

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. 46

January 06, 2008

NO 1

"I AM ... THE BEGINNING" (Rev. 1:8)

By His grace we have come to the beginning of another year. Reader, how have you begun this year? Is it in holidaying and sight-seeing? Is it in visiting friends? Or is it in feasting? This is how the world thinks of beginning a year. A few may, as they stand at the portals of a New Year, decide to begin it by turning over a new leaf. But all these are vain beginnings. Reader, Jesus said, "I am the beginning". No mortal being on earth has ever made such a statement. No other beginning can bring you eternal blessing/Holidaying will end in dissipation of your inner life; friends and feasting will make you end up in the fool's motto, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die". Jesus Who said, "I am... the beginning" also said, "I am the end". So beginning the year with Jesus you come into an eternal purpose for yourself.

There are three beginnings mentioned in the Word of God which should become your experience. Firstly, "In the beginning God created" (Gen. 1:1). It was a glorious beginning because it is recorded in Job 38:7 that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy", when they beheld how perfect, full of beauty and glory His creation was, reflecting His eternal power and Godhead. And so there was unrestrained joy. The same God wants to begin a "good work in you" (Phil.1:6). Today let there be a beginning of a good work in your life. The Word of God tells us that God Who "created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9), Who sends forth His Spirit and they are created (Psa. 104:30) wants to create in you a clean heart (Psa. 51:10). Reader, what a good beginning it would be in the New Year! In this heart of ours sin is written "with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" (Jer. 17:1), and also out of this heart proceeds "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness,... and defile the man" (Mark 7:20- 23). But "Christ... through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14), that He might create in Himself a new man (Eph.2:15), created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Reader, right now in the beginning of the New Year cry out to your Creator like David, "Create in me a clean heart". Let your heart be washed in His blood."... wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved" (Jer. 4:14). Then you will become "his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and as in the beginning when the morning stars sang there will also be joy in the presence of the angels now (Luke 15:10).

Secondly, "In the beginning was the Word"(John 1:1). This must be the second beginning for the New Year in your life - a beginning with eternal things and not the temporal things of the world, a beginning of the Word in your life from today. The Scripture reveals that the Word is the,

(i) Source Of A New Life: (1 Pet. 1:23). Jesus said, 'The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (John 6:63) - spiritual life. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13), begotten of Him through the Word of truth (James 1:18). Let that spiritual life begin in you today as you accept His Word in your life.

(ii) Spiritual Food: When spiritual life begins in you, you must desire the sincere milk of the Word of God that you may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). From the very beginning of the year decide not to "spend money for that which is not bread" (Isa. 55:2) but like Job, esteem the words of His mouth more than your necessary food (Job 23:12), and like Jesus say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word ...of God" (Matt. 4:4).

(iii) Source of Conduct: From the beginning of the year till the end let His Word be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. Of David it is said that "he behaved himself wisely in all his ways" (1 Sam. 18:14). Paul writing to the Philippians says, "let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). When the Word begins to work in our life our conduct is bound to change. We will "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt..." (Eph. 4:22) and instead be "holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1:15). The Word should be our source of conduct.

Thirdly, 'I am... the beginning' (Rev. 1:8). John saw this beginning not in the isle of Patmos but in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 1:13) - the Church. He saw the glory of His power and majesty - His countenance shining as the sun in his strength (v. 16) in the midst of His Church. And he heard His voice saying, "I am ... the beginning". While His glory can be seen in His creation and His power in His Word or commandment, His fullness can only be experienced in His Church because the Church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. It may be God has created a clean heart in you at the beginning of this year and the Word has begun to work in your life but His work is incomplete until the Church life begins in you. The Lord wants to bring you from the beginning of the year to Acts 2:42 and not to forsake assembling of yourselves together... so much the more as you see the day approaching (Heb. 10:25), but to be found in His Church offering the sacrifice of praise and service to Him Who is the beginning of all things.

E.W.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER
as from El-Shaddai, PRAISE 16, RelliRoad, Kalimpong, Dt.Darjeeling W.B,
Date: 22-12-2007.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

All honour and glory, riches and blessing, wisdom and power be unto the Lamb, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath in His infinite mercy and goodness brought us to the threshold of the New Year, 2008. Let us be thankful and grateful for all that we have received of Him, bane and blessing, personally, family wise and in the fellowship of the Church, which He hath

purchased with His own blood. May the Lord grant us grace as His elect holy nation to review the year that is over, as to how far we have progressed in His calling according to His own purpose and grace given us in Christ before the world began. Have we on the other hand fallen short of it or wandered from it? We had set out on it with desire and devotion, and somehow we find ourselves swerved or even almost severed from it. May our faithful God remind us of it if it is so and bring us back to it.

The history of God's dealings with His saints or specially called out ones reveal that He bears with us patiently and waits on us graciously. If we have fallen short of His holy standard, and we have been wandering hither and thither, He cannot allow it to continue. He does speak and so works in our circumstances or confused conditions, as to bring us back to the original terms and conditions. Thus recovered and restored we can even be reinstated to the special position and path of service He has predetermined for us. The life of Apostle Peter bears ample testimony to this truth. Peter had stumbled, denied the Lord and went back to his boat and net.

He was thoroughly restored, and as a restored soul he stood by the sea of Tiberius when the Lord called him by a brief, pointed utterance "Follow me", as he heard it by the Lake of Gennesaret for the first time. He was brought to the 'original terms', the terms between Christ and his soul, and between his soul and Christ. He was brought to learn that the heart of Jesus had undergone no change toward him - that the love of His heart was inextinguishable and unalterable. It cannot tolerate any departure on the part of Peter from the original terms of the Saviour's first call.

Now we see the same thing precisely in the history of the Patriarch Jacob. We have a record of the original terms between Him and Jacob in Genesis 28. It ends in verse 15, where it comes to this high note in the Lord's blessed statement as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Who undertook to do for Jacob and for his seed. The Lord's memorable words read thus - "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". Such are the terms by which God binds himself to Jacob. Jacob on his part, after he awaked out of his sleep said, " ... Surely the LORD is in this place;... And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28:16,22). Jacob thus dedicated himself to God and vowed that the spot where he had enjoyed such a revelation and hearkened to such exceeding great promises, should be God's House. All that he thus deliberately uttered before the Lord was solemnly recorded by Him.

Thus Jacob went on his journey. Twenty long and eventful years passed. They had been years of trial during which Jacob experienced many ups and downs, changes and chances, but the Lord of Bethel watched over His poor servant and appeared to him in the midst of his pressures and said unto him, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred" (Gen. 31:13).

Thus the Lord deals with us in the midst of all our wanderings and haltings and our stumblings. He makes us to know that as we cannot do without His love, so neither can He without ours. He will keep the soul upto the old terms. Let us hearken to these touching appeals of the Spirit of Christ to the saints in other days, "...thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from

whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works..." (Rev. 2:4,5). "... call to remembrance the former days..." (Heb. 10:32).

Though Jacob again halts and settles down in Shechem (Gen. 34) with the resulting pollutions and confusions, the Lord finally speaks, "Arise, go upto Bethel" (35:1). Jacob responds with his household putting away all strange gods and unclean garments to go upto Bethel and build the altar calling it El-Bethel. El-Bethel, - precious title which had God for its Alpha and Omega. This is the true standpoint he attained unto, that of the God of the House of God. This was true restoration, and the God of Jacob could never have rest and be satisfied until Jacob His elect reaches there and be called by the new name Israel (Gen 35:10).

Wherefore beloved readers, let us review our life and take the necessary steps as we step into the year 2008. Whatever might have drawn us away from the measure of our first and earliest dedication to Him, let our hearts now spring up and get back at once to Him. Let us not hesitate or linger, but cast ourselves at His feet, Who hath loved us with a steadfast everlasting love. Let our hearts be only for Him. If Christ has not the love of our heart, He does not want the labour of our hands. He says from the beginning of the year, "My son, give me thine heart" (Prov. 23:26). Where the heart is given to Jesus all will come right. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Thus our works, ways and walk and hence the character will be to His satisfaction and joy, and we shall be a blessing to our families, fellowship, fellow-servants and above all His Church, from the beginning of the year.

The saints and fellow-servants at El-Shaddai, Kalimpong, would have us to thank and praise the Lord for prayers answered in connection with the Holy Convocation held in their midst from 15th to 23rd December. The Lord supplied every need, temporal and spiritual. About 4000 participated in the Convocation, mainly from Darjeeling District besides Nepal, Sikkim, Nagaland etc. A good number came from Andhra Pradesh as well as from North India, God's servants Bros. Lazar Sen, Theodore Reginald and J.C.Rao were the main messengers speaking on the theme from Acts 1:11 emphasizing the believers to be ready for the imminent return of Jesus our Lord. The Bible Study by Bro. Theodore was a detailed treatise quoting the many references and prophecies about the Lord's Second Coming - expositional, devotional and practical.

Bro. Sam Williams, whose father, God's servant late Bro. A. Williams, labored in Kalimpong and Darjeeling with late Bro. Jordan Khan as early as six decades ago, also shared in the ministry of the Word. During the family prayers we shared from the five chapters of 1 st Thessalonians. The Gospel procession on the 21st morning was an inspiring event. Sisters' gatherings and youth meetings were held in the afternoons. About 40 brothers and sisters testified in baptism. The church as a whole covets our prayers for the follow up work for the many who decided for salvation and restoration.

Praying that we all be moved by His Holy Spirit to look for the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ in purity, unity and brotherly charity,

Titus 2:12-14, 1 Thess. 5:23,24 , Heb. 10:37,38
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

STEPS TO PERFECTION

BAKHT SINGH

Scripture Portion: "Be ye perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

"Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

From the verses quoted above, we can understand the high standard the Lord has appointed for us whom He has saved and called. Not only has He said, "Be ye perfect", but He has also made every provision for our spiritual growth so that we may attain unto His standard of perfection. On our part we should have the desire to reach that perfection, and then the Lord undertakes to lead us into it.

We find in John's Gospel chapters 11 to 17 that as the Lord was drawing nearer to His death upon the cross He began to reveal the secret of the eight steps we have to take toward divine perfection.

1. LIFE:

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). This is the first step, the beginning of the path to perfection. Unless we have received the life of the Lord Jesus Christ we cannot proceed one inch forward. We might have Bible knowledge, and lead a religious life, but unless we have the experience of the life of Christ coming into us, there is no hope for us. In other words we must first be born again. But then we should not stop there either. Now we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour and that He died for our sins. But we should also know by daily experience that He is our life. God's Word says, "Christ is our life" (Col. 3:4).

In John 4:14, this new life which we receive from the Lord is compared to a spring of water. It meets our own personal need. If we had a spring or a well in our home, we would have enough water for all our needs, and perhaps even for some neighbors. In the same way, whatever our need may be, the Lord will meet it through the new life. He will give full satisfaction in every way as we learn to appropriate His life.

Then in John 7:38 this life is likened to "rivers". A river flows for many miles giving fertility to the earth bringing joy and blessing to thousands of people. First the life flows into us, then it flows out of us. People will come to us for comfort, help and advice. We will be able to satisfy the spiritual thirst of many. This life will be poured out of us in many streams of water. It is a mystery and a wonder how the life in us becomes many rivers flowing in every direction. The life in you will flow out even to distant places like China, Africa, Europe and America. Places you may not reach personally, you will reach by prayer. Your circle will be widened day by day. That is why the Lord Jesus said that He came to give abundant life.

When you have received this life as a gift from God that is the first step towards perfection.

2.THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION:

Martha had great faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord came to her house four days after her brother Lazarus had died, she said to Him, "I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee" (John 11:22). But when the Lord said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.... Believest thou this?" (verses 25,26), she avoided a direct answer and replied, "Yea Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ." She could not understand what the Lord meant. In the same way, we also may speak about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet not know its meaning. It is for my sake and your sake that He died and rose again. We understand the first part; we can say, "Yes, He died for me". But when it comes to the next part, that Christ also rose again for us, that is to live in us and to work through us and to transform us completely, we fail to understand it.

In Philippians 3:10, the Apostle Paul said he longed to know Him and the power of His resurrection. He did not want to see more miracles or to be taken up again into the third heaven, but he longed to have a deeper and fuller experience of Christ's resurrection. Then again he prayed in a similar way for the Ephesians that they might know the exceeding greatness of the power which had been given to them in Christ (Eph. 1:19). It is by this same resurrection power that the Lord Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead and highly exalted.

By faith we can appropriate this power every day. It will help us to overcome all human weaknesses and limitations. By this power we will be given immortal bodies; "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

3. THE WORK OF THE CROSS :

"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 prophesies here concerning His own death upon the cross. Many people imagine 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.

There are twenty - eight references to "the Lamb" in the Book of Revelation, each of which speaks of some different aspect of the cross. What a mighty power God has manifested to us!(To be contd.)

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. 46

January 20, 2008

NO 2

GOD IS LOVE

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8)

God is love:-

These words are well-known to people all over India; however, very few know that they are taken from the Bible verse quoted above. It is commonly acknowledged that these words are true.

Firstly, we know God is love because He has so lovingly provided in this world everything that man needs for his comfort and enjoyment. Food, clothes, iron, coal, electricity, radio waves, electrons, protons, all go to make this wonderful world a fine place for man to live. This is all the provision of a God of love.

Secondly, the God Who put in the hen's heart love for its chicks, and in the mother's heart love for her child - such a deep and self - sacrificing love - must surely be a God of love Himself. Once a fire broke out in a house. After it was put out people went in to see it. In one corner they found a hen with wings spread out. It was dead. When they moved it they found live chickens coming out from under its wings. Evidently the mother hen had protected its little ones from the fire and had been burnt or suffocated to death herself.

The Greatest Love :-

We could find many other reasons to say that God is love. Finally, we come to the greatest reason of all. Two thousand years ago God became man and dwelt upon this earth. For thirty years He was an unnoticed and unknown Man, a carpenter's son in Nazareth of Galilee. The remarkable thing about Him was that He was a sinless Man - a phenomenon that this world has never, never seen either before Him or after. When He was thirty years old He began His ministry of preaching, healing the sick, and doing good. Thus He went about all over the country for three years and a half and manifested the glory of God through the human body in which He dwelt. Then He died for us upon the cross. It was a shameful death in the midst of two thieves. Before crucifying Him wicked men put a crown of thorns upon His head, spat upon His face, mocked Him and nailed His hands and feet to a wooden cross. How His holy blood must have flowed from His head, hands and feet and bruised body! How His bleeding body must have quivered when the cross was lifted upright and placed with a thud in a hole upon the hill called Calvary! How great must have been His suffering when the sun became dark for three hours and the sins of all mankind were laid upon Him! He went the way of the cross because it was His eternal plan to die as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. He suffered and died for you and me, so that we might be forgiven. As the prophet Isaiah said 700 years before Christ, "...he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we

are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth"(Isaiah 53:5-7). (Isaiah lived during the reign of Shalmaneser IV, King of Assyria, 734 B.C.).

Undeserved Love :-

It will melt the hardest heart to know that none of us deserves to receive such a love. We have been ungrateful to God. We have disobeyed and grieved Him. We have neglected and forgotten Him. Sometimes we have even dishonored and defied Him. Yet He loves us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

We Love Him:-

As soon as you believe from your heart the story of God's love and how Christ died for you, you will also begin to love Him. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). There is redeeming power in that love. When you love God and His Son Jesus Christ, you will be set free from the power of sin. You will begin to love righteousness and hate sin. There is transforming power in that love. You will be changed. You will become a new man. Old habits like drinking, smoking, debauchery and gambling will disappear. A quarrelsome man will become a loving man. A filthy man will become a holy man.

Do you believe that wonderful love? Do you believe that God loved you so much that He left His throne of glory and came into the world to die for you on the cross? Will you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and invite Him into your heart today? God is love, and He is knocking at the door of your heart to give you His great salvation.

If you Reject:-

A prodigal son may reject the love of his parents and run away from home and go through much suffering in the world. However, in some rare cases such a son may prosper. But if you reject the love of God there is no hope for you. You will die in sin. Then your soul will still exist. You will remember your past, but you will be far away from God and your misery will be indescribable. You will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. There, neither will you die nor will the fire be quenched.

God did not create you to go to such a horrible place. He created you to be His child. But He has given you free will. Repent of your sins today and accept the love of God in Christ. God is love and He will bless you.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron Golconda Crossroads Hyderabad – 500020, A.P., India Telephone No:
27613066,
Date :13-1-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prevailing Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost", hath shed forth the same into our

hearts, even the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Peter quoted the above passage on the day of Pentecost, as well as referred to the prophecy of Joel, concerning the outpouring of the Holy Ghost as the promised outcome of the ascension and exaltation of Jesus, Who was crucified. The Holy Spirit thus brought home to the devout men of the Jewish nation, their guilt of having rejected and crucified this Jesus of Nazareth, "a man approved of God" and sent of God to bring them into His Kingdom. To their question to Peter and the Apostles, "What shall we do?", the answer was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). This they did and "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers". The Apostles were commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins beginning at Jerusalem to which they faithfully adhered, empowered by the Holy Spirit sent from above, and thus the Church was born on the day of Pentecost, according to the predetermined program of God. And it is said, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:16, 17; 22; 33; 36, 37; Luke 24:46,47; Acts 2:47).

Nowadays we tend to look back to the day of the coming of the Holy Spirit, as the day of Pentecost. There is of course a true meaning of significance of that first coming of the Spirit of God. This we need to understand, but we also need to recognize His presence here today, as we are living in a day of great need, and in many hearts there is the growing concern of the enjoyment of His presence in purity and power. Among the people of God there is so much searching of heart as to why there is so little impact, so little evidence of the seal and strength of the third Person of the Trinity, in the service of the Gospel and the upbuilding of His Church, according to His Eternal purpose. Many individual Christians are conscious of a lack in their lives, which they feel only the Lord can fill. And the result of this sense of need is a searching round for something, as we know that there is always something ready to fill a vacuum. In this way many are involved in something less than the reality which God intends for His people. There is a great need for us to apprehend, both personally and together, what it really means that the Spirit of God came. The fact that the Spirit of God is here in His people means, that it is of not little, but of great significance.

We all agree that when the Spirit of God came on the day of Pentecost, there was no doubt that something happened, imparting life and liberty to the repentant, tradition-bound Jew under the Mosaic system of the Law. There was nothing weak about it. It was a tremendous thing and tremendous things continued to happen, for that is how it is when God is present. By that we do not mean that there are outward and visible wonders, although there is always something mighty and wonderful about anything that has God in it. While His presence is sometimes quiet and unsuspected, it is not less potent or powerful for that.

We should also be open to a word of caution in this connection. In seeking to understand the real meaning of the Spirit's coming, we need to be careful about the terms we use. It is easy to talk about the "fullness of the Holy Spirit" or of "the power of the Holy Spirit", or of "His blessings and of His gifts". All these are attractive and sound like the thing we want. Sometimes we come across people who are seeking what they call "the baptism of the Holy Spirit", as they have been met and questioned by other people with certain kind of experience. Being influenced by their talk about it, this new group feels that this

is something wonderful, something to be sought after. Then there are others earnestly praying for a revival. Not that there is anything wrong about it. We all do long for a great reviving. But unless we have God's mind about this, we shall go astray. Either we will be content with something less, or we will become involved in something that is contrary to what God really intends. So I believe that the Lord wants to instruct our hearts as to the principles that govern the whole matter.

First of all, let us consider Pentecost as a long awaited climax. Out of it we may learn the real meaning and significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Firstly, as we look back to the actual giving or coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, we see that it was a climax and a realization. There had been a long period of waiting from Old Testament times. Indeed the whole history from the beginning had only been preparatory, and it had all been less than realization. The Old Testament record from the very beginning tells of an unsatisfactory and inconclusive process, thereby continually pointing to a future realization. We find that even the Patriarchs were always moving towards a goal, to which however they never really came. Generation after generation passed away. Then we come to the history of God's earthly people with its tragedies as well as its brief glories, and finally to the prophets with great heart cry which was never satisfied. And so the Old Testament finishes with the note of unrealized hope, and a great deal of disappointment. Now the beginning of the answer was of course the presence here of the Son of God Himself. And yet, we need to remember that even His life, His mighty ministry, His death upon the cross, His resurrection and His ascension, still looked for completion. When He had finished His work, and returned to Heaven, that by itself has not carried us any further. God helping, we will continue in our next issue.

As we have entered into the New Year, after the Watchnight and New Year gatherings in the five hundred or more assemblies in the land, we need to pray for the Word ministered on those special occasions, that the Lord may fulfill His promise in Isaiah 55:11-13 and accomplish that which He pleases, that the people who received it may go forth with joy into the days ahead, and instead of the thorn and brier of the old creation, something new may be formed in their experience, to their satisfaction and joy, and for the glory of the Lord's Name.

Sis. (Mrs.) Sumanben, wife of late Bro.Champaklal Bhatt, servant of God who labored for the Lord for many years in Mumbai, was promoted to Glory on 6th January after being confined to bed for several months. She labored for the Lord's House and the extension of His Kingdom along with her husband. Now she rests from her labors as we read in Rev. 14:13. The funeral took place on 7th January when Bro. John Stewart with others shared in the ministry of the Word. Please pray for the comfort of all her children.

Praying that a new work of the Holy Spirit be wrought in us in identification with the cross of the Lord Jesus, that our life, walk and work may contribute to the exaltation of His Son and upbuilding of the Church which is His Body,

Isa. 43: 1,2,19, 2Cor. 3:17,18, Zech. 4: 6
I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

STEPS TO PERFECTION - 2 **BAKHT SINGH**

In John chapters 10 to 17 the Lord revealed eight steps to perfection. As we saw in our last issue, the first one is life, eternal life; the second one is the power of His resurrection, and the third one is the work of the cross.

There are twenty - eight references to "the Lamb" in the Book of Revelation, each of which speaks of some different aspect of the cross. What a mighty power God has manifested to us. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (v.25). As the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ works in us more and more deeply we will be drawn towards perfection.

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 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 dealings, and influenced by worldly wisdom in our activities, and as a result we may bring much loss in the work of the Lord. By the deeper working 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. That 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 converted 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. This is the third step.

4. HUMILITY:

This is the fourth step indicated by the Lord towards perfection. 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; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (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 of 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 yokefellows 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 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 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 children of Israel against the will of God. That is why God brought David twice to the experience of the threshing floor. The Lord through chastisement, threshed David and 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.

' (To be contd.)