenever I wanted money I would write a long letter of five pages or more for my father or mother and give them all the news in detail. Finally I would write, "Please send me Rs 500/-". After that money arrived I would not have time for even a letter of thanks for another two months, until all the money was spent. In the same way many people want God only for some earthly benefit. When they are in trouble, affliction or sorrow, they will pray much; but when they have no trouble they will never pray. Unless we pray, we will not enjoy communication with God, and God will not be able to pour out His love upon us. And then, God needs a house in which He can have communion with His people. So that is why God said to the children of Israel, "Let them build me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them".

NOVEMBER 21

"...be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Eight days after His resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Thomas. When the Lord first appeared to the disciples (John 20:19), Thomas was not with them. As soon as they saw him they told him, "We have seen the Lord" (v. 25). Thomas in disbelief replied, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." So, for the sake of Thomas the Lord appeared again and said to him, when he was with the others, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answering exclaimed, "My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Thus we see that the power of His resurrection is experienced by us only as we believe His Word with simple child-like faith and do not depend on our own feelings or signs or dreams for our soulish satisfaction. A large number of believers depend upon signs for spiritual growth and for receiving the power of God, and as a result they remain barren spiritually. We shall have the privilege of enjoying His power as we exercise simple faith in claiming His promises, in reading His Word and obeying Him without question in every matter.

Then our Lord appeared to His disciples at Bethany before He ascended (Luke 24:50). He gave them the command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. "...a cloud received him out of their sight, And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). And thus they were made the witnesses of His ascension and were given the promise of His second glorious appearance, when, according to John 14:3, He will return to receive His own to Himself. We can experience the power of resurrection day by day, by preaching the Gospel to the people all around according to God's plan. This power will also increase as we help other believers get ready for His second appearing, by taking part in the Sunday worship gatherings and Breaking of Bread regularly and faithfully.

NOVEMBER 22

"...in thy presence is fulness of joy" (Psa. 16:11).

Great joy comes to us as a result of continuously feeling God's presence. The more time we spend in His presence, the more of His Heavenly joy we will receive, by seeing God's presence always helping, and guiding us. By reading the Bible and praying sufficiently we receive Heavenly joy. If we have any sin in us such as jealousy or hatred, we lose the sense of God's presence and there by our joy departs. To regain this joy we have to truly repent of our sins and shortcomings. Then alone the joy will be restored. By worshipping the Lord, by reading God's Word, and by close communion with Him through prayer, we can have this joy which keeps on growing.

We read in Jer. 15:16, that by receiving God's Word and obeying it we get joy. God gave Jeremiah the very hard task of being a prophet to the people who hated him. They laughed at him, mocked him and even threw him into a pit. Even then Jeremiah received God's Word and obeyed it, and his joy continued to increase. Thus by obeying God's Word our joy multiplies.

In 1 Thess 2:20, Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica as follows, "For ye are our glory and joy." We read in Acts 17, how the people in Thessalonica received the Word of the Lord in the midst of persecution and remained faithful. Paul wrote from Rome saying that he was able to forget all his afflictions because of them. He said that they were his glory and his joy. He hoped that they would stand before God worthy of a crown.

In the same way, when after a very long time we meet people who are saved by our prayers, love, service, and sacrifice, our joy will be very great. We will see many in heaven who were saved through our life and testimony. That is why we should constantly pray for our friends, relations and loved ones who are not born again. Thus by enjoying God's presence, obeying His Word and willing souls, we will have heavenly joy.

NOVEMBER 23

"...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

After the Israelites crossed the river Jordan, the Lord instructed Joshua to choose one man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel and to take out of the midst of the river Jordan twelve stones and these stones were pitched in Gilgal (Josh. 4:20).

Gilgal means "rolled away". The life in Egypt had been a life of reproach. Now in Gilgal their reproach was rolled away. God rolled away and removed all their past failures, defeats, shame and reproach. One of the strong weapons which the devil uses to keep us defeated, is to keep us reminded constantly of our past failures. He keeps saying to us, "What about that failure, that defeat, that sin?" Because of this we become discouraged and say, "How can a person like me ever think of possessing the inheritance in Christ?" In this way many believers come under judgment and condemnation. We need not remain under such guilt of sin: we can claim constantly the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for cleansing the stains of our sins. By faith in His blood we can remain clean and pure. According to Acts 15:9, it is by faith that we can constantly be washed and cleansed from all our defilements. Every time we are defiled by thought, word or deed, we can say, "Lord Jesus, I am defiled. Please forgive me, wash me in Your blood and cleanse me". Then He will cleanse us. But if we do not come under His blood, we will remain under judgment and condemnation. Come to Him by faith and He will roll away your reproach. If we humble ourselves and confess our failures and bring ourselves under the precious blood, the Lord will forgive us and wash away all our sins.

NOVEMBER 24

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22: 6).

We can see from Deut. 6:4-9 what responsibility parents have towards their children. Verse 4 says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD". This means that first of all the parents should have a definite personal experience of the loving Lord Jesus Christ and must have hunger for the Word of God.

"An thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (v.5). After coming to know the living God, they should love Him with all their heart, mind and soul. "And

these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" (v.6). They should keep the Word of God in their hearts by daily meditation.

They should read their Bible prayerfully, upon their knees, at least thrice a day. "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (v.7). They should teach God's Word to their children, diligently, patiently, clearly and lovingly. They should teach them Bible verses and Bible stories little by little and also teach them how to pray for everything, how to use the Word of God in their conversation and activity. Besides in their talk also they should use the Word of God frequently.

In many homes children hear more of the worldly things on TV than the Word of God through their parents. Do not have a TV in your house. By having one, your children will be tempted to watch dirty and bad programmes. Generally parents say that they themselves do not like to have one but the children like it. In this way the parents become the enemies of their own children. Gradually the children get many evil suggestions and ideas, right in their early age. They begin to love worldly stories and worldly music. Afterwards they do not have hunger for God's Word.

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (vs. 8,9). All movements and all plans should be made according to the Word of God and children should be taught the Word of God from their early age.

November 25

"...Be ye holy... Be ye therefore perfect" (1 Peter 1:16, Matthew 5:48).

Every human being is composed of three things-body, soul and spirit. The body consists of blood, muscles and bones. Soul consists of intellect, emotions and will power. Spirit also has three parts-namely, conscience or the inward voice or the sense of discernment to know what is good and bad or right and wrong. Secondly, we have a desire to know the unseen. We have curiosity to know our Creator, where He is and how to find Him. Then there is the intuition, a sudden thought to do something. In Gen, 1:26 we read that God made man in His own image. God's glory and beauty could be seen in the first man's face. Because of sin man underwent a threefold downward change. The spirit became dead due to sin, the soul became darkened and the body became defiled. We read in John 4:24 that God is a Spirit, and He is living. We can feel Him, talk to Him and know Him, but we cannot see Him with our physical eyes. In our spirits we can talk to Him and feel Him. As long as we live in sin and remain in an unforgiven condition, none of us can feel God's presence or hear His voice because He is Holy God. God's Word says in Heb.12:14 that without Holiness no one can see God. Also we read in Matt.5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We can see God provided we are holy. 1 Pet 1:16 says our God is Holy. No one can ever have such holiness by themselves. God wants us to have everlasting holiness.

In Matt 5:48 our Lord said, " Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." None of us by our own effort can have God's perfection and holiness. It is to make us righteous that our Lord rose again. In the Old Testament period, God used the Tabernacle to show His people how they

should be holy. For example, the most holy place had divine light. God wants us to be filled with the same divine light. Only in that divine light can we see our real condition. There are some diseases which cannot be seen and diagnosed by ordinary examination. Some years ago X-rays were discovered. These reveal the condition of the internal organs of the body very clearly. Through X-rays it can be seen whether there is any fracture in the bones. Similarly, when the light of God comes into us it enables us to see ourselves as God sees us, and also helps us to see God's glory and beauty.

November 26

"... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

John the Baptist having baptized the Lord, prophesied what was to happen to Him afterwards. He saw the Lord coming to him the next day, and called Him by a new name: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. He did not say, " Behold your Saviour," or "Behold your Messiah" even though they were eagerly waiting in those days for the Messiah to come. In the beginning he said, "I knew Him not" though He was there in the crowd. Now he could say, "I know Him" and he called Him 'the Lamb of God.' The Jews were celebrating the Passover every year, killing thousands of lambs without knowing what they were doing. But that morning John had begun to see that Jesus Himself was 'the Lamb of God.' He saw now that the other lambs could not take away the sin of men, but this Lamb was able to take away the sin of the whole world.

You may do what you can; you may shed many tears, you may fast many days, and do any amount of charity and attend any number of meetings; but none of these things will give you the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Look at the people who came to be baptized by John the Baptist. They were convinced and they began to confess their sins with tears. Yet if you had questioned them, "Now Mr. So-and-So, you have confessed your sins and shed many tears, can you tell me whether your sins are forgiven?" Then they would have said, "No we still have a troubled and guilty conscience." It is terrible thing to have a guilty conscience.

You may silence your conscience for a short time saying to yourself, "It does not matter if I do this. Why am I so frightened? I am not the only one doing it." But a day will surely come when your guilty conscience will trouble you. The men who went to John the Baptist saw their sins and the coming wrath of God. But even though they confessed their sins, John the Baptist could not forgive them. He told them that the Messiah would come and He would bring forgiveness. The Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, died for you to forgive your sin and to cleanse you and make your heart His dwelling place. For that purpose He is seeking you today. If you repent of your sins and receive Him. He will forgive your sins, cleanse you in the blood and come and dwell in your heart.

November 27

"... if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts " (Hebrews 3:15).

We believers have to learn to keep ourselves in subjection. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the

proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet.5 :5). We have the same thought in Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you". We have to learn to live together in fellowship and in subjection, to pray for each other and to seek prayer fellowship of elders for our need, According to 1 Pet 5:6 if we humble ourselves the Lord will exalt us. As believers we have to learn the lesson of humbling ourselves and exalting the Lord (Matt.23:11,12).

The enemy can attack us in a fourfold manner. He attacks us as a roaring lion. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Secondly, he attacks us as a ravening wolf (Acts 20:29). Thirdly, he comes like a flood (Isa. 59 :19), and fourthly like an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). It is by being sober, watchful, and prayerful, and also by humility and perseverance that we can defeat the enemy.

In 1 Pet.5:10 we see how it is for a purpose God allows hardship in our life. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you". Through hardship God brings us into perfection. Secondly, He establishes us in faith. Thirdly, He makes us strong spiritually by taking us through suffering. It is by storms that trees on the mountains become strong and thick. Also God establishes us or keeps us steady so that we may not waver. Thus for a fourfold purpose, the God of grace allows afflictions in our lives. He is called the God of grace because we can claim His grace for every trial and every hardship.

November 28

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22).

In Hebrews chapter three, we see how we enter into a spiritual partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ by receiving His salvation. Not only are our sins forgiven and we receive a place in heaven, but we also become spiritual partners with Him in all things. This partnership is a unique partnership. In other places in the Bible we are called God's co-workers, and partners (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor.6:1). That privilege is not given to the angels. But we believers who are purchased by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ have become His partners, so that we may build for Him, His everlasting habitation. This is a great mystery. God is so great that even the heaven and its fulness cannot contain Him. And yet He wants us, human beings, to build a sanctuary or a dwelling place for Him. With that purpose He brought His people from Egypt. He performed many miracles for them. But with all that He was not living among them. He is mighty God. He said, "...let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exo. 25:8).

The Holy Spirit has given different names to the House of God like sanctuary, God's dwelling place, God's temple, and spiritual house. The mystery is, for such an everlasting habitation, God needs you and me. However weak and foolish we may be, God wants us for such a house. When a wealthy man builds a house, he uses very costly material. When a king builds his palace, he uses the best material gathered from different parts of the world. But the Lord Jesus Christ chooses a filthy rag, an unclean thing and a faded leaf to build God's house. That was our condition when we came to Him. But because we were purchased by Him, we became so precious to Him. And the mystery is that every one of us however foolish

and weak, can become a part of His everlasting habitation. God is love. In His habitation He pours out His love.

Just as a loving father wants to pour his love on his children. God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. A servant may be good and faithful. But the love which is shown to the wife and children is not shown towards the servant. So God's love is for those who are bought by the Lord Jesus Christ. God wants as everlasting dwelling place for Him. The apostle calls us God's dwelling place or God's habitation. We are built up to be God's habitation, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

November 29

"I counsel thee to ... anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

In Mark chapter 8 the Lord speaks of spiritual blindness. He asked His disciples, "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember:" (verse 18).

The first kind of blindness, which the Lord pointed out is in Mark 8:11,12. The Pharisees had seen many miracles performed by the Lord Jesus. Yet they were not willing to believe Him. The multitudes recognized Him, for He taught as One having authority (Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22, Luke 4:32). They knew He was performing miracles in a way no prophet had ever done before. Yet these Pharisees were demanding a sign from Him. In spite of all that they had seen and heard they were unable to believe the Lord Jesus. They were utterly blind. This same condition can be found among people even today. In many cases miracles have been performed in their very homes and they have seen their prayers being answered; yet they are not willing to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

In John 6, we read that a great multitude followed the Lord Jesus Christ because of the miracles which He did on them that were diseased (verse 2). But when the Lord told them they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to obtain eternal life, they went back and would not walk with Him any more (verse 66). In the same way there are many people today who want to be healed of their sickness and pray to God to get the perishing things of this world, but have no interest at all in spiritual health or spiritual wealth.

The second kind of blindness referred to in Mark 8 is found in verses 14 or 21. Here we see that the Lord Jesus is warning His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. He pointed out to His disciples that just as a little leaven leavens the whole lump, one small doubt could bring much blindness into their lives. The leaven of the Pharisees then, was unbelief and doubt. Doubting God's word, and God's love and grace will bring blindness and darkness into our lives also. In this way many believers have lost their joy and peace and faith. Some begin to doubt God when their prayers are not answered in the way they want. In their foolishness they stop attending the church meetings, Bible reading and prayer, their tithing and their private devotions. Thus they allow one act of unbelief to bring darkness and blindness into their lives. That is why the Lord Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

November 30

"... Ah Lord God!... there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah. 32:17).

At first God started working in the life of Nehemiah and through him many others were stirred up for God's work. In the history of God's people we can see how again and again God raised up a faithful servant or a small remnant of His people to restart His work. The Lord always performed great things for His people because of the faithfulness of a few. God desires each one of us to be a part of the remnant through whose faithfulness and intercession He plans to work out His divine purpose and plan.

Nehemiah was very sad because the city of Jerusalem was lying waste and the gates were consumed with fire (Neh. 2:3). In the same way those who are deeply concerned about the work of God cannot help but feel sad when they see the lean and spiritual weak condition in the lives of God's people. These days in many parts of the world we find among believers nothing but leanness and spiritual infancy. According to God's promises, His great power is at our disposal, our lives can be abundantly fruitful if we are concerned about the sad condition of God's people and if we are willing to do according to His desire (John 14:12; Rev 1:18). We have a living Saviour Who is the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb 13:8). When we fail to obey God's Word fully, our lives become barren and we have failures, defeats and spiritual infancy in our experiences.

When the children of Israel were in Babylon there seemed to be no hope whatsoever of their returning to Jerusalem, because they were captives and also few in number. But God kept the promise He made to His servant Jeremiah. Thus through a heathen king named Cyrus they were given a chance to return (2 Chro. 36:22,23). After the proclamation was made by king Cyrus, they started to return to Jerusalem. They could finally see God's prophecy being fulfilled on their behalf. Things that were impossible had become possible.

December 1

"... prove me now" (Mal. 3:10).

"Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year" (Deut. 14:22). Many believers fail to give their tithes to God joyfully and regularly. In the beginning when their income is less they give their tithe regularly. But when their income increases, they find it difficult to give their tithes. Many believers misuse their tithes. Some think they can spend that money to poor relations; or beggars or wandering preachers or a charity. Tithes are meant for God, and God's House. By giving our tithe to God's House we acknowledge that all what we have and all what we are, is from God. Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20), to acknowledge that by God's strength and help he could rescue Lot and defeat the kings. Your tithes must be brought to God's House. You have no right over it. If you want to help your poor relations or neighbours, do so from the remaining portion of your income.

In the beginning I myself never knew how to give tithe. At that time I had no money. I was having my training without any payment. If someone gave a small gift I spent it on myself. For more than one year I did not give tithe. I remained in poverty; no money for many days. I had to walk many miles almost every day as I had no money for bus fare. If someone felt sorry for me and gave me a small gift I thought, "It is not much, it is meant only for my need", With that understanding I never gave any tithe. Then the Lord

rebuked me saying, "You are a robber. Even though the amount is small you are robbing Me". Then a thought came to me; "If I can manage with Rs. 10, I can manage with Rs. 9. Why rob God of one rupee?" So I decided to give tithe. I began with giving God one tenth, then two tenths, then half, then three fourths, then everything I received. I said, "Lord, all that I have is Yours. I won't touch a single paisa without your permission". It is from that day, He began to give abundantly and gave me a privilege of helping many people. He went on multiplying and multiplying. Now I do not even know what it is to be in want. All these past years, the Lord has been supplying in abundance every need in God's work of any kind. He met all my needs, when I learned to give Him joyfully.

Do not be a robber. Give God your tithe. That is God's portion. Thank Him for the strength, health and wisdom He gave you to earn something. And whatever He gives be content. Do not be greedy and covetous. Do not beg, do not borrow, not even from your father-in-law or mother-in-law. That is God's Word in Rom. 13:8. "Owe no man anything." You may be a preacher or anyone else. It does not matter. Whatever your need may be, never borrow. If you want to testify before other people that the Lord is your helper then do not borrow. (Read Heb. 13:5,6). If you do borrow then you say, "My father-in-law is my helper, my mother-in-law is my helper, my neighbours and friends are my helpers." It is by contentment and by refusing to borrow anything that you can be a witness. Please do not borrow from any man. Give God's portion joyfully to God's House and He will abundantly reward you and bless you.

December 2

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).

There were 250 princes who rebelled against Moses and Aaron the chosen servants of God. God was speaking and working through them, that is why, those princes became very jealous. Jealousy is a very terrible thing, and brings weakness and loss in many lives. Jealousy brings hatred, anger of all kinds, suspicion, murder and strife, and separation between friends and relations. We have seen how young children become jealous when they see their mothers showing love to some other child. You may also have seen jealousy between husband and wife, for jealousy brings constant strife and quarrels between husbands and wives. Even the bald-headed, grey-haired husbands are jealous of their wives; that is why we find in many houses constant strife and quarrelling. In the same way when a third person come between two friends there is jealousy. Many preachers have lost their ministry and power through jealousy, and many God's servants have lost much privilege because of jealousy. Because of jealousy, some tell lies, or make false and hurtful statements. If you want to be used of God, if you want your life to be like a rod blossoming and fruitful, be prepared to meet jealousy. We give you this warning from God's Word. You have received God's Word and no doubt you have found a heavenly joy in God's work. God's power will work through you in your home, streets, neighbourhood and country. People will see that God is using you for the saving of souls, and for helping others and they will begin to say, "He is not the only man whom God can use or who is being used of God. We are as good as he, in fact we are better than he. We know more of the Bible than he does, yet look at that man. He says he knows God, and that he is a God's servant. We can do much more than he can." Then they will begin to say things against you

and spread stories. Even your brothers and sisters will begin to say things against you. If God has begun to work through you then surely ungodly and worldly men will begin to work against you. In Num 17:8, we see how the rod bearing the name of Aaron budded, blossomed and brought forth fruit, but the other rods remained as they were. That is how God proved His servants. We too, may be called by any name, and have any amount of Bible knowledge, we may be baptized anywhere by anybody, but all these things are not going to prove that we have been chosen by God. It is only by fruitful life and ministry that the murmuring and hatred of people can be stopped.

December 3

"..thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Psa.119:75).

God wanted a man after His own heart, a man to whom He could reveal His heavenly plan concerning the Temple. He desired a man willing to be governed by Him, who would thus be able to gather the true material for the Temple. So David was chosen and the Lord took him through many sad and painful experiences. As believers, we often go through trials and afflictions which are beyond our comprehension. In our early Christian life our concern is to live a good life in the eyes of men, and to expect God to bless and help us according to all our personal needs, without any thought of our taking part in church meetings and activities. Very few believers know the real purpose for which God has called and saved them by grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Only after David had gone through many sufferings and afflictions did he realize that the Lord was preparing him for something far more wonderful and important than he had ever imagined. That is why he said in his testimony, "LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions" (Psa. 132:1). He was not praying to God for sympathy, neither was he asking God to lessen his afflictions, but he earnestly desired to know and to understand the purpose that God had for his life.

Job also could not understand why God was taking him through such painful trials. Only when God came and spoke to him face to face did he realize that God was preparing him for double blessing than what he had before his afflictions. So also David through his sufferings, was being prepared to be God's partner and co-worker, to accomplish His purpose on the earth i.e., when David began to see that God wanted him to build a House for Him, then he vowed to God saying, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psalm 132:4,5). So also the Lord reveals His own purpose for His Church. He has to take His redeemed one through many refining fires, before His work of building them together for an eternal habitation for Himself is completed.

December 4

"For the preaching of the cross is... unto us which are saved... the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

God greatly desires to cause all of us to live a victorious life in Christ. He has made every provision for every one of us to live such a life; but this we can do only if we understand our relationship to the Lord, and our union with Him in His death, burial and resurrection: otherwise a triumphant life will not be

possible. Therefore it is necessary for us to make sure by every possible means that we are united with the Lord Jesus Christ in this threefold manner. Baptism is a symbolic expression of our spiritual union with our Lord; and that is why the testimony of Baptism is very important.

With all the advantages at their disposal the believers at Corinth should have grown spiritually and become mature Christians. Instead, they still remained babes, and were not ready to receive the strong meat which Paul, the apostle, wished to give them. So, Paul had to reprove them, "You are still babes, and can digest only milk." Something had gone wrong with their spiritual growth. Though God's Word had once come to them with power, now they were not in a position to understand it. There was strife amongst them both about spiritual, as well as temporal things. There was envy, there were divisions, there was fornication (1 Cor. 3:1; 5:1; 6:1). They began well, but they continued to remain babes spiritually. This is the condition of many believers today. They remain full of shortcomings and failures, spiritually barren, and unable to understand the hidden things in the Word of God. Consequently they are easily deceived by the enemy, and fall into his subtle temptations and wrong teachings. As it was with the Corinthians, so it is with believers today. Lack of proper understanding of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the cause of spiritual weakness and barren and unfruitful life.

If you want to grow spiritually and be strong, then you too must have a proper understanding of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, remember, you will remain a spiritual babe, stunted and barren. It does not matter how hard you work, how long you pray, or how much Bible knowledge you have. You may have all these, and yet not be growing spiritually. God's power can be manifested fully only in those who are willing to be fully identified with the cross of the Lord Jesus. The apostle Paul repeats this truth, again and again in different words (1 Cor. 1:18,23,24; Phil.3:10).

December 5

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Mordecai, Esther's uncle refused to bow down to Haman: that is why he determined to destroy not only Mordecai but the whole Jewish nation (Esther 3:6). Haman is a type of Satan who is angry with the believers and persecutes those who refuse to bow down to him. Haman was full of wickedness and wanted to kill all the Jews. If his scheme had been successful all the Jews would have been killed in one day. To save His people the Jews, God raised Esther for that period. She never knew why she was brought to such a high position. When the enemy's scheme was known, her uncle said the above words to her (Esther 4:14).

Mordecai speaks of believers who refuse to bow down to antichrist and the false prophet in the end days. In Revelation 13:15 we read that the enemy would raise up an image of the beast and persecute and kill those who refuse to bow down to it. The man child in Rev. 12:5 speaks of those believers who refuse to worship the image. They are the overcomers who will rule with a rod of iron in the millennium (Rev. 2 : 26,27). The woman in Rev. 12:1 with a crown of twelve stars wearing the sun and the moon speaks of the Church. Among many names given to the Lord Jesus Christ, one is the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2).

The moon by itself has no light but the light of sun falling on the moon reflects the light. The moon under the feet of the woman speaks of the prophets who receive the message of the Lord and give it to the Church. The twelve stars speak of the twelve apostles. The enemy is ready to devour the man child (Rev. 12 : 4). Thus we see that those who want to overcome have to go through all kinds of sufferings and persecutions. But in the end, they will be rewarded and will rule with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is going to be great persecution upon all the believers. These days are not far ahead. In communist countries and even in Roman Catholic countries the enemy is using every possible means to weaken the faith of believers, to persecute them and to destroy them.

Esther did not know that the Jews were in great danger. We also do not know that many Christians are in danger. Because things are going on secretly, we do not know the danger coming upon all the believers of the world. When Esther realized the danger she prayed to God. Because of her intercession the Lord delivered all the Jews. On account of one person's intercession, God gave great deliverance. Even though we are few in number through our prayers the Lord will deliver many believers from persecution and all trials.

December 6

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8:33).

In John 15:18 the Lord said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you". Do not say that you are the only one who is reproached. If reproaches should come to us, they come first to the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever people speak about us, they speak about the Lord also (John 15:19-25). "...mine enemies ...hate me without a cause". This prophecy is given in Psa. 35:19. If we obey the Lord Jesus Christ, and identify ourselves with Him, we also will be hated, despised and persecuted without a cause. Our Lord Jesus Christ became our Saviour in order to forgive us of our sins to save us, change us and purify us. That is why He allowed people to curse Him and spit upon Him. If I want others to be saved through me, I must be reproached and despised. The more we are despised and reproached the more the Lord Jesus Christ will use us.

When we know God is with us, then let men do what they like. We know that the Lord will take up our cause, because He is with us. If we are sure that God is with us, then there is no need to take any notice of what people may say against us (Rom. 8:31-39). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (v.31). That is the main thing to remember. He is called Jesus, because He is our Saviour, Christ because He is the king and Emmanuel because He is with us. If you have that assurance in your heart that the Lord is with you, then let men say what they like. They may reproach us or hate us or persecute us. Let them do what they like. Satan will use that weapon again and again. Many believers lose their peace because of reproaches. They feel so troubled. Simple reproaches also they cannot bear. They lose their sleep and appetite. In different ways the enemy makes them lose their peace and joy. Imagine the reproach that Mary and Joseph had to bear from the beginning. If you want to enjoy your salvation, be prepared for reproaches. They must come. The more you rejoice in reproaches the stronger you will become. Do not let reproaches of any kind rob you of your joy. That is Satan's strong weapon to weaken many believers. We know the Lord is with us. He has promised saying, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every

tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD" (Isa.54:17).

December 7

"...the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him" (Deut. 32:12).

In Deut. 32:7-14 God was reminding the children of Israel through Moses that as He had blessed them in the past as long as there were no strange gods among them, so also He would do in the future. God wanted them to remember this as they were about to enter the land of promise. It is very easy for us to forget the blessings we have received in the past and to miss the purpose for which we have been saved by God's grace. But it is good for us to think more and more of the grand and lofty purpose for which we have been sought and saved by Him.

It was a constant failure among the children of Israel to forget God and His love and His purpose for them. They thought of Him only when they were in some need, some trouble or distress. But soon after their prayers were answered and their requests granted, they forgot the living and true God once again and went after strange gods. We also may have the same weakness. After we have tasted and enjoyed the love and faithfulness of God, if any object or person or desire or association lessens our love for God and weakens our faith in Him, then that becomes a strange god in our life.

God had blessed Jacob, but he could not go on further with the Lord after that, because there were strange gods in his household (Gen. 35:2,4). God had much greater blessings to give him, much more than could have ever imagined; but he was not in a position to receive them. Even though we have received many blessings already there are many more which we have yet to receive from our loving Saviour, but He will not be able to give them to us as long as there are strange gods in our lives.

When God met Jacob at Penuel, He changed his name from Jacob to Israel which means, "A prince with God". God had much more than all this to give to Jacob in order to bring him to Bethel, the proper place where He could meet Jacob and bless him. In Shechem Jacob had become very prosperous and had no lack of material things. Yet in God's sight he was very poor spiritually, so He commanded Jacob to leave that place and go to Bethel. Spiritually, he was far away from Bethel. As Bethel was the place which God had appointed to bless him fully, Jacob could not receive the blessings until he came back to Bethel.

December 8

"...For Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4).

God gave the Law to Moses for several reasons. First, it was given so that people might understand God's definition of sin. We read in Rom. 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Secondly, the Law was given to us to understand God's holiness. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). The Law was there, and they knew right from wrong, but

when they tried not to commit sin, they failed and had to admit that not a single person had the strength or human energy to obey and fulfil what God said, and thus the whole world became guilty, and every mouth was stopped before God.

Moses went on the Mount and a great fire from heaven came on the Mount: there was an earthquake and nobody dared to go near. When they saw the fire, they trembled and said, "God is Holy, He is a consuming fire." If they dared to go near where God was speaking they would have been consumed and reduced to ashes. If that fire was so holy that nobody dared to go near it, how dare you come near the fire of God? That was a glimpse of God's holiness and God says, "Compare yourself with that sight, look at your hands and feet and say if you are holy, and then come near my fire." Nobody was allowed to go up the mount except Moses. Thus the mouth of every man was stopped.

Thirdly, the Law was given to help us to know how terrible sin is. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). The Law was given to make sin still more sinful. In other words, to help us understand how dangerous, destructive and horrible sin is.

We think so lightly of sin and say, "Oh, it is only a thought, only a desire, only a feeling, only friendship, only affection, only a little association, not much. " But the Lord tells us how dangerous a small thought is. How much destruction has been brought into homes and lives by one thought! How much unhappiness by one feeling! How much darkness by one blind step! The Law was given for that purpose to make sin look exceeding sinful.

Fourthly, the Law was given to bring us to Christ as was read in Gal. 3:24. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." There is no salvation in the Law i.e. all the sacrifices offered, circumcision and commandments, prepared and trained the people like a schoolmaster for the Lord Jesus Christ, and when He came, there was no longer any need for the schoolmaster. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4). Christ is THE END OF THE LAW. How clear God's Word is, that when the Lord Jesus Christ came, He put an end to Law. Now we are no long under circumcision, Sabbath or sacrifices, we have come under Grace. It is not by doing something that we become righteous, but by believing. The Seventh Day Adventists who say that you should observe the Ten Commandments and keep the Sabbath come under God's judgment for changing the Word of God.

December 9

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7).

The Book of Revelation is a book that we should read again and again upon our knees. Then and then alone we shall be able to get the right word or message from this book. Its main purpose is to teach us how to live an overcoming life, and thus be qualified to inherit all things of the new creation. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is being prepared for a great, rich, heavenly and spiritual inheritance, "an inheritance incorruptible...reserved in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4).

To begin with, we require a strong, active, living faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." God has to use many means to put into us such a strong active faith. So for such a tried faith, we must be willing to go through many refining fires.

May be during these days, the Lord is taking some of you through refining fire. Don't think God is punishing you. If you are truly born again, God's Word says you are free from every condemnation (Rom. 8:1). You may say, "Lord, why did it happen in my case or my family? Or in my country?" None of us can understand everything upon the earth. Many unexpected things can take place in our lives. Our friends may fail us, our parents may fail us, our plans may be broken, our health can fail, and we may find ourselves alone for a period, without a single person to sympathise with us. Even though may have been blessed through our ministry, yet they may also turn away. Such things are bound to discourage us.

At such a time we require a new glimpse of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, for our individual life, our family life and our church life. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave John the apostle a fresh vision of Himself. He Himself became his wisdom in his old age. No angel came to take him out of the jail. In the case of Peter, the angel came. In the case of Paul the earthquake came and shook the jail. But John was a prisoner in his old age, in a very lonely place, hearing that many have lost their lives, that many have gone astray like Demas; and naturally all this sad news would make him sad and discouraged. But the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to John the apostle to answer his questions and to let him know the secret of God's purposes. We are living in the end days, and must be prepared for the signs of the end days. Don't be surprised. These things must happen. Be ready and be prepared to face them.

December 10

"...thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself..." (Deut. 14:2).

God's fulness is to be revealed finally through His Church (Eph. 1:23). It cannot be revealed through angels or other heavenly beings. Similarly God's manifold wisdom, God's glory, God's power, God's life, God's grace and purpose are revealed through His Church. That is why the Church is so precious unto Him. He wants us to be a part of the Church and He uses every possible means to make us a part of the Church. This preciousness is symbolized by the twelve stones on the breastplate, which were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in their marching order. This order had also to be maintained whenever they went on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. This was the order : the tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun had to camp on the east side ; Reuben, Simeon and Gad on the south ; Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin on the west ; Dan, Asher and Naphtali on the north (Num.2). This order was never to be changed and it revealed the order of 12 spiritual experiences necessary for us if we are to be very near to the heart of God. You may remember that the names on the onyx stones were in the order of their birth (Exo. 28:9,10). Now for their marching and camping God had changed the natural order. He was showing that He was not governed by any human qualifications. Man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart (1 Sam.16:7). Jesse brought all his sons one after another to Samuel, and the Lord said that they were not His choice. When finally David came before Samuel, the Lord asked Samuel to anoint David. Thus you may be deceived by outward appearances. You may also deceive

others by your words, by your face and appearance. Others may admire you and say, "What a fine Christian! What a kind man! How devoted he is!" But in your house you are a different person, full of temper and wickedness.

God was saying that we should come into His divine order and into His heavenly plan to become precious. As we are inwardly transformed and willing to be in His heavenly plan, we are brought near to His heart. God was saying in a simple way, "You are very precious unto Me and I want you to be near to My heart that I may love you freely and love you for eternity and pour into you My fulness."

December 11

"...make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee..." (Hebrews 8:5).

After Nehemiah had come to Jerusalem and seen the condition of the broken wall and the burnt gates of the city he went and told the other people also about it and got ready for rebuilding. Nehemiah knew that it was God Who sent him there and that He would open the way for His work. Hence he had faith that God would help him without fail. He went ahead without any hesitation and divided the work among the people in such a way that all could take part in the difficult task. When we see the barren condition of the people today and begin to consider how we can make the condition of the people better, it may appear altogether impossible. So, many people who are discouraged say, "We should not be bothered about the condition of the people. After all we are not living in the days of the apostles." Others think that they should work according to the times. But God is not happy about such a condition of His people. If you are willing to obey and follow Him, He will give you extra strength and grace. We should not forget that with all our human limitations and handicaps God can wonderfully use us if we are willing to trust and obey Him.

Nehemiah divided the whole wall into different sections according to divine order. No one complained or refused that he should be given a particular corner or portion of the wall according to his liking. Some people like to select work according to their fancy and say that they can do only some particular job and not other jobs. For instance during the Holy Convocations some people say that they can only wash vessels and cannot do other jobs. We find even among God's servants many who want to serve God according to their own liking and thus refuse to fit into God's plan and order. Nehemiah divided the whole work according to God's guidance among the people whether they were rich or poor, young or old. He did not pay attention to any consideration except God's guidance. We know that God's order and plan are always the best. If there are any difficulties He Himself will give us the strength to overcome them; if there are any obstacles He Himself will remove them and if there are any impossibilities He Himself will make them into possibilities. If there are any needs He Himself will supply them.

December 12

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world... I am the way, the truth, the life..." (John 8:12; 14:6).

Just as the high priest had two stones, Urim and Thummim, to find God's will, there are two stones possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ also (Psalm 43:3-5). The Lord Jesus Christ is our life, our light and our truth (John 8:12;14:6). When He comes into us as our Saviour He becomes The TRUTH and the living WORD. That is why, at our new birth we have unusual hunger for God's Word. Though we read it daily, we never get tired of it. Before our conversion we loved to read magazines, novels and worldly books. Now we want the Word of God in the morning, at midday and in the evening. Unless we have the living Saviour in us we cannot enjoy God's Word. Holiness becomes real to us after we experience the Lord Jesus Christ. God's plan and will are revealed to us day by day, by reading the Word of God slowly, systematically and prayerfully. The Lord Jesus Christ is our life. We say by faith, "Lord Jesus, open my eyes, give me Thy divine life and let me see things more clearly." With the help of His divine life and the Word of God we are able to find God's will even for small things. That is the greatest privilege of a believer ; knowing and doing God's will.

The whole life of the Lord Jesus Christ was lived in doing God's will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). If we want to enjoy His love and affection and come near His heart, then we must learn to know and do His will. It is only by doing God's will we can enjoy His presence. Just as the high priest carried these stones, Urim and Thummim, and could find God's will for individuals, for families and for the whole nation, now we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Urim and Thummim. The Lord Jesus Christ Who has come into our heart is our heavenly High Priest, our life and our truth. So by receiving God's Word into our hearts and by receiving divine life by faith. He becomes all in all to us.

December 13

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17).

God had asked Jacob to go to Bethel, saying, "...now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred" (Gen. 31:13). But Jacob was tempted to obey God partially. He yielded, and halted at Shechem. It was here that his daughter Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land and was defiled by Shechem the prince of the country. This was Jacob's fault. We cannot blame Dinah. She was young and inexperienced. Her parents ought to have known better than to behave as they did. Parents are for the most part responsible for the behaviour of their sons and daughters. Very often, they are the very ones who lead their children into sin; they allow young men to stay in their house, quite unmindful of the danger of their own daughters. One day they will have to give an account to God for their folly. If Jacob had proceeded on his journey in obedience to God's command, Dinah would not have been left open to temptation.

Jacob had now to face another temptation as we read in Gen. 34:8,9. Hamor, the father of Shechem, came to Jacob with a proposal for his son Shechem, to marry Dinah. Simeon and Levi intervened and by a subtle trick destroyed the men of the land (Gen. 34:25). Even then, Jacob was not thinking of leaving the place. Perhaps he thought that since the men had been killed it was quite safe for them to continue dwelling there. Again the Lord spoke to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel" (Gen. 35:1). There at Bethel, Jacob could understand the purpose of God. "Bethel" means "The House of God." It is there we can understand the deep purposes of God. Many people do not know this secret. They are content with the blessings of the

past. They are deceived by the world and its prosperity and as a result they keep away from the House of God. Unless you take your full share in the House of God in fellowship, worship and in service, you are liable to fall into many dangers. People give different kinds of excuses. Some say they are busy buying lands and buildings houses. Others say they have to look after their children. And when on a rare occasion they get ready to attend some spiritual gatherings they find some worldly friends or relatives coming to visit them, and so they stay behind to entertain them. They say, "We can go to the House of God next Sunday." When next Sunday comes they are hindered in some other way. When parents are so careless regarding their devotion to the Lord and love for His House it is no wonder that their sons and daughters are carried away by the lusts of the world and fall into defilement and sin.

December 14

"Behold, I give unto you power... over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

Strong faith is a great spiritual weapon to fight with the enemy. We need strong faith in prayer. Evidently, the devil comes in to weaken our faith as he desired to do with Peter. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32). The Lord Jesus Christ, knowing beforehand the devil's attack, used a mighty weapon to strengthen the faith of the man of God. If we do not have strong faith, no matter how many words we use in prayer, they are of no use. By weakening our faith the enemy makes our lives barren. That is why we have to pray by faith, "Lord, make my faith strong and active". We must have faith in God, as we read in Mark 11:22. In the margin it says, "Have the faith of God". That means, the Lord Jesus Christ living in us gives us strong faith. Our weak faith becomes strong by the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ coming into us. With such a faith we can rebuke and bind Satan.

Another spiritual weapon is to learn to bind the powers of darkness. When the enemy attacks us we should know his weapon. Otherwise we cannot say whether the attack is from the devil or not. Some attacks are from human beings and some from the devil. We have to have understanding and sense of the enemy's attacks. Then only we can confront him and bind the powers of darkness. That requires faith and oneness. "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). That is a great privilege we as a church have, to bind the powers of darkness. Very few assemblies, God's servants, and believers use it. Some repeat the words like magic. First of all we have to have the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then only we can bind Satan. If we live defeated lives and the enemy has gained some place in our lives, and yet we pray, "Lord, we bind the powers of darkness", it will have no effect. We have to see that the enemy has no place in our life. Only then by one mind we can bind the powers of darkness.

Once some of us went for open air preaching. When we began the ministry, we found that our throats had gone sore. After a few minutes all throats became hoarse. Suddenly it dawned on us that it was the enemy's attack. We came back and spent the whole night in prayer. Next morning all the throats were clear. So we know, there are enemy's attacks which can be bound by faith, oneness and unity.

December 15

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

We read in 2 Kings 8:18 that Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had married Ahab's daughter. This could not have happened all at once. Ahab was a very subtle man and knew that if he suddenly proposed this match, Jehoshaphat would immediately turn down the proposal. Was not Jehoshaphat a God-fearing man? So, in a clever way, he first made friendly alliance with Jehoshaphat as one king with another. After establishing his friendship, he slowly brought in the marriage proposal. Perhaps Ahab might have been suggested to Jehoshaphat that because he was a God-fearing man, he would be able to convert the girl after she became his daughter-in-law. Somehow Jehoshaphat was persuaded to agree; and his son married Ahab's daughter. What a tragic downfall followed this marriage! After all the love and zeal Jehoshaphat had shown for God and His Word, now this marriage brought about his downfall. Then Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat to go with him to battle against Ramoth-Gilead. Notice how cunningly the enemy worked. Ahab did not say abruptly: "Come to my palace in Samaria", or "Come with me to battle in Ramoth-gilead". He planned it all very cunningly in order to bring strong yet subtle pressure upon Jehoshaphat. By this time Jehoshaphat was so tightly caught in Ahab's net that he did not even pay attention to the warning given by the prophet Micaiah (2 Chronicles 18 : 8-22).

In Deut. 7:3 and Joshua 23:12, God had given solemn warning against marriages with the heathen. Ahab had married a heathen woman, Jezebel, who was noted for her idolatrous practices. Now his family was no better than a heathen family. In spite of this Jehoshaphat had taken Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, to be his son Jehoram's wife. Thus Jehoshaphat had fallen into Ahab's trap. Now, like a slave, he accompanied Ahab to the battle, in spite of the prophet Micaiah's repeated and emphatic warnings. He was a good king, and a zealous one. But, sad to say, he had fallen low under the influence of Ahab. Through the marriage alliance and through feasts and friendships, the devil had made him weak. Whenever we do anything wrong, even if we do it sincerely or unknowingly, we become weak spiritually.

December 16

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized" (Acts 22:16).

Baptism is the third fundamental and foundational principle of salvation (Hebrews 6:2). Many believers are ignorant about its necessity and importance. Supposing some vitamins are lacking in our body, we will fall sick. Many people go the hills in South India for summer holidays because it has a good climate. Years ago, it was found that people there were suffering from some skin disease. The reason was not known. The climate was good, there was nice and there was plenty of good food, yet people were falling sick. After much research it was discovered that there was no calcium in the water. When calcium was added to the drinking water, they were healed. Thus we see that a lack of calcium or phosphorous or iron or vitamins brings sickness in the body. Similarly, if we do not obey in the waters of baptism we cannot grow spiritually. Baptism is as important as any other fundamental principle of salvation. The enemy uses many devices to keep believers blind about it. Some believers say that baptism is not necessary; if we are born again that is enough. For nominal Christians baptism is only a ritual, but for believers it is a testimony. It is by baptism that we understand by revelation our union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

After my conversion, for two years I never thought of baptism. I read the Bible every day. Sometimes I used to spend a whole day with the Bible, but was not baptized thinking that it was not necessary. One Saturday morning in the month of February 1932 as I was having my quiet time the Lord spoke to me through Matthew 3:13. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." The Lord said to me clearly, "Are you in any way better than your Saviour?" I replied, "Lord, I never said so." He said, "Then what about baptism?" I had been thinking that baptism was not very important because I was born again and was giving my testimony everywhere. But the Lord spoke to me very clearly, that He was baptized for my sake, even though there was no need for Him to do so. The very next day I took baptism. That day I myself took the meeting and during the meeting I was baptized. I was filled with great joy when I came out of the water, and from that day onwards the Bible became a new book to me. I enjoyed much liberty in prayer and witnessing. Everything became new to me. I discovered that there are 51 references in the Gospels and the Epistles about baptism. I put them all together and studied them.

December 17

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" (Psa. 139:17).

God is love, and He wants to give everything so that we might enjoy and be blessed. Yet we neglect God and grieve Him. Once I came home very late in the night after a Gospel meeting. As soon as I came my mother said, "Have something to eat". I replied, "I do not want any food, I have no appetite." Then I went to my room and was praying for an hour or so. When I got up from my knees I saw my mother sitting and weeping. I asked her, "What has happened?" she replied, "My son, this morning, I went to the market to buy things for you. I knew what you were fond of in your school days, and I spent many hours preparing food for you. I also have not eaten till now, because I thought we could eat together. Now you say you have no appetite." And she went on weeping, even though I said to her several times, "Mother, forgive me". In the same way, we go on hurting God continually. We do not realize how much He loves us. No man or woman can love us as He does. Yet we despise and neglect His love.

Every human being will change, whether mother, father, brother, sister, children, wife or husband; their love also will change but God's love will never change. Even though by nature we are God's enemies, and go on saying and doing things to grieve Him and wound Him, He goes on loving us and seeking us. Again and again He comes to us and pleads, "My son, my daughter, give me thine heart." Now why is He doing this? It is to make us "One New Man".

We read in 1 Cor. 15:45, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit". Adam was only an earthly, natural man; but the Lord Jesus Christ is spiritual man: He was born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, lead by the Spirit, and whatever He said or did was all by the Spirit. Every word that Jesus spoke was filled with power. Even though the first man Adam lived for 930 years, he was still only an earthly man with a body of clay. But the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord from heaven. His body saw no corruption. No bad smell came out of the sepulchre in which His body lay. He came out of it with a glorified body. In 1 Cor. 15 the Lord Jesus Christ is called the last Adam, the quickening Spirit (v.45), the Spiritual Man (v.46), the Second Man, the Lord from heaven (v.47), and the Heavenly Man (v.48). All these names are given to Him to show us the meaning of the wonderful New

Man. The Lord has saved us to make us a new creature and members of His Church which is called one New man.

December 18

"...he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him" (Luke 24:30,31).

Our Lord's fourth appearance after His resurrection was to two disciples on their way from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. They were discussing the strange things that had happened at Jerusalem. They had been told by the women who had been to the sepulchre that they had seen the Lord. The women had been told by the angels that He was risen from the dead. As they were going, the Lord Jesus Christ walked a long distance with the two disciples, expounding to them the Scriptures with great authority, but they could not recognize Him. In the evening when He came to stay with them at their own request, at the meal, according to the Jewish practice, He took bread, gave thanks and broke it. Then they recognized Him in the act of breaking of bread. They remembered what He said at the time of the last supper, "Take eat, this is my body, which is broken for you." Now they understood the significance of His statement that He was going to give His body to be broken, His precious blood to be shed, as atonement for the sins of all people.

It is only as we thank our Lord with all our hearts for dying for our sake, for dying upon the cross for our sins and giving His whole body to be broken for us, that we begin to experience this wonderful power of resurrection. That is why our worship gathering on Sunday morning around the Lord's Table is so precious and helpful. We have seen that wherever believers have learned to gather Sunday by Sunday around the Lord's Table to remember His death in the manner He taught and to spend sufficient time in pure heartfelt worship and then take part in the Lord's Table after searching their hearts and putting things right, there has been spiritual growth and enlargement. Unfortunately the Lord's Table has become a ritual and ceremony for many believers. They do not realize the value of pure worship before taking part in the Lord's Table. That is why lives remain barren and comparatively dry. It is very importance for believers to learn to worship the Lord around His Table. Then there will be very rapid growth in them spiritually and they will grow in the grace and knowledge of God.

December 19

"...joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8).

In 1 Pet. 1:8, the apostle Peter speaks of joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. This joy cannot be expressed suitably by word or song. No earthly language can express this joy. Though we may not speak much, yet in our hearts there is a peculiar joy which make us feel that we are in heaven. The God of grace gives us this joy as gift. It is wonderful and unspeakable and it never leaves us.

This joy does not depend upon earthly factors like eating and drinking. It is a spiritual joy which comes into us through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). For some people their joy depends

upon good food. Their joy is occasional and temporary. But the joy of the Lord can be enjoyed even during drought or famine or hunger. I can say by experience that, though I had to starve for many days, I found no murmuring or discontentment in my heart. I had a peculiar joy within me, with which earthly factors cannot interfere.

We should exercise our inner life to see whether we have really received that heavenly joy. We should not deceive ourselves. When any one goes for shopping usually he thoroughly examines the things he intends to purchase, and in spite of it, many such people are deceived. In 2 Cor. 11:13 we read how the devil can deceive us. He can make us feel that we have the joy of the Lord even when we actually do not have it. The devil can make an imitation appear as very real.

It is good and safe to examine ourselves in the light of God's Word, and make sure that the joy we have, is really the joy of the Lord.

December 20

"...When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing" (Luke 22:35).

In Gen. 22:3 without consulting Sarah, Abraham was ready to take Isaac as God had commanded. Some may say that the customs in India and America are different. You may say that American wives are different from Indian wives. They demand everything! - and to keep the peace men have to tell everything to their wives! It may be an American wife, or an English wife or an Indian wife or a graduate wife or illiterate wife. But the divine law is the same for every country. In the work of God, and the things of God, is the same divine law that is operative. If you make any alteration in any divine law, you will bring great weakness into your testimony and loss into your ministry. Divine laws are not to be trifled with, and Abraham had learned that lesson - that when God speaks, He must be obeyed. So without consulting any person, he obeyed God immediately. We must never try to change divine laws by human wisdom.

By God's command Abraham went. We do not find the least anxiety in the heart of Abraham. When Isaac questioned him about the offering he said: "God will provide." He is not avoiding Isaac's question. When he said that God would provide, he actually believed that the Lord would provide. Literally the meaning of Moriah is: "God will provide." Here we see the kind of faith that had been created and developed in the heart of Abraham. The true friendship that God demands is a strong, living and simple faith and alas! for most of us, we have no faith. Even though we talk about faith, and preach and sing about faith, when the test is actually given, we know how the devil again and again brings some doubt into our hearts. Even though we have proved God on many occasions and He has given victory over the enemy's devices, we have seen how many times doubt still comes into our hearts till the Lord reassures us with His promise that He will surely provide.

In the same way we often find that when we are asked to give a message we feel so dry, empty and weak; the throat may be dry and the brain tired but even then, He provides His message if we seek it and you will find the same way in every test; I know it in my own experience. He is faithful. Whenever God blesses,

He provides, and whatsoever burden we as men may have to bear, He gives abundant and extra grace for that burden.

December 21

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:24,25).

After crossing the river Jordan the children of Israel had to conquer the high-walled city of Jericho. The Lord told them that if only they would follow Him as He went before them and do whatever He commanded them, they would be able to see the enemy defeated. God informed the Israelites so clearly that they had not passed that way before and that they could not depend upon the wisdom they had acquired in Egypt or any other past experience of theirs. Only the Lord knew the way and He alone could lead them. They simply had to follow Him. He revealed His plans to Joshua step by step and the children of Israel could be sure of victory when they implicitly followed the revealed plan. The reason why the Lord had asked them to keep a space between them and the Ark of the covenant (Josh. 3:4), was that they could keep their eyes on it and follow on. The people were asked to sanctify themselves before they could cross the river (v.5). Sanctification means bringing ourselves into the full possession of the living God. Instead of depending upon ourselves, our wealth, our numbers, or any other human advantages, we should give full charge of our lives to the Lord. He will then fight for us in every situation and make us more than conquerors.

The Ark of the covenant had to be borne by the priests and all the rest of the people had to follow them. We too have to identify ourselves with the whole church and thus become successful in overcoming all the obstacles. We must be in fellowship with other believers and take our full share in building the Church. Many believers do not meet with other believers for fellowship. They are just satisfied by hearing good music and good messages. But they do not know the value of the fellowship which we have as we meet together either for worship or for prayer or for the study of His Word. Do not keep away from fellowship, thinking that through messages on the radio or through good books and magazines, you will receive full blessings. That way you will only remain weak and powerless. Our strength and growth depend upon our fellowship with one another. The early believers began to grow spiritually, because they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers (Acts 2:42).

December 22

"For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7).

Learn to look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greeks said, "We would see Jesus". Our Lord was saying, "My dear friends, do you want to see Me? Then first of all, be partakers of my death, like the grain of wheat dying in the ground." No man can save himself. He can try many means, he can fast, weep, say long prayers or suffer hardship; yet he cannot save himself. It is by faith we become partakers in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, some may have the tobacco habit for many years. They may promise "From tomorrow I will not smoke," but after one week they begin to smoke secretly. They have become slaves to that habit. They struggle and get no relief. But when we understand the cross, every sin and vice

vanish away in a second. By the power and the working of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are given victory over sin.

As we continue to behold the cross we become like our Lord Jesus. For example, take those who are married. Before their marriage, they were carried away by outward appearances. But after their marriage they are more concerned with inward virtues. They go on seeing some new virtue in each other. After many years they look like brother and sister, whereas before marriage there was a great difference between them. It is the same when the life of the Lord Jesus comes into you. As the work of the cross goes on, you become more and more like Him.

You may see miracles and dream dreams; but you will not see the Lord till you come to the cross and know by faith and revelation what He did for you. Then you can see Him always, you can see Him every day and everywhere; you can see His heavenly glory. O what a joy! When you learn to see the cross you will become more and more like Him. If you do not have that experience yet, come and have it now.

December 23

"...They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matt. 14:16).

If we can truthfully and honestly say that the Lord Jesus Christ has become our personal Saviour, then we should be able to give spiritual bread to the hungry people around us. Wherever we may live, whether in village or city, we will find in our neighbourhood or locality many hungry people doing deeds of shame and living in darkness, a life of defeat. The Lord's command to all of us is: "Give ye them to eat". If we have received the bread of life from the Lord Jesus Christ, then we should be able to offer that bread to those who are hungry and thirsty. They may not accept our offer, but we have the privilege to offer what we have. The disciples confessed their poverty as they saw the multitude, and said, "...We have here but five loaves, and two fishes" (v. 17). It is only when we know our true inward spiritual condition and confess our poverty, that the hunger of others can be satisfied. If we think we have plenty to give, we cannot satisfy the hungry and helpless and cannot be of use to the Lord. When the disciples confessed their poverty the Lord said, "Bring them hither to me" (v.18). We have got to learn that lesson. Whatever we have and however little it may be, it must be brought to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ with simple faith. Say to Him: "Lord, even though I am weak and empty, I bring everything to Thee. I do not know what to say, or how to say it. Lord, use me entirely for Thyself." In the same way do not hesitate to give your money, time and strength unto the Lord. That is God's way of using us. But whenever we try to use what we have for ourselves, we find it does not matter how much we get, it will not satisfy us, and because we try to use our own wisdom and knowledge we fail. We must bring to the Lord all we have.

Here were a few barley loaves and a few fishes. But the Lord blessed them and multiplied them and doubtless made them more tasty. In the same way whenever we claim God's blessing on our labours, we find it works. Sometimes we do not know what to say. We feel frightened to talk to people saying. "They will not believe me. I cannot speak because I have no understanding or knowledge. I don't know anything properly". Remember He will bless broken words which you may utter. Broken words have power behind them. I have had that experience. "How can these broken words convince so and so? But I found that every word was a blessing to somebody. If the Lord can bless the loaves, surely He can bless the words

we speak. This is true in every case. If we want our neighbours and co-workers to be blessed through us, let us not be afraid to say to the Lord: "Touch my tongue and bless the word I speak in Thy name", for we know that men are in misery and sorrow and they want a message. God can use you if you are a willing co-worker.

December 24

"... we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

The Lord Jesus Christ died to bear the punishment of our sins and also to bury them for ever. He also died to enable us to identify ourselves with Him in His resurrection. Just as we believe that we died to our old nature when He died on the cross, so also we have to believe that we have risen with Him to a new life - His resurrection life (Rom. 6:5). We are baptised not only into His death but also into His resurrection. The same glorious power which raised our Lord from the grave, comes into us and goes on working in us. This power of resurrection is the highest power which God had made available, in Christ, to every believer. No wonder the apostle Paul could exclaim, "Oh! how I long to know Him, and the power of His resurrection!" The power of resurrection is the final proof that we have victory over our old sinful nature. It strengthens us in the inward man - the new creation and helps us to overcome our trials and temptations. Therefore claim, by faith, the power of resurrection every day, for every need. But take warning. Do not deliberately enter into temptations, and then ask the Lord to help you. Also do not wait to ask the Lord for help till you are actually tempted.

Do not wait till you have slipped half way down into sin. Be ready even before the temptations come. Begin the day, as early as you can, in worshipping the Lord and praising Him. Continue to wait on Him with His Word. Then pray, "Lord, I am weak. I know my experience that I say and do foolish things. I do not want to fall into sin. I acknowledge my emptiness and helplessness. Wilt Thou not pour into me Thy power of resurrection?" Then you will hear the Lord's voice assuring you. "Yes, My child, 'without me ye can do nothing'. (John 15:5). So depend upon Him for the least as well as the greatest need. Then, in Christ, you will become stronger and wiser day by day.

Do not use any worldly wisdom or weapons of the flesh in order to live a victorious life. Use only God's wisdom, and God's weapons: our oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 1:18, Gal. 6:14; Gal. 2:20). These verses give us the secret of a triumphant life. But we need faith to get hold of this secret. Remember that the Lord is willing to give us this faith. Pray for Him, "Lord, give me the faith that will make me more than a conqueror. Cause me to triumph in Christ. Lord, do manifest the savour of Thy knowledge in and through me in every place; I will not let Thee go till Thou hast made me a conqueror".

December 25

"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

The joy of the Lord is a very great joy and is given to us in a very great measure. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you

is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10). This message was brought to the world at the time of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the angels. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to give us His great joy. This joy is directly from heaven, and is heavenly.

Secondly, this joy is also sent from heaven under divine authority to the entire human race. This joy is meant for "all people". It is not meant to be confined to any one section of people. What God says in the Bible is infallibly true. It cannot be altered. The term "all people" means, people of all countries, of all languages, of all ages, of all walks of life, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, civilized and uncivilized, high and low, white and black. This joy can be received and enjoyed by all.

In the last part of Neh. 8:10, we read as follows, "...the joy of the LORD is your strength". When a sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins by being washed in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, he receives a peculiar heavenly joy. This joy multiplies when one lives his life for the glory and satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ. When once we receive this joy it can be increasingly experienced by us day by day. In the same Scripture portion given above, it is written, "...send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared". In other words the heavenly joy which a saved person experience can be passed on to people who are in sorrow and are deprived of this heavenly joy. This means that the heavenly joy received by one can be shared with other people also, that is, people who are in sorrow and who are without such a joy. This joy of the Lord also gives victory over every sin and temptation.

December 26

"...and his eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14).

John the apostle saw that the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ were as a flame of fire. John was thinking that the Lord was not seeing what was happening to the believers, but the Lord could see everything. His eyes will be upon us provided our heart is perfect toward Him, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and from throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chro. 16:9). Love the Lord with a perfect heart and sincerely. Then He will work on your behalf. He knows your heart's thought and need and He goes on moving that way. His eyes are like a flame of fire. You have to look into His eyes.

Sometimes when guests come into your house, you want to give them tea or coffee, and tell your wife, "Bring coffee for So and So". But there is nothing in the house, and your wife cannot say openly: "We have nothing in the house!" so she stands in the door and talks with her eyes. Our Lord says, "I want to speak with you. Look at My eyes. I will tell you what is in My heart." As you turn around, you find eyes like a burning flame, and the fire must burn out sin. If there is any defilement or sin, we dare not look at Him. We will look the other way. But if you keep your heart pure, you can look at Him. You will find love is in His eyes, when your eyes meet His eyes, and what words cannot say, the eyes can say.

The Lord is saying, "My children, look at My eyes. Then you will know how much I love you". Do not look at the situation or trouble around you. Look at His eyes constantly. Then you will know how great and powerful His love is for you. For a purpose He has to chastise you, punish you and rebuke you (Heb. 12:6). "...whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth". In the midst of trouble, look at His eyes; you will never doubt

His love. Ask Him: "Lord, give me eyes to see Thy beauty and Thy glory!" and you will find that a new glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ will solve all your problems.

December 27

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance" (Eph. 6:18).

The enemy uses weapons of mockery and ridicule as we notice in Neh. 4:1. These are very common weapons which the enemy uses, to hinder the work of God. The devil often used the leading men for this purpose, hoping the mockery and ridicule from the leading men will prove more effective to harm God's work. Sanballat and Tobiah did not only hold important positions in Jerusalem, but they also had plenty of money. They were so proud of their position, land, authority and money that they did not fear ridiculing those who wanted to obey and serve God. We have seen the same type of things happening during the past years. Those who were in charge of schools, hospitals and other institutions and were having much money, were intoxicated with power in their high position. They began to ridicule those who wanted to testify in the waters of baptism, saying, "Who will bury you? Who will marry you? Who will give you jobs? Who will feed you?" and so on. The devil has used the same weapon through the ages against God's servants who wanted to obey and serve Him. But we thank and praise God for our strong and effective weapon of prayer which is all powerful to defeat the enemy. If we want to obey God fully we must also be prepared for facing all kinds of mockery and persecution. When Nehemiah and his helpers were attacked by the enemy they began to pray. The more they were attacked by the enemy, the more did they pray. Similarly we were not discouraged by all the attacks of the enemy but we went on praying and seeking God's help. We have found by experience that the people who mocked us in the beginning are now begging us to come and help them, pray for them, or have Gospel campaigns in their places. If we patiently bear all the mocking, in due time the Lord will help us and make us channels of blessing to those who earlier mocked us. Our duty is just to remain true to the heavenly vision and go on praying. In some cases, we find the enemy bringing contention and strife among the believers to hinder the work of God. In order to maintain oneness in the spirit among ourselves we should pray much. The enemy can raise bitter opposition against God's people and God's servants. It is only by travailing and persevering prayer that we can very certainly defeat the attack of the enemy.

December 28

"...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

There are conditions to be fulfilled in order to find God's will. "Teach me to do thy will". Teach me, is the first condition. God will not force you nor compel you. He has given every man free will. It is only when we go to Him and say to Him: "Teach me", that He will teach us to find His will.

Secondly, we must die to our own will. You have got to say again by faith, "Not my will, but Thy will. I am willing for all my plans to be broken". We must say this from our hearts everyday and not as a matter of formality.

Thirdly, be willing to obey God joyfully. Can you say honestly, "O God! whatever You say, I will do joyfully and not half-heartedly; Thy Law is within my heart?"

Fourthly, you must be free from worldly friends and worldly relations. Say in the beginning of the day. "Lord, is there anything in my heart which is grieving Thee?" Only then you can prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. You must long for God's best. For many believers money comes first. They do not care whether the girl is black, fat or short, if the parents offer Rs. 20,000/-, she is the best girl for their son. Consequently, there are many girls with mental breakdowns, because the parents are governed by worldly advantages, and not by God's will.

The fifth condition is in Proverbs 3:5. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." Then your request will be fulfilled. Without faith you cannot find God's will. Be not wise in your own understanding.

Sixthly, "In all thy ways acknowledge him" Proverbs 3:6. You must go to God every day for every matter and for every problem. Not only occasionally, but daily. Even for small things, you must pray.

The seventh condition is found in Is. 30:21. "This is the way, walk ye in it". Take heed to the timely warning which our Lord gives you. If you are about to take a wrong turn, there will come the voice of God, "Do not go that way, be careful. This is the way, walk ye in it."

Many believers, like Eli, become deaf spiritually. God was speaking to Samuel. Eli could not hear, even though he was a high priest, because he was negligent and because of his defilement, he had become deaf spiritually. Oh, keep your ears sensitive to the voice of God.

December 29

"...LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw" (2 Kings 6:20).

A blind man was brought to the Lord Jesus, Mark 8:22 to 25. Usually the Lord healed the sick and infirm with just one touch. But in this case it was different.

Firstly, the Lord Jesus took the blind man by his hand. We also have to learn how to be held by Lord, and to hold on to His hand. Many of us know the Bible, but we have failed to understand how to hold on to the hand of the Lord. Instead, we often hold on to some man's hand. As long as you allow Him to hold you by His hand you will be safe in any kind of circumstance.

Secondly, the Lord Jesus led the blind man out of the town. Through this He is teaching us a spiritual lesson. He wants us to see that if we are to be healed of our spiritual blindness we must allow Him to lead us away from all our worldly associations and friendships. How many believers fail to attend worship with the Lord's people because of worldly friends and relations! If you allow the Lord to lead you, He will liberate you from all associations which bring loss and blindness.

Thirdly, we see that the Lord Jesus spat upon the eyes of the blind man. This meant that the man had to be prepared to bear reproach for His Name's sake. If we want to grow spiritually we must be ready to bear

His reproach (Matt. 10:24, 25 and 1 Pet. 4:14). There are many believers who are not willing to bear reproach and so do not testify about the Lord. As a result they become blind spiritually and lose their joy.

When our Lord touched this man new life came into him. But even after he had received new life, we see that the Lord had not finished dealing with him. The Lord asked him if he saw aught, Mk. 8:23. He could have said, "Yes Lord, it is wonderful; I can see!" Of course, the Lord knew what the condition of his sight was before he asked the question, but He wanted that man to make an honest confession of his own accord. We see how the man made full and honest confession to the Lord, "I see men as trees, walking".

This man confessed his weakness to the Lord. So the Lord touched him and gave him clear vision. How glad he must have been then, that he had not tried to cover up his real condition from the Lord! May be you too are being troubled by temper, or pride, or greed, or some other defiling habit, practice or friendship. May be you tell lies. Because of these weaknesses your spiritual eyes are dim. Do not be reluctant to confess your weakness and defeat to the Lord Jesus. That is what He is waiting for you to do now; then He will touch you. He is so loving and gracious and merciful. He will give you one more touch and "restore" perfect spiritual sight to you.

December 30

"God ...comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble" (2 Cor. 1:3,4).

Reuben means "Jehovah seeth" or "the LORD hath looked upon my affliction" (Gen. 29:32). Whatever your trouble may be, believe from your heart that the Lord has seen all your affliction, sufferings, poverty and trials. Do not seek human sympathy. The Lord alone knows how to comfort you in your sorrow and help you in your difficulties. All you have to do is to let God see your afflictions.

Paul suffered extreme sufferings (2 Cor. 1:3-10). He had none to comfort him. He was pressed beyond measure. In fact he had no hope of remaining alive. Then God came to his rescue and delivered him. For this reason Paul said that he himself was now able to comfort others. God allowed such afflictions in his life so that he might know how to help others in distress. Perhaps, troubles have come upon you and you have murmured against God and said, "Lord, I have done nothing wrong against You! Why have You allowed such afflictions in my life?" The Lord has not sent these afflictions to you as a punishment for your sins but only to train you that you may be a source of comfort to many others who are in similar need.

Through all our sufferings, sorrows and difficulties, God is preparing us for a heavenly vocation. We know that through all these we are strengthened spiritually. For example, on high mountains strong and tall trees grow because of the strong wind. In the same way every storm of life, whether persecution, or poverty, or trial, or sickness, or loneliness, or family strife, is not intended to punish us but is allowed to make us strong spiritually.

I thank God with all my heart for my sufferings after my salvation. From the year 1927 to 1935, God permitted every kind of suffering in my life. I thank God for them. He gave me grace. I do not know of anytime when I murmured. I believe that it was God's plan for me. In those days He taught me many

spiritual lessons and He became real and precious to me. We will never learn these things by reading books or going to any college. Remember that the Lord has seen your affliction, you will be comforted and brought very near to the heart of God, so much so that you will be able to serve others by comforting them.

December 31

"I... will do better unto you than at your beginnings" (Ezekiel 36:11).

We see in 2 Kings 6:5 how a young man, son of a prophet borrowed an axe, and because he was careless he did not make sure that the axe-head was firm in the handle. In the same way, some of us borrow money and are very careless in returning. It is because of dissatisfaction. Some people earn much money, but spend it carelessly, and then they begin to borrow. Because of carelessness, we cut short our prayer time, our time of devotion and reading the Bible. We use our tithes for other purposes and thus we become unhappy. We can recover all that we have lost, for God is saying to you and me, "I will do better unto you than at your beginnings."

In Eze. 36:9-11, we see God's desire that every kind of barrenness should be put away and mountains be made to yield all things in abundance every where. Some of the mountains at that time, were barren for more than 1500 years and according to the prophecy, that place which was barren has become fertile. The Lord is saying to us, "Oh my people, though you have become barren, I want you to bring forth fruit, more fruit and still more fruit! But let Me first of all possess you again and use you more and more". That is God's longing. We want to forget the past. We want to thank God for the mercies He has already showered upon us, and want to go forward with stronger faith and larger vision and see Him working more mightily. He is a wonder-working God and a covenant-keeping God: a mighty God and a prayer-answering God. He will do marvels as we read in Exo 34:10. That should be the longing of our hearts. Let us call upon Him to possess us completely. We need to fully follow Him for He is a faithful God.

Let us forget the past and press forward with the high calling of God expecting great things from Him. He is a great God and He never fails. The God of might and the God of power is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Whatever might have been our failures in the past, they will be forgotten.