

Hebron Messenger

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NO. 16

REPENTANCE

"God...now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). This command is from God; and it has come to you. "Repentance" means changing one's mind. Sad to say, all men are sinners and are going the way that leads to destruction. God in His great love is commanding all men to turn right about turn and go towards Him, and He is willing to accept them. "...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

1. Have you repented of all your sins? Perhaps you have heard the voice of God and have decided to repent. But have you repented of all your sins? "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2: 10, 11). You may be willing to leave 99 sins; but there may be one sin of which you have no mind to repent; then it is as if you have not repented at all. If you truly repent, you must flee from every sin.

2. Have you realized the sinfulness of sin? Adam and Eve only ate one fruit, disobeyed God only once, and they were sent away from the Garden of Eden. Their sin may appear small to man, but it was very serious before God. You might think that only to kill is a sin, but God says, "...Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. 5: 22), or you might think that only adultery is serious, but God says, "...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). When God really opens your eyes you will realize how serious and abominable all your sins are. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Ezek. 36: 31). Then you will cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7: 24). Read also -Psa. 38: 3-5; Psa. 51: 3,4; Isa. 59:2.

3. Are you really sorry for your sins? In Luke 18: 13 we read of a man who was sorry for his sins. This man came to the Temple. but stood afar off. In this way he confessed that because of his sins he was unworthy to approach the presence of God. Do you realize how unworthy you are to come before the holy God? Secondly, he would not lift up his eyes unto heaven. He acknowledged that he was guilty before God, and worthy to be punished. He hung down his head like a guilty criminal. Have you ever acknowledged that because of your sins you deserve to be cast into the lake of fire? "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9: 17). Thirdly, this man smote upon his breast. Had anyone died in his house? No. but he was full of sorrow for his own sins. You have shed many tears because of pain, sorrow or disappointment. But have you shed one tear before God, being sorry for your sins? Fourthly, he prayed saying, God be merciful to me a sinner". He came believing that he would receive mercy from God. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psa. 86: 5). Have you called upon the Lord and obtained His mercy?

4. Have you brought forth the fruits of repentance? It is possible that you have repented, and God knows all about it. But should not men also have the evidence of it? The Lord Jesus said, "...by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). When you see mangoes on a tree, then you know it is a mango tree. So also when people see the fruits of repentance in you they will know that you have repented. Have you made peace with all your enemies? Have you asked forgiveness from all whom you have offended? Have

you returned the articles you have stolen? Have you decided to pay back all your debts, even though you have to make much sacrifice in order to do so? Have you given up your bad habits? Are you controlling your tongue and temper in the fear of God? Are you praying for your enemies without retaliating evil for evil?

5. Do you realise that you were born in sin? "And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt.3: 9). You cannot say you are different from other people because you are born in a godly family. "...for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3: 22,23). Even David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa.51: 5). "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer .13:23). We are all born with a sinful nature. By birth we are a generation of vipers (Matt.3:7). We have committed such abominable sins that the Lord had to say to us all, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44).

This was our terrible condition! But thank God, it is not so now. When we repented of our sins, He freely forgave us, cleansed us from all our sins, and has made our bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit. Notwithstanding you have to remember that when you were born to your mother you were born in sin; this body of yours is a "body of sin" (Rom.6:6), and a "body of death" (Rom.7:24); this body will be left in the grave and can never go to heaven (1 Cor.15:42-44)

.C.E.D.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

C/o International Assembly
4274 Lafayette Road
Jamesville, New York 13078, U.S.A

August 5, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

All praise and power, glory and honour be unto God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath in His faithfulness and mercy led us into the eighth month of the year. May He lead us on in His prepared paths, with His provision of grace and precious promises in Christ (Eph.2: 19; 2 Pet.1: 4).

Amongst the many ministries the Lord has been enabling us to fulfill in answer to your prayers, both in India and abroad, we may profitably mention two. First, the special meeting arranged at Jehovah Shammah on 12th July, being the 62nd anniversary of the Testimony, the Lord was pleased to raise in Chennai (Madras) through the instrumentality of our beloved brother Bakht Singh. About 2000 saints from all the assemblies in Chennai attended. The Lord's servants Bros. Neville Jayasundara and J.C.Rao enjoyed much liberty in the ministry of the Word based on the theme, "The work is great" (1Chro.29:1).

Bro. Neville dwelt on three things regarding the great work of building the House of God. 1. The place of the work. 2. The preciousness of the work and, 3. The principles of the work. Speaking on the

place of the work, he referred to Mt. Moriah or the threshing floor of Ornan. The House of God is built on the threshing floor where chaff is separated from the grain. At the threshing floor of Ornan, pride was removed from David's life (2 Sam.24: 16). At the threshing floor of Atad, we see how the envy of Joseph's brothers was removed (Gen.50: 10). At the threshing floor of Nachon the oxen Carrying the ark stumbled and Uzzah died (2 Sam.6:6). There the chaff of worldly ways, and carelessness in diligently following the rules of the sanctuary, in David's life was removed. At the threshing floor at the gate of the city (1 Kings 22:10, margin) the chaff of self-will in Ahab's life was revealed. He would not accept the warning through the true prophet of God, went ahead in his own will and perished. Gideon at the threshing floor (Judges 6:36-40), teaches us to wait at His feet till we make sure of God's will in building His House. At the threshing floor of Boaz, Ruth was declared free of chaff-"...all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman" (Ruth 3: 11). That is the final state of the Church -blameless. Finally, in Luke 3:17 we read of the threshing floor where our Lord will thoroughly purge His floor and burn the chaff in fire. That is the threshing floor of salvation through repentance. All chaff must be removed from our lives before we can take part in God's great work. Please pray that the Lord may water His word for the recovery and renewal of His work among the saints.

Secondly, the 21st North America Holy Convocation held in Lemoyne College facilities from 16th to 20th July. The following is the excerpt given by Bro. T.E. Koshy.

"About three hundred saints representing practically most of the continents and scores of countries attended this year's Holy Convocation. Anointed servants of the Lord from India, Australia, France and USA ministered the word on the theme, "Rooted and built up in Christ" (Col.2: 7). The uniqueness of this year's Holy Convocation was that we had saints representing most of the assemblies in USA and Canada which are spiritually affiliated to us. All through the Holy Convocation we felt the glorious presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many left shedding tears of joy and saying that they are looking forward to next year's Holy Convocation, and would like to bring with them those who missed this year's Holy Convocation, so that they too may receive the blessings. Thank you all for praying for us and standing by us.

"We also thank the Lord for all those who helped us in many practical ways to make this year's Holy Convocation a mighty blessing. Particularly I want to thank the Lord for the services rendered by Bro. Christopher and Sis. Ruth for hosting and taking care of many guests who came from overseas. Please pray that the Lord may continue to strengthen and use them mightily as they continue to serve the Lord along with us both in Syracuse, and other parts of USA and Canada".

Bro. Koshy would covet our prayers for the ministry to be fulfilled during the month of October in Metzingen, Germany, Hungary, and Rumania and possibly in Moldovia. Bro. Christopher also is praying about accompanying Bro. Koshy. There are a number of assemblies scattered in all these areas, but they need proper teaching so that they may do the Lord's work in the Lord's way.

Please pray for the final proof reading and editing of Bro. Bakht Singh biography, Bro. T.E. Koshy, Bro. Christopher and Sis. Ruth, that it may be published soon.

We take this opportunity to mention about the Homecall of Bro. G.D. James, eminent evangelist, crusade speaker, writer and founder of Asia Evangelistic Fellowship. The funeral took place on 29th of July at Sydney when hundreds of Christians and church leaders attended. He was well known to late Bro. Bakht Singh ever since he invited our dear brother for the ministry in Australia many decades ago. He wrote about Bro. Bakht Singh, which appears in the Appendix of Bro. Bakht Singh's biography, "His (Bro. Bakht Singh) godly life spoke more eloquently than his words. Bro. Bakht Singh was a man of integrity...Bakht Singh always drew the attention of his audience to His Lord and Master Jesus Christ -not to himself". Those of us who have known him personally will miss him dearly. Bro. G.D. James worked closely with our fellow-saints in Australia. Please pray for the comfort of his ailing wife and members of his immediate family.

It has pleased the Lord to promote to Glory Bro. Hanoch Prasad, God's servant at Bidar, on the 23rd July. He was a humble and faithful labourer in the Lord's vineyard working in fellowship with the church at Hebron, since the past seventeen years. He rests from his labours (Rev. 14: 13). Let us pray for the comfort of his wife.

God willing, a mini Convocation is arranged in London by the saints and brethren, gathering at Horeb International Christian Fellowship, Middlesex, London, from 16th to 19th August. They covet our prayers for all the arrangements and the ministry of the Word by Bro. T.E. Koshy, myself and other saints, as the Lord leads.

Please pray for the ministry of Bro. Theodore Reginald in a few assemblies in Gujarat from August 9th to 14th, closing with a Youth Camp at Beer-Sheba, Ahmedabad from August 15th to 17th. Bro. E. Subba Raju, responsible brother at Philadelphia, L.B.Nagar, Hyderabad, covets prayers for the Lord's help in constructing a Prayer House for their sister assembly at Sanghi Nagar, Hyderabad. Please also pray for the Lord's healing touch for him as he is suffering from Thrombosis.

Praying that we all may be enabled to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God,

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Col. 1: 10,11
2 Tim. 3: 16,17
Isa.55: 10,11

YE ARE MY WITNESSES -14
BAKHT SINGH

We can prove God's faithfulness, even in small things. There is no need to be anxious, troubled or worried when things go wrong. God may permit in our lives many painful situations to give us strong faith. He is our living God. He is all-powerful for every situation. He wants to prove that He is interested even in small things. Do not depend upon sleeping pills, but trust in God's Word. He will give you sound sleep. Most of you do not get proper sleep, because you are worried too much. Do not blame others for lack of sleep. It is your own worries and anxieties and unbelief, which keep you awake. Whenever someone says anything against you, you do not get sleep. If by chance you lose something, you cannot sleep. Perhaps you lose your umbrella in the bus; even though it is an old one you cannot sleep for two or three days. When you do not get sleep you should go upon your knees.

We read that the angel told Peter to bind on his sandals (Acts 12:8). They were not new shoes or English shoes. They must have been old or even torn ones. We do not know how old they were. Some people change their chappals every month, because they wear out soon. Some change for the sake of fashion. But this man of God did not follow the modern fashion. His were old-fashioned shoes. My father was an old fashioned man. He used to wear old-fashioned shoes and long shirts. One day he came to see me in the hostel and brought nice things for me. He was sitting beside me on the cot. One of my schoolmates saw my father, called me out and asked me who that man was, with old-fashioned shoes, and shirt. I was so ashamed and told him that he was from my village. I took his money, food and other things but was ashamed to say that he was my father. The man of God, Peter, was not ashamed.

We see here how the Lord takes interest even in small matters like old shoes. The Lord knew that in his excitement Peter would leave his shoes behind. This has happened many a time to many of us. One day a man came to see me. After a while, he wished everyone good bye and left. But he came again after a few minutes. I wondered why he had returned. He had forgotten his chappals. God knew that Peter was just an ordinary man, though he was filled with the Holy Spirit. We do not become supernatural when we are born again. We remain ordinary human beings. We all have common weaknesses and failures as human beings. Thank God for He is our sufficiency for all our needs.

See how God of grace is interested even in small things like Peter's shoes. You think of big things but God is interested in small things too. That is why God's Word says, our tears are numbered (Psa.56:8). Our hairs are also numbered (Matt. 10:30). Sometimes when we comb our hair, they fall. You do not know how many have fallen. Nor does your wife or husband, your children or parents know. But God knows. So also, He knows the number of our tears. Every tear we shed in sorrow, in trials and in difficulties, He knows, and He knows how to keep it. He puts our tears in a bottle. He does so to remind us and to show us that He knows what we go through and makes provision for every need.

He makes provision for our comfort, strength and sorrow. God will not allow anyone to take away even our old chappals. The Lord has looked after my old chappals all through the past years. Many lose their chappals in the train. Even though they put them under their head, clever thieves take them away. I have travelled for many years but never lost my chappals in the train. But strange to say, I have lost them in the meetings. I have always prayed while travelling, asking the Lord to look after even my small things.

Once I got into a very crowded train. I wanted to have a shave badly. I could not go out lest I should lose my place. So I prayed saying, "Lord, will you please send me a barber?" I kept my head outside the window and a barber came. He shaved me, I paid the money, and the train started immediately. I knew if I had shouted for a barber, my voice would not reach him. But the Lord shouted for me. He brought the barber right on the spot. You may say, it was a chance, but to me it is God's provision. Learn to pray for every small thing. Scripture says in Phil.4: 6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God". This should be our daily experience. Some children learn everything by heart and get very good marks. After three weeks all that they have learned by heart is forgotten. That is how many learn Scripture verses by heart and soon forget them.

(To be contd.)

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NO. 17

REPENTANCE -2

6. Do you realize that Christ had to be crucified for your sins?

Our sins were so great that you and I deserved to be crucified. But Christ took our place and died for our sins (Rom.5:8). We have done wicked and sinful deeds with our hands, and they deserve to be pierced with nails. We have used our feet to move with sinful motives, and they deserve to be nailed to the cross. Our whole body has been defiled with sin and deserves to be beaten with whips. Our faces have been proud and stubborn and we deserve to be spat upon our faces. Our heads have been full of selfish and unholy thoughts and we deserve a crown of thorns. But Jesus took your place and mine and suffered everything for you and me. Perhaps you think that the Roman soldiers crucified Him. But actually because of your sins, you have crucified Him. Have you realized this fact? (Acts 2:36,37).

7. Have you turned away from all your sins?

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov.28:13). When you truly repent of all your sins, you will be filled with hatred for sin and love for righteousness. There are seven results, which the Holy Spirit will work in you (See 2 Cor.7:10,11). You will be filled with a desire to be very careful that you should never fall into your old ways again, like a dog returning to his vomit, and a washed sow to its wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:22). You will have a great desire to set right all your past sins and to clear yourself of any guilt or blame that had come upon you because of your past sins. You will be filled with hatred, aversion and indignation against those very same 'sins which you once loved and enjoyed and longed for. You will also be filled with fear that God may punish you severely if you willfully fall into the same sins after coming to the knowledge of the truth. You will now have a vehement desire to lead a life of absolute holiness, and live a life which is well pleasing to the Saviour Who has redeemed you by His own precious blood. You will now have zeal and joyful longing to do acts of righteousness and service to the Lord. Also you will determine to take revenge (in a holy sense) on the enemy by not only overcoming your temptations but also by entering into the enemy's territory and obtaining spoil by working for the salvation of those who are still in his bondage.

Finally, you have to repent also of every idea that you can please God through anything good in you. You are a leper. You have the leprosy of sin, which is incurable by man. You need the Lord's touch to be healed by Him. Till now, you are only an unclean thing and all your works of righteousness are only filthy rags before God (Isa.64:6). Unless and until you are healed, your service to God, such as singing, giving offerings, even preaching and praying, are all alike entirely useless and unacceptable to God. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord...When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? ...the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting...yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean" (Isa.1 :11-16).

God wants to give you the gift of everlasting life so that you can become a member of God's family. Unless you receive that gift you are dead in your sins, and even what you think to be your good works, are only dead works before God. These dead works cannot give you salvation. Have you turned away from them to trust in the finished work of salvation which the Lord Jesus accomplished for you upon the Cross of Calvary? Instead of saying, "I am trusting in my good life, my good works and my good gifts for my salvation", can you say, "I am trusting only in this that although I deserve the wrath of God and the everlasting punishment, Christ died for my sins and therefore I am free?"

Dear friend, repent of all your sins sincerely, so that your tender heart may become like good ground where the seed of God's Word may be sown and bring forth thirty fold, sixty fold and hundred fold fruit.

C.E.D.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron,
Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad -500 020

A.P., India.
Telephone No.27613066
August 14, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "the only wise God our Saviour", Who hath saved us according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Having been called according to His own purpose may He work all things together for our good as we set our love upon Him, in true obedience of faith (Jude 25; 2 Tim.1: 9; Rom.8: 28; John 14:14, 15).

After the fellowship and ministry in the America Convocation, the Lord enabled me to spend a few days in some of the sister assemblies in that country, and share a brief ministry of the Word, and finally reach Madras by August 10th. I have been conscious of your prayers helping me throughout this itinerary and travels. At Dallas, the believers have been gathering on the basis of Acts 2:42, in the home of Bro. Linus Gamadia named Bethel for the past 13 years. On Sunday, the 27th July, they had their last worship gathering there, and from the first Lord's Day in August, they are gathering in a rented facility, more central. More than fifty gather there, and some of them are our believers from India. Sister (Mrs.) Mercy Matthew, daughter of late Bro. Amrithraj, covets our prayers for their young child under medical care being allergic to milk and all milk products. Pray for Bros. Pritam, Edward Phillips and others who are sharing the burden of the work and ministry together with Bro. Linus.

A small flock is gathering at Chicago for regular worship and remembrance of the Lord in a church building, where Bro. Joel Kingsley (son of late Bro. Joel of Malakpet, Hyderabad) with others is sharing the ministry. Pray that the Lord may build them up in true testimony to the risen Lord, and others too may be drawn to them, as there are many from Hyderabad in that city -that they may be a company who love the habitation of His House, -the place where His honour dwelleth (Psalm 26:8).

Brother Paul Thangavelu, together with Bro. Sudheer Das and others of New York covet our prayers for the up building of the flock who gathers at Bethany for regular worship and prayer, and especially for the young people's ministry. Bro. Mark (from Ahmedabad) a ministering brother amongst them, covets our prayers for his wife Sis. Urmila, who has to undergo a major abdominal surgery on 15th August in New York hospital.

Bro. Alex of Delhi (one of the elders of the church with Bro. J.C. Rao and others) has to undergo bypass surgery on 15th for his cardiac problem, in the Escort Hospital, Delhi. Let us pray for successful surgery and speedy recovery for him.

Pray for the Youth Reunion gathering at Hebron on 15th August when Bro. Paul Sudhakar with others would be ministering the Word. Also pray for sisters' gathering Lord willing on the 19th August, at Hebron.

15th August being a holiday for the Independence Day, the church at Jehovah - Shammah is planning for a Gospel outreach, with tracts and literature in Annanagar area. Pray that the Lord may watch over them, and work with them as written in Mark 16:20- "the Lord working with them confirming the word preached" for the salvation of some, as well as for the strengthening of the saints.

Let us pray for the country and those at the helm of affairs for the proper governance and welfare of the nation, maintaining the freedom of worship and practice of our faith (1 Tim.2: 1-4) as enshrined in the country's constitution.

Please pray for Bro. Eddy Williams who will be leaving for the United States on 16th, halting at Singapore for a few days ministry and then God willing be with his son Bro. Joseph in Syracuse University, as he will submit his final papers for his Ph.D. At the same time he would be sharing the ministry of the Word with Bro T.E. Koshy and others

in Syracuse and in the surrounding assemblies.

In the previous issues we have been considering the life and walk of David, who was eager "to build an house unto the name of the Lord" (1 Chron.22: 7) and how he went through conflicts and crises, especially by being brought to the threshing floor twice. The work of the threshing floor is to remove the chaff from the grain- the chaff refers to the propensities and performances of the flesh as well as the pride of the flesh in his service for God and relating to his status before God. They both had to be removed. Then only, he could become a man after God's heart, and vitally contribute to the building of the House of God, receiving the pattern of the same as the Lord had made him understand by His hand upon him (1 Chron.28:11 , 12, 19).

Thus the building of the House of the Lord, or the Church of the living God, is not only the gathering together of people, -the adding of souls by their salvation which of course is foundational but also a spiritual and moral building up brought about through conflict. Although the Lord Jesus had in Himself secured a universal triumph over all His foes, they are still left for us to deal with. The enemy, although defeated, has still been left for the saints to have something to do with, and deal with, standing by faith on His triumph. It is thus you and I get our spiritual development. It is by conflict, by battle, by grim and terrible warfare spiritually, that the moral excellencies of our triumphant HEAD are brought out in us. It has to be wrought into our very being, and that is done through conflict, in which faith is drawn out. And so, spiritually and morally, we build through conflict, through adversity, in the Divine, Sovereign ordering of our lives. Calvary's victory is thus inwardly established, as we hold on, hold on in faith. During the time of this holding on, our faith is severely tested, until at last His victory is realised and established in us. It has become a moral quality in our being, and in the next time of testing, it is not trying to get hold of something, it is there with its roots in us. Something has been done in us and it has been made part of us.

The Lord write this word upon our hearts and help us all to face all battles and conflicts, holding on in the faith of the Son of God, Who is also interceding for us that our faith may not fail.

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Luke 22 : 31 ,32
1 Chron. 28 .10,20
Eph. 2 .19-22

YE ARE MY WITNESSES -15 BAKHT SINGH

God's Word should be read daily and its promises should be claimed. Phil.4:6 says, "Be careful for nothing". So do not be worried about! anything, but only pray for everything. One day I lost a bottle cork. It was so small that one could hardly see. I dropped it in the bathroom. First I thought, it is a small thing and why I should bother about it. I searched for it for three days but could not find it. Then I remembered that the Lord has told us to pray for everything. So I prayed saying, "Lord, I don't want to lose that cork. Please show me where it is". Then I looked down and found it. Even for small things learn to pray.

In 2 kings 6:1-7we read about a man whose axe head fell into the water. It was foolish to look for the axe head in the water. There was no hope of getting it back, because it, had sunk deep into the water. But the man knew, if he went to the man of God he would get it back. The man of God cut down a stick and cast it in the water, and the iron did swim. Something, which was impossible, was made possible. Now we all know that iron cannot swim. Yet because of that man's faith in God's Word, God made the iron to float on the water. In the same way, every spiritual loss can be recovered if we pray.

That man was careless. Before cutting the wood he should have made sure that the axe was fixed properly. He lost the axe head because of his carelessness. But he went to the man of God for help and confessed his fault. God forgave him and he recovered that which he had lost. Most of us are like him. Through negligence we incur loss. We fail to find God's will and do things on our own, so we suffer loss. That man held the handle without the axe head. We would call him foolish. Some God's servants are foolish like him. They have lost their axe heads. There is no power in their ministry or prayer. They have no joy in their hearts. They only have their handles. The source of power is gone because of some negligence. Some defilement or some pride, or greed has entered into them. I Sometimes they lose their faith and peace also. They--become helpless and do not know how to face the situation. Perhaps that is\your condition today. But there is hope for you. This man knew where to go (2 Kings 6:6). First of all, he had to go to the place where the axe head had fallen. Similarly, you have to go to the place where you have lost your axe head because of sin, defilement, and negligence etc. Then claim the power of the cross, because the tree

speaks of the cross. Then he got back the axe head. You also can recover your spiritual loss, by humbling yourself at the Cross-of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many times we do not confess our failures. We blame others for our loss as Adam blamed the woman God had given him. Do not blame anyone. Humble yourself before the Lord, acknowledge your faults and failures, negligence or whatever it may be; then recover the loss.

Many parents are very negligent and careless. They do not spend sufficient time with their children. They do not have family prayers both morning and evening. They say in their hearts, "We are far too busy with our jobs. How can we spare time for prayer and Bible study in the morning?" They do not fulfill their first responsibility towards their children. After some time they find some sin in their children. Parents are responsible for their sin. Their axe head was lost due to their negligence and carelessness. Do not blame your children. Do your duty faithfully with love and concern when they are small. Read Heb.12: 6-12. Many parents have lost their axe heads. Their children are disobedient because of their own negligence. When children needed to be chastened and corrected, they did not do it. Now that they are grown up, it is too late. They are rebellious now, and no amount of teaching will help them. Only by confessing their sin and going to the place where the axe head had fallen they can recover. Go to the same place and say, "Lord, it is due to my failure and negligence, that my children are disobedient. Help me to be careful in the future and fulfill my duty faithfully towards my children. Help me to recover all". Thus go on asking the Lord for every small thing. Seek God's face in all things and recover every loss. In Prov.3:5,6 we read, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths". Learn to depend upon God for spiritual things. Do not depend upon your cleverness, wisdom or experience of any kind. We have to claim God's strength, grace, and wisdom for every small thing. It must be a daily practice. Then you will see God's hand upon you, and recover every loss.

Now Peter was not only told to bind on his sandals but also take his garments (Acts 12:8). Thus we see how God is interested in everything, in old chappals as well as garments. Then the angel said to Peter, "Follow me". Do not go by your own experience. You may be a strong man but you do not know the way. For some distance, Peter followed the angel. Learn to seek God's guidance. Do not think that you know the way. It is safe to say, "Lord, I do not know the way". Let Him guide you. He knows the way. He knows what is the best way. He knows the end from the beginning. Our safety is to follow Him as long as He leads us.

Then we are told in Acts 12: 10, when they were past the first and the second ward they came to the iron gate, which opened to them by itself. The Lord knew how to bring Peter safely through the gates. You also may be facing many iron gates. As you follow His guidance, He will bring/you out safely. When He shows the way, then we are safe.

In the beginning the Lord's angel had to open the prison door. But in verse 13 we find Peter himself knocking the door many times. If God wanted, He could have opened that door also and brought Peter into the house. But for a purpose, the angel departed from half the way. Then Peter himself found the way and went on knocking the door. God gives us divine strength when needed. At other times we have to use our own strength to open the door, nevertheless, God is always with us.

The same Herod who persecuted Peter was dealt with by God Himself without any interference on the part of Peter. Peter was an ordinary man. He could have cursed Herod and said, "Lord, punish Herod". But he had no hatred for him. He never said one word of revenge against him. He kept sleeping and left Herod in the hands of God. That is why God Himself punished Herod. If there are people like Herod in your neighborhood or office, do not worry. God Himself will judge them. The Lord Himself will solve all your problems. He will take up your case and judge other people.

(To be contd.)

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