

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. XXXIX

July 1, 2001

NO.13

DO YOU WANT TO BE SAVED?

The Lord Jesus Christ put this question (or its exact equivalent) to a very needy man whom He encountered at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (John 5:6). In that case, the issue was one of physical healing, but the same question comes to all of us regarding our spiritual condition. *Do we want to experience the miracle of God's salvation?*

The marvel of the Christian Gospel is that it offers free and full salvation to all men. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, our sins can be forgiven (Acts 13:38); our hearts can be cleansed (1 John 1:9); and we can receive, within ourselves, the inestimable gift of everlasting life (John 3:16). In other words, we can be saved; -recovered into a condition of full spiritual "healthiness" in the sight of God. The question that remains is, however.. "Do we want it?"

We believe that the incident at the Pool of Bethesda has very much to teach us regarding this whole matter, and we would set it out as follows:

I. THE TREMENDOUS NEED OF THIS SALVATION

We are told that, at the Pool of Bethesda, there was "a *great multitude of impotent folk*" (John 5:3). We would suggest that that is a perfect description of present-day humanity *as God sees it*. We may make our proud claims of scientific knowledge and cultural advancement, but God looks *behind all this*; and judges everything on a spiritual and moral basis. In His eyes, we are, indeed, "a great multitude of important folk", and even a casual reading of our newspapers proves that He is right!

The verse that we have mentioned (John 5:3), goes on to specify some of the *particular* needs that were represented at the Pool. Some, we are told, were "*blind*", reminding us immediately of Paul's word to the Corinthians about Satan "*blinding the minds* of them that believe *now*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of

'Christ...should shine into them" (2 Cor. 4:4; -see also John 12:40; 2 Cor. 3:14).

Others at the Pool were "lame", and we have to admit that our present humanity is a very "*lame*" humanity when it comes to spiritual and moral issues. Even the best of us can scarcely hobble, and we find that life is, indeed an "up and down existence". This, too, is borne out in Scripture (see Eph. 2:2 etc.). Yes we are a *lame* humanity.

Most significant of all, we read that others at the Pool were "*withered*", or "shrunk", and this reminds us of how very "small" men have become through Adam's fall. When we *could* have known the *largeness* of a true friendship" with God (see Exo.33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23 etc.), and a positive partnership with Him in the executing of His great eternal purposes (see Eph. 1:9, 10; 3:10,11; Heb.3:1,14; also Lam. 5:16), we find ourselves taken up with what Paul calls "the weak and beggarly elements" of this poor passing world (Gal.4:9).

Yes, indeed, the scene at that Pool, clearly depicts our present humanity. *And yet it is to that humanity that the word of Christ goes forth, "wilt thou be made whole?"*

We now consider

II. THE ESTABLISHED GROUND (BASIS) OF THIS SALVATION

This is beautifully represented for us in the name of the place where the miracle was performed; -"The "Pool of BETHESDA". The word "Bethesda" means "House of Mercy", and we should ever be thankful that the Great God Who stands behind everything is a God of Mercy. The Bible tells us that He is "rich in mercy" (Eph.2:4), and that His "mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136). We are told, too, that His mercy is, in fact, His glory (See Exo.33:18 and 34:6)!

That mercy is what we all need, and many are those who have come to sing with the great John Wesley

**"TIS MERCY ALL, IMMENSE and FREE,
FOR O MY GOD, IT FOUND OUT ME"**

We are told, too, that there were 5 *porches* at Bethesda (v .2). Five, in Scripture, always stands for "grace", - and it is by grace alone that sinners favour", and that is what we all need, for we can contribute nothing to our soul's salvation. It is all a totally undeserved gift from the hands of a "gracious" God. And that, we believe, is why proud men are so slow to embrace God's offer: -it is far too humbling for them.

But, sooner or later, if we want salvation, we *all* have to say,

**"NOTHING IN MY HAND I BRING SIMPLY
TO THY CROSS I CLING"**

And we have to say it from the heart! The glorious fact is that CHRIST HAS DONE EVERYTHING FOR US.

At Calvary, He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30). That is the ground that we all must take; the pure Grace of God, and *the finished work of Christ at Calvary*. It is "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). That is the "ground" of salvation, -Christ's finished work.

In conclusion, we shall see what our story has to teach us concerning

**III. THE SIMPLE CONDITION ON WHICH
GOD SAVES US**

Here we shall be considering what it is that God requires *from our side* if we are to personally experience His salvation. The answer, in a word, is FAITH; -pure simple faith.

We note that the man had already given a very positive and convincing answer to the question about *wanting* to be healed (see v. 7). *He certainly wanted it*, but could not find anyone who would help him. It is at that point, that he was confronted with what was *in its essence*, a clear and powerful word of promise, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk", To us it reads like a command, and, in one sense, it is that, but in its inmost essence, it is, as we said, *a glorious word of promise*, "Rise and walk".

Those words would have brought anew " hope into a hitherto hopeless heart, and quickly that hope turned to TRUST. The Saviour saw that *trust*, and so we read, in the very next verse, "immediately the man was made whole" (v.9). What a glorious transformation, what unimaginable newness, and all in a moment of simple *trust*. God's saving and renewing power surged into the heart and body of this hitherto helpless

man. God had worked, and now the man could, as it says, "take up his bed and walk", -something he had not done, probably, for 38 years! Glory be to God!

We pause here to note that, while *faith* is God's invariable condition for saving us, *there is absolutely no merit in the faith itself*, -all the merit is in the One believed. In that way, God's plan of salvation is a perfect plan, and no ground at all is left for any "flesh" to glory in His presence (1 Cor .1: 29). "FOR BY GRACE ARE YE SA VED THROUGH FAITH; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD; NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST" (Eph.2: 8,9), and that salvation is for us today. Hallelujah!

C.R.G.

LETTER Hebron,
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15-6-2001

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the matchless and mighty Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who loved the Church and gave Himself for it- "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood". As the Exalted Head of His Church, He hath given His gifts to the Church, for the perfecting of the saints... for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, ...unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". Speaking the truth in love, and according to the measure of the gift of grace given to everyone of us, we may be found effectual joints of supply for the increase of this Body unto the edifying of itself in love (Eph.5:25; Acts 20:28; Eph.4:11-13,15,16).

When gifted men are faithful in prayer and the ministry of the Word, saints will be properly equipped and rightly motivated to do the work of God. From the saints who are thus equipped, God raises up every other kind of workers needed for the ministry to the Church, even pastors and teachers, all needed for the Church to be productive and fruitful.

Spiritual service is the work of every believer; every saint of God, thus equipped by the ministry of gifted men, the Head of the Church has given. "Speaking the truth in love" -serving one another by love (Eph.4: 15; Gal.5: 13) - thus edifying itself in love. Thus all service to build up the Body has its source and spring in the love of God

shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom.5: 5), the love that enables us to love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and serve Him in godly simplicity. Seeking His Kingdom first and foremost, we are constrained by the love of Christ, not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who died for us and rose again. Then only our labours are the byproduct of His love and would count for eternity. In contrast the Lord had to say to the Ephesian church, "I know...thy labour...for my name's sake hast laboured...Nevertheless... thou hast left thy first love" (Rev.2: 2-4).

The risen Lord manifested Himself to His disillusioned and discouraged disciples on the shore of the sea of Tiberius, preparing a breakfast to satisfy their hunger, thus ministering to their immediate need, as we read in John 21. Before He sought to set before them His vast world-wide programme and concern for His sheep, He challenged them-demanding an answer from them, especially from Simon, to the thrice-repeated question- "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? -Feed my lambs; Feed my sheep; My sheep". The risen Saviour dealing with Simon assumed the position of a shepherd. He had laid down His life for them, and He wanted them to be shepherded, and led on to the predestined ultimate goal, He had in view through the redemption He accomplished for them on the Cross. His thinking of the shepherd role can be interpreted by the statement in Matt.9:36, and Isa.53:6. "All we like sheep have gone astray; ...and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all". He saw the multitudes as distressed and scattered, as sheep having no shepherd and was moved with compassion. He was standing on the lake side and looking out upon humanity the world over, through all the running decades, centuries and millenniums. Of them He said, "My, Mine" which speaks of His Saviourhood and Sovereignty.

From that standpoint He was dealing with Simon. The qualification for feeding lambs and the sheep is then revealed by His question to Simon, "Simon, are you devoted to Me?". It is the unconditional, genuine and sincere love for the Lord, flooding one's heart by the Holy Spirit. But let us not forget that the love He seeks is at the same time the love of absolute devotion. Having thus spoken in terms of His worldwide programme, He gave Simon his personal programme. He said when he was young he went his own way, self-willed and independent, able to manage his own affairs. But when he

was old he would be a very different man, neither self-seeking, self-centered nor self-satisfied; He would be taken where naturally he would not like to go. In contrast to what he used to be, the cross would henceforth be the principle of his life, by which he would fulfill his apostleship to the Glory of God.

Peter after nearly thirty years of following the Master writes in 1 Pet.5: 1-3, "The elders which are among you I exhort, ...a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, ...willingly; ...being ensamples to the flock. "He who had said to Jesus concerning the sufferings of the Cross, "be it far from thee", now in love and total devotion to Him embraces the sufferings of the Cross, to become His willing and exemplary shepherd, rather under-shepherd, serving and looking for the appearance of the Chief Shepherd. The Lord desires that we should become mature spiritually in our following Him, In the way of the Cross. Thus we will be freed from self-will and self-pleasing to do His pleasure, nourishing and feeding and leading His lambs and sheep in His foreordained paths and provisions to share His coming Glory. The Lord help us all.

The Special meetings at Nellore from 6th to 10th June drew an average of 1500, gathering in a school compound under shamianas, with facilities for accommodation of those who came from far and near. Bro.Paul Sudhakar ministered in the morning Bible classes on the above theme, besides in the Gospel meetings in the evenings and about a hundred came forward for prayer for salvation, besides the many who recommitted, their lives to love and serve the Lord in true love; and separation unto Himself. The procession and the sisters and Youth gatherings were all profitable and encouraging. The Lord wonderfully intervened although there was a downpour of rain on two occasions. Bro.Eddy Williams and our fellow servants from various assemblies shared the Word from 1 Peter for family prayers and others for the afternoon youth gatherings. Sisters from Hebron helped in the children's ministry and others for the sisters gatherings. The singers and musicians all contributed in making melody unto the Lord and glorify His Name in the words of new songs based on our love for Him. The brethren and saints of the assemblies of Shalem, Carmel and Zion, besides others from Kavali and other places are thankful for the Lord's gracious working for these

gatherings, providing amply for their spiritual and temporal needs in answer to your prayers.

Kindly pray for our fellow-servants and their families as some amongst them are moving to new assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, that the Lord maybe pleased to use them all in a new way for the establishing and the edification of local churches. Also pray they may receive every help for their families and for school admissions and education of their children.

Praying that we all be enabled to love the Lord in sincerity and truth, that speaks of true devotion to His Person, to serve Him acceptably, unto His appearing,

Heb. 12: 28

1 Cor. 15: 10

John 12: 24-26

I remain,

yours in His grace

K. PHILLIP

PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS

BAKHT SINGH

God had called Jacob Israel, a prince, after twenty years, judging by his behavior he had been only a beggar. So God was speaking to him once again asking him to live like a prince and not as a 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 I will bring kings 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.

The Lord said to Jacob, "I am God Almighty be fruitful and multiply". When you also become prince you will know God's power in your life. You will not be a coward any more.

We read in Deut.32: 9, "Jacob is the is His inheritance". In other words, God was say "Jacob, you belong to Me forever. 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 saints" (Eph.1: 18).

Then we read, "He...led him about 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; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple his eye"(Zech.2:8).

In Deut.32: 11 we read, "As an eagle stir up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them her wings:" The mother eagle usually builds nest on a high place, such as the side of a high When her young ones are grown she break up her nest so that they may learn to fly. As the little ones fall from the nest they might think that mother is very cruel. But as they fall, the mother eagle comes underneath them and bears them on her wings, and then drops them again. In this way she teaches them to fly. Similarly, the Lord may stir you out of your nest also, because He wants you to learn to fly Of) 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. (Concluded)

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. XXXIX

July 15, 2001

NO. 14

HAVE YOU BEEN CONVERTED?

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

The above words, spoken from the lips of Christ Himself, are indeed solemn, and they need to be pondered by all who would have any part in God's Kingdom. Whoever we are, Christians or otherwise, conversion is essential.

We shall now seek to show what our Saviour actually meant when He spoke of "conversion", and also how each one of us may have that necessary experience..

Quite clearly referring here to what is often referred to as a "change of religion". That is plain from the wording of the statement itself; where the Lord goes on to speak of "becoming as little children". That, certainly, is not just an official thing, but also something personal and profound, and suggesting a total change of character. It is a matter of the proud and the strong and the self-sufficient becoming meek and humble and beautifully "trusting". That is the kind of "conversion" Christ was speaking of, -a total inward renewal.

One of the clearest examples of conversion in the Bible is that of the dying thief. We are told that when Christ was crucified there were two thieves crucified with Him, "one on the right hand, and the other on the left" (See Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33). Full details are given, but the end - result was that *one* of the thieves was converted and the other was *not!* We propose, then, to examine what it was, precisely, that led up to this conversion, for, in principle, it was typical of every true and real conversion, -such as all of us need to know.

In our story, of course, we are dealing with a man who had probably spent most of his life disregarding the laws of God, -not least the eighth commandment, -"Thou shalt not

steal"(Exod. 20:15). The law of the land had finally caught up with him, and now we see him paying the ultimate price for his crimes. He is already engulfed in the jaws of judgment, and it seems there is no hope for him. But then a remarkable takes place. Something has happened which has made this thief refer to Jesus as his "Lord", and to cast Himself on His mercy, with the result that he is immediately assured of a place "with Christ in paradise" (Luke 23:42,43). High drama indeed; - another sinner converted to the Lord!

As the Lord may help us, we propose to show how three clear steps to this conversion. For the present, however, we shall concentrate on the first of these; -perhaps the most important, namely:

HE CAME TO SEE WHO JESUS WAS

We note that he did *not* see this at first, but, thank God, he *came* to see it, and that was the *basic* factor in all that later transpired. The record we have is most illuminating, -specially when we read the report of Matthew alongside that of Luke. It is important to notice that *at the beginning* (as told by Matthew) BOTH the thieves were "casting insults into Christ's teeth" (Matt. 27:44). *Both* were mocking at Christ's deity (v.40), and both were ridiculing the very idea of His Kingship (v.42). But later it was different. At the *end* of the story {as told by Luke) we find that one of those thieves is silent, while the other is calling Christ his "Lord" (Luke 23:42) and openly pleading for a place in Christ's Kingdom. From those few words, we learn that God's own light had shined into that awful darkness, and another sinner was being converted, -"brought from darkness to light and from the power of Satan! unto God" (Acts 26:18). God Himself has shined in and given "the light of the knowledge of His glory", -and

all "in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.4:6). The same miracle which was later to take place with Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus is now taking place on the hill of Calvary, as one of those two thieves suddenly realizes that that Cross beside him is not carrying some deranged imposter after all, but is lifting up to heaven "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1Tim.6:15).

Some have asked what it was that brought about this complete change of attitude. Perhaps we should simply answer that it was just God's mercy. But there were other factors, which we should remember. Doubtless the thief had been watching Christ, and he would have heard the amazing words that were issuing from Christ's lips, including the prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke23:34). Here, he would have realized, was a death different from all other deaths; -an innocent victim of crucifixion beseeching God's mercy on the very ones that : were responsible for the crime. Here was a Life being willingly "laid down", and "no man taking it from Him" (John 10: 17, 18). We can only suggest-that the seeing of that sight, and the hearing of those words, opened the poor man's eyes, and compelled him to call out to Christ as "LORD". Even in that dark hour he had come to see who Jesus was. And that, we say again, is the very foundation of every true and genuine conversion.

In our next message we shall try to point out the two remaining factors in this conversion. But we urge you not to wait for that; -it could easily be too late. You need to be converted *now*, -and you may be. Perhaps what we have written has already helped you to see who Jesus is; -the Great Son of God and the Great King of Glory. If that is so, come personally to Him right now. Humbly repent of your sins and put your trust in Christ. He loves *you* also and died for *your sins* and rose again. You can be converted today, and you, too, will be with Christ in paradise.

(To be contd.)

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2-7-2001

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ, All glory and honour, praise and power be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Saviour, Shepherd and our coming King Who hath enabled us all in His goodness and mercy to enter into the latter half of the year, with His precious promises based upon His priestly intercession on our behalf, at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Hence our faith need not fail, but strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, we may pursue our high and heavenly calling in His Son, to the praise of the glory of His grace. (2 Cor.1 :2,4,20; Heb.7:25; Eph.3:16).

The Lord enabled us-to have a day of prayer with our fellow-Workers in the South, followed by two days gatherings at Tuticorin. About twenty were baptized in Place of gathering in the seashore. About fifty or more who had not had the opportunity to participate in the Testimony of the laying on of hands, after their baptism many months ago, came forward to express their oneness In the Body of Christ; Under its Exalted Head, our Lord Jesus Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, or divided by other differences of culture, caste or community, as it exists even today under the first Adam. Hence, this Testimony mentioned in connection with the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, as in Hebrews 6:1, 2 is of value as we desire to go on unto perfection and fulness in Christ. It has to be lived out in day to day life in the fellowship of the local church where the Lord hath put us. Otherwise, it remains a doctrine without practice and hence cannot contribute to the increase of Christ in us.

Please pray for the saints who gather in a small rented house, near Beach Road, Tuticorin with Bro.M.Paul as the Lord's servant to stay with family ministering amongst them. The name of the Prayer House is Rehoboth, as we read in Genesis 26:22, in connection with Isaac, the well-digger sojourning in the land of the Philistines (v .3), being directed of the Lord, inspite of the famine condition she sowed in the land and received hundredfold. He became fruitful in the land, as the name Rehoboth

reminds, "...now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land" (Gen.26:22).

It would be profitable and instructive for us to consider the period of Isaac's dwelling in Gerar, actively engaged in digging wells and sowing in the land, in spite of the opposition and envy of the Philistines. The Lord would have encouraged him to hold things confidently even in the presence of the Philistines. But it was just at that point he seems to have failed. He denied his relationship with Rebecca (v.7), a kind of thing Abraham had done twice before. He failed to take heed to it as a warning. Eventually he was brought back to the true place, so that the Philistines had to acknowledge that God was with him. It is an instructive chapter for us.

What was lacking in Isaac was what the New Testament calls virtue. Peter says, have in moral courage so that you are able to stand your ground in the face of influence that would divert. Many saints would like to be faithful, would like to follow the Lord. They have desires after Him, but many lack spiritual courage and are ashamed of the Testimony of the Lord. They dread to be despised, dread the Cross, are ashamed of the Apostles' chain (2 Tim.1: 8).

Philistines represent nominal, unconverted Christians, people who are in the place of Christian profession, but have not been affected by divine teaching. True Christians fall under their influence, become ashamed of the Testimony, and lose their source of spiritual refreshing wells. Isaac was ashamed through selfish fear. The moment I begin to think of myself, and how things will affect me, I am on the line of those who seek their own things and not the things of Jesus Christ. Isaac conjured up these fears; although there was no real ground for them. We create a lot of fears for ourselves, when there is no need. Fears often rob us of the privilege of proving that God is with us.

Philistine influence is to make the saints to set their minds on the earth. The earth has got into the well of the water of life the Lord hath put in us. Philistine element comes in and the water is not springing up, in praise, prayer and worship. So the Philistine is a spiritual enemy robbing us of the spirit of worship the Father seeks from us. Secondly, David moved the ark in a Philistine cart forgetting the Scripture that it should be borne on the

shoulders of the Levites. He was doing God's work in the wisdom of the Philistines. So the Philistine hinders us from being governed by Divine wisdom and ways in the work of God. This means death and no progress as David experienced in the threshing-floor (2 Sam.6:1-8; 1Chron.15:1-3,13). Thus the Philistine influence and its elements hinder the worship in truth and the work of God in the true Scriptural pattern, for His glory. Finally, we read in Judges 16:15-21, that Samson the man of war was brought low by Delilah, used by the Philistines to entice him, and rob him of his spiritual might in warfare. The world puts us to sleep with many comforts and luxuries so that the promised presence and power of the Lord depart from us, without our knowledge. We may carry on the work and warfare of the LORD as at other times, but we fail to withstand the enemy, because we ourselves are not strong in the Lord, though outwardly called in the Armour for spiritual warfare (Eph.6:10, 11). We read in Judges that the Philistines were one of the nations left in the land to "teach them war" (Jud.3:2). The Lord help us in this warfare in this age against the rulers of darkness of the world, so that wells of refreshment may spring up for His people, as well as supply of food by Spiritual revival, and renewal of our hearts. Only after the matter of relationship with Rebecca was settled, Isaac sowed and the Lord gave hundredfold. We need to examine our lives, as to where we are tempted to deny our divinely established relationship, in the family, fellowship of the church and in the ministry of His House, and put things right to the pleasure of the Lord.

Pray for the ministry fulfilled at the servants' gatherings of Telangana area held at Hebron on 19th and 20th June, when Bro. Habakkuk, Bro. David of Malakpet and others shared the Word.

Bro. T.E.Koshy and saints of the International Assembly, 4274, Lafayette Road, Jamesville, NY, 13078, covet our earnest prayers, for the 19th North America Holy Convocation, to be held at the Le Moyne College, Syracuse, New York., God willing from July 18th to 22nd. Pray that the Lord may plan and provide all things, according to His riches in glory connected with the spiritual and temporal needs and aspects of this Convocation. Let us pray that His anointed and appointed ministers

be made available for the ministry of the Word, throughout the period.

Continue to pray for Bro.Lazar Sen as he has already reached U. S.A. Pray also for the many weeks of helpful ministry he could render in various parts of Nepal before leaving for U.S.A.

Pray for the saints and brethren in the church at Jehovah-Shammah, Chennai, as they, in the mercy of God, complete 60 years of this Testimony there, which began through the instrumentality of beloved Bro.Bakht Singh and co-workers, staying and ministering in this compound, -from July 12th 1941. Pray also for the Special gatherings at Jehovah -Shammah God willing from that day till 15th July with Bro.Neville and others ministering the Word.

The following is a brief report prepared by Bro.T.E.Koshy on our beloved Brother Karl Frei of Winterthur, Who was promoted to Glory on Sunday the 1st of July 2001.

"It is with great sadness we report the Home call of our beloved Brother Karl Frei of Winterthur at 4 a.m. on July 1st, 2001, Swiss time at his home in Winterthur. His passing away is a great loss to all those who have known him and worked-with him in the service of the Lord over the years. He was a faithful servant of the Lord, who served Him tirelessly in the light of the Word of God in obedience to His will. He was 87. Indeed like Apostle Paul he fought a good fight, finished his course and kept his faith till the end. He came in contact with Bro. Bakht Singh during the time he went to Bangalore to work at HMT (Watch Company) on deputation from Switzerland for three years in the year 1954. During those years he worshipped the Lord with the saints at the House of Worship, Cubbon Road, Bangalore. The Lord indeed used his association with Bro.Bakht Singh over the years. After he and his family went back to Switzerland he continued his fellowship with Bro.Bakht Singh and the saints in India. Whenever Bro.Bakht Singh visited Switzerland or Europe he was always there travelling with him and assisting him in any way he could, in order to share the vision of the

Church. He translated many of Bro.Bakht Singh's books into German as well as he translated and distributed Hebron Messenger to those in Europe who were interested in receiving it. Then during my visit to Europe, he always organized meetings and traveled with me and Bro. Werner Tietze from place to place as a faithful co-worker in the Lord. The Lord used His servant to touch many lives. Just like Abel though he is dead he continues to speak by his life of humility, obedience and whole-hearted commitment unto the Lord and to the vision of the Church. Please continue to pray for his dear widow and his children and their families that the Lord may continue to comfort them.

"The following is a report he wrote to me about his contact with us and with Bro.Bakht Singh In '50s in Bangalore. 'In Bangalore I got in contact with the saints who used to fellowship at Cubbon Road, 21 Bangalore. I met Bro.Bakht Singh some time later when he came again to Bangalore I, with joy learned from the saints there and also from Bro.Bakht Singh that they too are independent of any denomination. What from the beginning impressed me most, was a time of pure worship before the Lord's Table which is maintained every Lord's day as a testimony commenced by the Lord. And also that every believer brought his Bible to the meetings and they were earnestly advised to read Scripture portions during the ministry of the Word. To get them well grounded in the Scriptures and " thus with the Biblical principle for personal life of faith and for the Church after the New Testament pattern. The same warmth of fellowship I observed in all the assemblies I had the joy to visit' ".

Praying that the Lord by His Spirit, may deliver us from all the injurious influence of that which pertains to the Philistines around us, and refresh and renew us for His worship, work and warfare, for the upbuilding of His holy Church, His Body,

Gal. 1: 4

I remain,

Col. 1: 12, 13

Yours in His grace

Acts 3: 8, 19

K.PHILLIP

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. XXXIX

July 29, 2001

NO.15

HAVE YOU BEEN CONVERTED? - 2

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

In our last message we spoke of the essentiality of conversion if we are to enter the Kingdom of heaven, and we began to look at the conversion of the dying thief, - typical, we said, of all true and genuine conversions of the kind to which Christ was referring. We mentioned that there were three clear steps in that conversion, but we only dealt with the first of these, - Namely that the thief CAME TO SEE WHO JESUS WAS, - the Blessed Son of God and the Glorious King of kings. That, we said, is where all true conversion begins; - we come to see Who Jesus is. Now follows the second step, - equally essential to true conversion, and vividly illustrated in our story.

HE CAME TO SEE WHO HE HIMSELF WAS, - and what he was.

This, we would say, was equally a miracle, but not unrelated to the first, and, in fact, a consequence of it. Luke's record shows us that, toward the end of the crucifixion scene, the thief we are considering called out to the thief on the other side (who was still continuing with his blasphemies against Christ) and said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds"(Luke 23:40,41). We emphasise those closing words, where, evidently including himself, he spoke of their common guilt; "we are dying justly". Here, obviously, is a personal admission of sinnership, - another vital step in his conversion. Probably, until that point, he had always protested his own innocence, - but now it is different, - he admits that he is dying justly, and fully deserving of all that has come to him. He is finally taking sides with the law, and against himself. In the Light of Christ, he has also seen himself, - another miracle. The Bible says, "in thy light shall we see light"(Psa.36: 9), and it is a fact that, once we begin to see the glory of God's Son, we begin to see, as well, the depravity of our own hearts. People who go on insisting on their own "righteousness" are only advertising how blind they are. Certainly they have not "seen" Christ! We recall that when the prophet Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, ...for mine eyes have seen the King" (Isa.6: 1-5). Thank God, there was an immediate cleansing waiting for him (vs.6, 7), and so there is for us.

We say again that this principle of "seeing who we are" is basic to every true conversion. The Bible says, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3: 23), and we read, too, "There is none righteous, no, not one"(Rom.3: 10). Thank God, the dying thief finally "saw" it, and once he openly confessed it, he stood at the very threshold of heaven. Well has it been said that "If we justify ourselves, God will condemn us, but if we condemn ourselves, God will justify us". And yet again, "if we will take the sinner's place, we shall find the sinner's pardon", - and all, we would add, through the atoning blood of Christ.

Some may be inclined to argue, "But I am not a thief". That itself is questionable, but does not the Bible also speak of "robbing God" (Mal.3:8)? We must remember that, by right, each one of us is God's property, both by creation and redemption (Isa.43: 1), and, when we live our lives as if we were our own, and giving little or no thought to our Creator and Redeemer, we are making ourselves robbers of the worst kind! But, thank God, dying thieves can be converted, - and such, indeed, we are. O for grace to see ourselves as God sees us, and to repeat the cry, "We are dying justly". How wonderful it is when any sinner sees his sinnership, and admits, at last, that he fully deserves the condemnation of God's law.

Now we come to the third and final step of the thief's conversion. This was when, out of the depths of his need.

HE CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Having "seen" Who Jesus was, and beginning to see who he himself was, he called out personally to the Saviour for grace and mercy. His actual words were, "Lord, REMEMBER ME when Thou comest Into Thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). This, evidently, is something that the Lord asks for. It is our personal cry of need that brings down His supply of grace. When, on the day of Pentecost, Peter concluded his powerful message on the Person of Christ (His death and resurrection), he declared "And ...whosoever shall CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Paul, too, explaining the gospel in his letter to the Romans, repeats the same promise (Rom.10: 13). This, evidently is God's appointed way, and the secret of true conversion. It is not a matter of "joining a new religion", nor is it some vigorous effort to change our own "life-style". It is not even reading the Bible, or "saying prayers", or, shall we! Say, attending the Christian meetings. That may all come afterwards, but conversion itself come when,

as needy sinners we go personally to the Lord Himself and call on His Name for salvation.

We ask you, then, have you taken that third; and final step? Do you now see that Jesus is, indeed, the Great Son of God and King of kings? Do you now see that you are a sinner, - the sinner for whom He came to die? And will you, at this moment, kneel down before that wonderful and living Saviour, beseeching His mercy and forgiveness? Those three words of the thief, "Lord remember me" would be quite sufficient, - provided they come from the heart. Thank God, the thief did not have to wait long for his answer. The very next verse gives the loving reply of Christ, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Lk.23: 43). Call on Him now, trusting in His Redeeming blood, which was shed for you at Calvary. You, too, will be genuinely converted, and will be "WITH CHRIST IN PARADISE". Do not delay; come NOW!

(Concluded) C.R.G

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20-7-2001

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who loved us and gave Himself for us, even the Son over His own House whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end, as we read in Heb.3: 6. May we be kept sensitive to the voice of God, the Holy Ghost, and be kept from any tendency of an evil heart of unbelief, or the hardening of our hearts through the deceitfulness of sin. Thus, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may be enabled to fulfil our heavenly calling as His holy brethren and become even His partakers (Heb.3: 6; 3:1,12-14).

Thank you all for your prayers for the Specie Gatherings, we were enabled to hold, from 11th to 15th July, in the church at Jehovah-Shammah, in connection with the 60th anniversary of the Lord's Testimony, which He was pleased to raise in Chennai, through the instrumentality of beloved Bro.Bakht Singh, and the co-workers and the early Elders the Lord gave him. It was on the 12th of July 1941 that Bro. Bakht Singh entered that compound with six others, amongst whom were late Bro. Moses Dawn and Williams, and also Bro.Golsworthy, who is now in Brisbane, and Bro.Sam Chacko, though aged still following the Lord. All the above four, were called into full time ministry. They contacted the then owner and arranged for the occupation of the premises on a rental basis. Two months rent of Rs.300/- had to be paid in advance within a short time. Brothers R.P. Dorairaj, Rajamony and Bro. George Rajaratnam were the Elders who laboured with Bro.Bakht Singh for the up building of this Testimony in the sovereign plan and provision of God. From such small beginnings with a company

of about three hundred believers, brothers and sisters, the Lord has been pleased to bring us thus far, touching far north and south and east and west of this land as well as beyond its shores. Praise be to His Name.

An average of 1500 attended the gatherings and it swelled up to more than 2000 for the weekend. The Lord in His great mercy and faithfulness undertook for all the arrangements as we sought to accommodate those outside the city limits, in the premises, although the lack of water supply was our major need as the whole city is affected. The volunteers of all departments like water supply, cooking, serving and accommodation, besides chain prayers, all heartily co-operated in serving the Lord with gladness and serving one another in love.

The Lord had brought His messengers, Bro.Neville Jayasundara from Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Bro.J.C.Rao from Delhi for the ministry of the Word besides the testimonies in the afternoons by our early co-workers as well as the elders with us. The theme of the ministry was taken from 1 Tim.3: 15 - "The House of God". Bro.Neville dwelt on the House of God, being a House of Prayer. Quoting Isa.56: 5-7, he emphasised that we should experience "joy", as the Lord hath promised in the House of Prayer. Many a time we lack this - "being made joyful in the House of Prayer". We come into the House, sit and offer prayers and petitions, but we lack this joy the Lord has promised to His people. He spoke of the walls of the House, as walls of separation and protection, to maintain the testimony of the House, which is holiness, first and foremost. "Holiness becometh thine house" (Psalm 93:5). Quoting from Ezekiel 41: 17, 18,25 he focussed on the cherubims and palm trees of the inner house, on the walls and doors. Cherubims refer to God speaking to commune with us as we read in Exo.25: 22, and Num. 7:89,90. So the House of God is the place where God desires to speak with us of His plans and purposes or provisions. We are many times not ready to hear His voice. He mentioned that the palm trees speak of our upright growth in His House, yielding the sweetness of its fruit, though it is exposed to intense heat or cold or adverse weather conditions. The believer planted in His House faces everything painful and perplexing even fiery trials or fierce opposition - and still yields that which is sweet by the power of the indwelling Christ.

Bro.J.C.Rao exhorted us to fresh surrender and separation within our family circle, which is also a miniature of His House. If we fail there, we would be failing the Lord in relation to the building and the beautifying of His House. Do pray that in view of the Lord speaking to us from His throne in these days of the 60th anniversary gatherings, the Lord may be pleased to do a new work in us, servants, elders, deacons and saints to make the 61st year of the Lord's Testimony, in the church at Jehovah -Shammah, still fruitful and far-reaching.

Please pray for the Dedication and Thanksgiving service of Horeb, House of Prayer, Tarnaka, Secunderabad, and God willing on The

25th July, Bro. Paul Sudhakar and Bro.Habakkuk sharing in the ministry.

Please pray for the speedy and complete recovery of Sis. (Mrs.) Mariam, wife of Bro. Paul Sudhakar, from the injuries she sustained in the recent scooter accident while travelling with her husband at Trivandrum.

Praying that we all be enabled to walk worthily in His House and thus contribute to its building and beautifying as the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,

Isa. 66 .1, 2

1 Pet. 2 .5

Eph. 2 .20-22

I remain,

Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP

THE RUNAWAY SERVANT OF GOD BAKHT SINGH

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. 12:40,41).

The story of Jonah is a true story recorded by the Holy Spirit, and the Lord Jesus Himself made reference to it while He was speaking to the Pharisees. We find many lessons in this short story. The first great lesson is how the God of love shows 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, Jonah ran 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. Yet, just as Jonah ran away from the honourable task given to him by God, many young people run away from God's command for the sake of some worldly gain or pleasure.

We do not know the real reason why Jonah ran away at that time. May be he thought that the people would not believe him? May be other people gave him wrong advice. Many servants of God run away when they are told to go to a place, which is not convenient to their families because of the persuasion of their wives. Some wives look very quiet and simple, yet their husbands have to

tremble before them. This may not be true in your case, but it might have been true in Jonah's case. 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 have they learnt how much loss they incurred by their disobedience to God. It is quite clear that the Lord had commanded and commissioned Jonah to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. He was a God-fearing man, as he himself testified (Jonah 1: 9). But he disobeyed God and ran away from His presence. Those who do not have a deep experience of God fail to understand what He speaks 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 God. 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.

The God of love, mercy and grace, lovingly and patiently brought back Jonah into His perfect plan. For this purpose, first of all, He sent a tempestuous wind, and this grew into a great storm on the sea. It appeared as if the whole ship would sink. But God's hand was on the people who were in the ship. God loves us, and uses many ways to draw us to Himself.

When the Lord sent a tempestuous wind, all the passengers in the ship began to cry and shout. They even called upon their gods, but nothing happened. The storm did not abate. We do not know how many there were in the ship. They all cried and prayed, but the storm only grew worse. It is only those who know God by personal experience that can pray with faith, and have the confidence and assurance that their prayers would be answered. Though Jonah was a backslider, he was far better than the others in the ship. He feared "the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land"(Jonah 1: 9).

The shipmaster went to Jonah and said, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not" (Jonah 1: 6). But Jonah had to confess to the men that he was the cause of that storm (Jonah 1: 8-12). He told them how he was running away from God's command. He humbled himself. He was ready for any punishment, which God would send upon him. He realized how much loss and suffering he had brought upon all those who were in the ship. Those who desire to walk according to God's Word, know by experience how disobedience on their part involves the lives of others and causes them undeserved suffering.