

Hebron Messenger

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NO. 20

BOAZ-2

The next picture we have of Boaz is actually central and basic to the whole story we are now considering. It begins to appear in chapter two where Boaz is seen as:

ONE WHO HAS COMPASSION ON THE STRANGER (Ruth 2:5-17).

The scene here is extremely beautiful. Boaz, coming out to his fields, sees the stranger who is gleaning behind his reapers, and he enquires as to who she is (v.5). He is told, she is "the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab"(v.6); -in other words, one who would normally be a very despised foreigner!

Perhaps we need to pause here and recall some of the early history of the Moabites, for it is a particularly dark one; -so much so that Moabites were permanently banned from entering into the congregation of the Lord, -"even to the tenth generation" (See Deut.23: 3; Neh.13: 1 etc.).

Boaz would certainly have known this history, and yet we hear him addressing the timid outcast as "My daughter" (v. 8), and then proceeding further to make every provision for her welfare! He even offered her a place among his own chosen reapers (v.14); -something deeply significant in itself! Ruth herself was quite taken aback by this wholly unexpected favour, and could only fall on her face and say, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger" (v.10). This surely touches deep chords within us all, and takes our thoughts back immediately to our Greater Boaz, the Lord Jesus, of Whom it is written that He "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Heb.5: 2). Here, very clearly is Christ our Lord, Who reaches out even to us! We feel we should say here that this particular aspect of our story is one that goes right to the heart of ALL Biblical revelation. All through the Bible we are being shown a Living God Whose inmost nature is one of compassion on "strangers"; -strangers in every sense! The God Who made us is a God Who is spontaneously and inexplicably gracious to the totally disqualified and undeserving; -a God Whose heart and hands (literally) are stretched out to rescue and restore. This, we say, is the God of the whole Bible, and we are, moreover, explicitly told that the matter of strangers like ourselves being brought into His favour, and being lifted into fellowship with Him, is His ordained method of the manifestation eternally of His own/ incomparable character (See Eph.2: 4-7).

How we should thank God that He and His Christ (our Greater Boaz) do have compassion on "strangers"! On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared, "For the promise is to you, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). And it was because of that great fact that Paul could later write to the Gentile converts at Ephesus and say, "at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: BUT NOW, in Christ Jesus ye who some times were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (See Eph.2: 12, 13, 19).

All this was clearly prefigured in Boaz, and in his gracious dealings with Ruth. And how appropriate to our story is the word in Deut. 10:18, "He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and LOVETH THE STRANGER, in giving him (her) food and raiment".

Thank God, the Gospel invitation is for "all who labour and are heavy laden" (Matt.11: 28). How we should rejoice that throughout Christ's public ministry, Gentile strangers, as well as privileged Jews, were welcomed into His embrace, and ALL could be renewed and be made part of God's eternal purpose! Even Peter could not, at first, understand this greatness of God's heart, and the wideness of this embrace (Acts 10:14,28). He might have known something of the depth of Christ's love, but he did not yet know its BREADTH! (See Eph.3: 18,19). To such matters he himself was but a "stranger"! But later, Peter, too, was enlarged, and began to love as God loves, and to welcome "strangers" as God welcomes them (See Acts 10:34,43; 15:7-11). Thank God, then, for our own Great Boaz Who still welcomes "strangers"!

C.R.G.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron,
Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad -500 020,

A.P., India.
Telephone No.27613066
September-20-2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Whom it is written, "... the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (set His Tabernacle among us Lev.26: 1) (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14). By "a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands... by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"(Heb.9: 11,12). As the redeemed of the Lord we are being built up as His heavenly Habitation, through the Spirit, until that voice out of heaven is heard, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men". The Lord help us all so to live and labour, obedient to this heavenly vision, loving His appearing (Rev.21: 1-3; Acts 26:19; 1 Tim.4:8; Eph.2:20).

Continuing our thoughts on the Tabernacle, "shadow of heavenly things" (Heb.8: 5; 9:23), we shall consider the different names given in Exodus mainly, by which we may perceive God's ways and purposes with us. Firstly, we mention, A DWELING PLACE. The word translate⁹ dwelling place or a home, and the fact that God commanded Israel to make it, proves that He wants to come and live with men. God is other than His creation and distinct from it, but He is seeking to find a way, whereby He can come and dwell in it. Pantheists say that God is a part of creation, but the Bible makes it clear that God is different and distinct from what He had created. Nevertheless, He wants to come and be one with it, in vital union where two personalities coalesce, and yet remain separate. For God does not want us to lose our identity and individuality, but seeks oneness by the encounter of two coming and living together.

In order to realise this properly and fully, and enjoy it all the time, He needed to set up a home. This is why He came to Israel and told them that He wanted to make His home among them in a dwelling place where this oneness could be enjoyed. Of course He knew that when He could move in, He would have to

keep the door shut most of the time or else men would be destroyed by rushing into His holy presence, a fact that involves a certain tension in Tabernacle teaching. For, while God wants to dwell with men, He also has to hold them back. This tension however is resolved in Christ, so that in Him men can be truly at home with God.

Secondly, SANCTUARY. In the second place the Tabernacle is described as a sanctuary (Exo.25:8), that is, a place SET APART. This quality of being set apart is the essence of the meaning of the word, "HOLY". One of the first things we must learn about our home, is that it is a set- apart place which belongs to no one else, but us. If it is not first and foremost, something sacred to our family, and set apart from all other homes, then it becomes more like a hotel or an institution. Other people should be welcome, but they come in on sufferance, for the place is not free for all, but our own private dwelling. It is a sad fact that some have destroyed their family life by not keeping their home set apart in the right way, for if one does not have a place where there is intimacy and sacredness between husband and wife, then the family life will soon fall apart. God has His sacred HOME, His SET APART place which He has chosen so that He may be intimate in communion with His people. We should ask ourselves, whether we have such an experience in our Christian life today. Were we alone with God, SET APART unto Him?

Thirdly, A TESTIMONY. (Exo.38: 21; Num.17: 4,7,8; Acts 7:44). The third aspect of the Tabernacle is that it was a tent of witness or testimony. This stresses the fact of God. Giving witness of Him self, saying that which reveals, what He thinks and what He is like. It would be a strange home, would it not, if it were not a place for one to learn and understand the people who live in it? Indeed the whole essence of living together in the love of home life is that there is a continual revealing through which each learns more and more of the other.

Now in the case of the Tabernacle there were three things connected with this feature of witness. The first were the two tables of the law, which were called Tables of testimony, and were put inside the Ark. Then the Ark itself was called the Ark of the testimony. The whole structure was therefore called the Ark of the Testimony, and there was the veil of the testimony. So we see that at the heart of the testimony, were Ten Commandments, written on two tables resting in the Ark and right at the center of the structure. The deepest idea of testimony was upon those stones, namely, the things, which God hath said, so giving a revelation of His own nature of what He is like. God's home was a revelation of Himself not only in the Ten Commandments, but in all the gold and purple and linen, the silver, and the pillars and the boards. In all these things He was seeking to show men what He is like. All speak of the Lord Jesus as He is the "Witness of God", and He is the One Who reveals the nature of God to us. This revelation is so wonderful that we are not surprised that God took such pains to train humanity before the truth appeared. God helping, we shall continue these thoughts in our next issue.

The month of October being marked by holidays, Youth Camps, Special Gatherings and Convocations will take place in our assemblies all over the land. In our previous issue, we have mentioned many of them coveting your prayers. In some cases, because of lack of ministers of the Word, and the dates of the meetings clashing, some have graciously postponed their region wise programmes, which co-operation we do appreciate, as co-workers.

Pray for the Convocation in Beer-sheba, Ahmedabad, from October 21st to 26th with God's servant Bro. Lazar Sen, who returned from U.S.A. on the 16th instant, and Bro. Theodore Reginald and others ministering. Pray for the preparatory work, and all divine plans and provisions for those days of ministry.

Saints and brethren in Zion, K.G.F. would have us to thank the lord for the fiftieth Anniversary gatherings for which they have been praying for long, to be held on 20th and 21 st October followed by a day of prayer and ministry for the servants of Karnataka. Bro. Paul Sudhakar and others would be sharing the ministry. Bro. John Stewart covets our -Prayers for travel mercies and ministry as he leaves on 25th September to participate in the Gangtok (Sikkim) Convocation, God willing to be held at Berachah Prayer House from 4th to 12th October, based on the themetaken'from 1 John 3:2. Also he would be taking

the opportunity to touch Kolkata, Siliguri, Kalimpong and Darjeeling en route with a short ministry as requested by the brethren in each place as the Lord helps. Pray for the Regional Youth Camp, God willing being arranged at Bethany, Warangal from 2nd to 5th October with Bro. J. C. Rao and other brothers helping in the Youth ministry at Hebron also sharing in the ministry. Pray for Sis. (Mrs.) Sarah Theodore Reginald undergoing treatment because of Diabetes etc. at Bangalore. Pray for the Lord's Day 21st September ministry at Hebron, when more than 60 are going to testify in Baptism. Pray that they may be kept true to their testimony, as worshippers, walking in newness of life (Rom.6: 4).

Praying that we may be built up together in divine pattern, as partakers of divine nature to reflect the beauty and blessedness of becoming His dwelling place,

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Psa. 84: 1, 4, 11
Exo. 40: 16,34,35
Eph. 3: 10, 11, 21

YE ARE MY WITNESSES -18 BAKHT SINGH

The lords of the Philistines became suspicious of David. They feared that David might leave them, join Saul and war against them as their enemy. So they insisted that David should be sent back. David knew that it was not God's will for him to join the Philistines, yet he decided to join them. Eventually he had to go back. David knew how to enquire from God, but he did not. That is why all their wives and children were taken away and they lost everything. Their loss was so great that they wept till they had no more strength to weep. If you know God's will and do not do it, you will suffer great loss. David repented and enquired of the Lord and the Lord in His mercy forgave him. Scripture says, "...his compassions fail not" (Lam.3:22). If we humble ourselves, confess our sins and call upon God and pray, He will have compassion upon us and forgive us. Now even though David had no hope of recovering anything, because he repented, confessed his failure and prayed, God helped him. He went to God and enquired what God's plan was. " And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall' pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all" (1 Sam.30:8). He ought to have done that earlier: now after he lost everything he went to the Lord. God is showing us how foolish we are. Now God forgave David when he obeyed Him and gave all the men into his hands.

Going by the number of the army of the Amalekites, it was not possible to pursue or smite them. Because David enquired of God, God told him to pursue the Amalekites. God in His own way helped them to pursue the enemy. On the way, they found an Egyptian who was about to die. God uses simple means to deliver us and help us. They had pity on that Egyptian. They gave him food and drink (vs.11, 12). Through him, they recovered not only what they had lost but much more than that. By believing God's Word and by obeying His Word they recovered all. Even though their loss was great, by humility and obedience they recovered. The spoil was so great, that David sent presents to all his friends who had helped him in the past. When he was pursued by Saul, David had to provide food for all his men. David being a man of God kept clear record of all that he received from his friends. Some gave shelter and some gave food. In some places he stayed for two days and in some places for four days or more. He knew the quantity of food they brought. Now he sent them all gifts and presents from the spoil. He was so thankful for their help in time of need. By enquiring from God, by obeying, Him and by believing in Him David recovered everything. He paid all the past debts, which he had to pay to his friends. Thus we also can

recover all our past losses. But we have to ask God's forgiveness for not doing His will in some cases and make it a principle to find God's will and plan for all matters.

Many believers buy property without finding God's will and do many other things without knowing God's will. Some people get their children married without finding God's will. Now they are weeping and their children are also weeping. Now if they humble themselves, repent and confess their sin and obey God and His Word, they can recover all and even more. May God make us all men and women after His own heart?

(Concluded)

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NO. 21

BOAZ-3

We now approach a further development in our story, -depicting Boaz as THE QUALIFIED REDEEMER This new phase is introduced to us by what Naomi said to Ruth, when Ruth returned home from her time of gleaning in the fields of Boaz. Ruth told her mother- in -law of her happy experiences amongst the reapers and of the kindness of Boaz himself. It was at that point that Naomi said to Ruth, "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen", or, as the margin renders it, "He is one that hath the right to redeem" (Ruth 2:20). Now; to realise the significance of what Naomi said, we need to be reminded of certain legal procedures, which operated within Israel at that time. We read about these procedures in Leviticus 25, and they had to do, basically, with the retention of properties within the families to which they had been originally allocated. We read "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem (buy back) that which his brother sold" (Lev.25: 25). Also, in verse 49, "Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him". All this throws light on what Naomi had in mind when she said to Ruth, "He is near of kin to us". The inference was that Boaz was legally qualified to act as their "redeemer", and secure to the family that which it seemed they must lose. It is interesting to note that, in the Hebrew language, the single word "GAAL" signifies both a relation (kinsman) (eg.Num.5:8) and a Redeemer (eg. Job 19:25). The reason is that God wanted to keep before His human creatures the important fact that only a true "relation" of men could ever bring "redemption" to men!

All this, of course, carries over to our need of "redemption", or, shall we say, our need of spiritual rescue or release. Because we are sinners ("sold under sin" -Rom.7: 14), there is so much that has been lost by us, and so much that needs to be restored to us. In fact, we ourselves are lost to our Original Divine Owner, and we need to be "bought back". But who can do that for us? Only a "close relation" can qualify. And, thank God, a Close Relation Indeed HAS DONE IT! -"The Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.2: 5).

Here, we would say, lies the importance of all those references to Christ as "Son of Man", -a title which our Lord Jesus loved to use of Himself, as, for instance, in Luke 19: 10, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost". And, how meaningful that word in Hebrews, -"...as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy...the devil, And deliver them who...were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb.2: 14,15). Wonderful it is indeed that our Almighty Lord Jesus, Son of God, should humble Himself to be "made in the likeness of men", and all in order that He might be man's Qualified Redeemer (See Phil.2: 6-8). We suggest that when Pilate exclaimed, "Behold THE MAN" (John 19:5), he was touching on one of the greatest marvels and mysteries of the ages, -"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim.3: 16), -in order to redeem! If only Pilate himself had realised that truth!

We have to realise that neither angels nor archangels could ever have wrought redemption for us, -they are not our "relatives". But Christ can, AND CHRIST HAS, in view of His embraced humanity. We could go further and say that, at Calvary, that Blessed One, in yet another sense, became our kinsman indeed, for we read He was "made sin for us" (2 Cor.5:21). How we should thank God, then, for our Complete "Relative - Redeemer", far greater than Boaz, Who, "by his own blood...obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb.9: 12).

C.R.G.

(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron,
Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad -500 020,

A.P., India.
Telephone No.27613066
October-9-2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

All glory and praise and honour be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father", according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world. Blessed be His Name, Who hath called us, holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling, to become His House and Dwelling Place for the ages to come. May we be granted grace to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of this hope firm unto the end (Gal.1: 4; Eph.1: 4; Heb.3: 1, 6).

Our meditation on the structure, setting and the service of the Tabernacle, we pray, may enliven and enrich us in this hope of glory, set before us. Continuing our thoughts on the same, we come to the fourth name -"TENT OF MEETING". This is I" also sometimes called the Tabernacle of the Congregation (Exo.33: 7). God Himself promised, "...there I will meet with thee' (Exo.25: 22). Such a meeting involves mutual interchange, not just the chance encounter, humanly speaking, with a handshake which can happen a hundred times without there being a real meeting. But this meeting is an occasion when each gives to the other and also receives back from him. The Tabernacle as the Tent of Meeting was to give an opportunity for God to fulfill His desire to give something to His people, and to receive something from them. Thus it provided a place for interchange, where men might be constantly enriched by communion with Him, and by communion with one another in His presence.

The fifth name we shall consider is, THE TEMPLE. The House or the Temple of the Lord is the place where He can be found. The actual Temple was the House of God, a sort of extension of the Tabernacle, only with a slight difference; -that is embodying the truth that God can be found by those who want His help. So the Tabernacle was put in the center of Israel's camp in order that any man, who like Job was crying, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him", could have the answer by realising that wherever God's Tent or Testimony was, there He could be found.

In a comprehensive way, then, we are confronted with the wonder of God having a home among men. Having analysed the background of these Tabernacle truths, we begin to know something of God's Fatherly heart, of how He wants to have a home and communion there with sons, with whom He can share His affairs. Thus He can make Himself available to them, which is after all the good news of the Bible. This is the eternal purpose of God conceived when He first brought man into being -His purpose of a home and family of sons. So the Tabernacle is not something of mystical ideas, but a visible means of

enshrining and embodying the most wonderful concept of God's Gospel.

His good news was made possible by the Lord Jesus Who came and Tabernacled amongst us. The final fulfillment is mentioned in Rev.21: 3 where it says that the Tabernacle of God is with men, so foretelling the time when God would have fully accomplished His great purpose.

Seeing that this is so, it ought to be a very fruitful occupation to consider this particular mode of communication. If God has seemed fit to provide this way of revealing Himself, then a consideration of the Tabernacle should be most profitable to us, who delight to know and do God's will. Because God's thoughts and manner of existence are summed up in His Son, it is obvious that the truths of the Tabernacle will reveal the Lord Jesus to us. Christ's flesh is called "the veil" (Heb.10: 20), so at least that part of the material of the Tabernacle will have something to tell us of Him. And since it is impossible to look at Christ without seeing His Body, which is the Church, which He now indwells, we can expect to discover the significance of the "two or three gathered together" in His Name, and see how the eternal thoughts and character of God can be revealed in those people of whom He declared, "...I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Cor.6: 16). God willing, we shall continue these thoughts on the Tabernacle in our next issue.

Now that the special meetings and Gospel outreaches are over in various places of the land, we would like to mention some details of the ministry fulfilled for thanksgiving as well as prayer, for the follow-up work.

In Villiwalkam area in Chennai, in the open- air Gospel ministry about six hundred believers participated, combing ~he area in batches with songs and sale of books, which amounted to about Rs.4000/-, although in one or two cases they faced objection from the police, seeking to take some of the brethren into custody which was finally overcome. The Lord used a lawyer, who appeared on the spot to convince the police that these Christians are only declaring the good news of Jesus Christ, and as such cannot be charged as converting the people. Thus the police were quietened and the work went on.

The residential Camp held at Jehovah - Jireh, St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, drew a company of nearly 600 attending the meetings in which Bros. Theodore Reginald and B. Timothy ministered. About 50 made decision, as many were already believers.

About 600 participated in the meetings held at Siyon Prarthana Bhavan, Ranchi, from 2nd to 5th October and quite a number made decision on to true discipleship and many were spoken to by the Lord, old and young. Pray that the Lord may accomplish His word.

The Convocation at Berachah, Gangtok, Sikkim, is being attended by about 2,500 believers, and the Lord has been using the ministry of Bros.Daniel Rai, John Stewart and Shammah, besides Bro.M.G.Lingdong and others locally, to bless His people with the word about readiness and rejoicing in the hope of His appearing (1 John 3:2). There were many who were led to recommit their lives.

The Lord blessed the ministry of the residential Youth Camp held at Bethany, Warangal, which drew a company of nearly 1000. The ministry of Bro. J.C. Rao, together with our youth leaders from Hebron, was used of the Lord to bring about 300 souls, for decision for the Lord.

Bro.Ratnasingh, a senior brother in responsibility and ministry in the church at Peniel, Palayamcottai was called Home to Glory on 2nd October as he had been suffering from Cardiac problem for some years. The Lord had specially gifted him for the ministry of translation through which some of the books of Bro. Bakht Singh were put into Tamil. Besides this he was serving the Lord in the ministry of the Gospel in surrounding assemblies and far off places, for the upbuilding of His saints into their inheritance (Acts 20:32). He finished his course and rests to receive the reward of the Lord at His coming. Pray for his wife and family members.

Sis. (Miss) Joan Aaron, who has been attending to the editing and proofreading of the Hebron Messenger,

was hospitalised for a period, because of serious Cardiac problem and old age infirmities. She is still very weak and needs our prayers. Please pray for young sister Elizabeth Kurien who is to undergo a new kind of Homeo treatment after her recent operation, as her disease will not respond to radiation.

On October 1st, the biography of Bro. Bakht Singh, published by O.M. Printers was released at Jehovah-Shammah, Chennai, the very place where the man of God stood hundred percent committed to do God's perfect will at all costs, for the Testimony of the Lord Jesus, more than 62 years ago. More than 500 saints were present on the occasion. With gratitude and praise unto the Lord, they earnestly sought the Lord's working for the furtherance of His Testimony far and wide, by the reading of this unique biography by many.

Also pray for the mini Convocation to be held at Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, from 21st to 26th October, that the Lord may guide and direct Bro. Eddy Williams and co-workers for all aspects of the ministry as well as the accommodation etc., since this is the first gathering of this kind being held there.

Praying that we all may take our humble share in this task of the furtherance of the Lord's Testimony, emulating the faith and obedience of the man of God, who served his generation in the will of God,

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Heb. 13 .7,8
1 John 2: 16, 17
1 Cor. 3: 9, 10

THE PREACHING OF -THE CROSS BAKHT SINGH

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified (1Cor.2: 2).

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was taken to the Corinthians through Paul, with great power and authority as we read in 1 Cor.2: 4,5. Yet the believers there remained babes for a long time. With a heavy heart he wrote to them saying, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor.3:1-2). He had to speak to them as little children and could not teach them the deeper truths of salvation. Even though they heard the word with power and authority, yet they remained babes in the spirit. As a result they not only had strife, confusion, contention and divisions among them but sin also. Then came the wrong teaching and false doctrines. The main reason for all that was, they had not experienced the power of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of us fail to grow spiritually because we do not understand the meaning of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not appropriate it in our lives.

Over the centuries, the cross is being used as a sign or a symbol. Many people bow before it or wear a small cross in the neck or keep it in their homes. Some think of it by repeatedly saying, "He died, He died". But there is no power in their lives. Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor.1: 18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: but unto us which are saved it is the power of God". The power of God comes into us in fullness and abundance by appropriating the power of the cross of Christ in us. There is no other way, and no other plan by which that power will come into us. Some people try to get that power by wrong means like dreams and visions. Apostle Paul saw many visions but he did not depend on them for this power. According to Phil.3: 10, he longed to know the Lord Jesus Christ and the

power of His resurrection. He had the privilege of seeing not one but many visions and miracles in his life. He even had the privilege of being caught up into third heaven and see many wonderful things (2 Cor.12: 2-5). He did not glory in those visions and miracles but longed to know how to identify with the death of Christ and to enjoy the power of His resurrection.

Now the cross means, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people think of hardship as their cross. Any difficulty, any trial, any persecution or even an unhappy home, they call it their cross. Some say their wife is their cross. But the cross means the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. He never died as a martyr or by force. He gave Himself willingly. He is not asking for any sympathy or tears from us. Some people think that by shedding tears on Good Friday or by fasting for three days, they show sympathy. But in John 1 a: 18 we read that He gave His life willingly. He died so that we may receive into us this powerfully. That is why we should experience it in our lives. All of our teaching and preaching should be centred on the cross of Christ. As we saw earlier, Paul saw the Lord personally, did many miracles and great works, yet he did not glory in all that. He gloried in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal.6: 14). We have to learn that by experience. The power and the secret of the cross is not one day's experience. It should be our daily experience to claim the power of the cross by faith.

Christian life is a warfare, a life -long warfare (Eph.6: 12). Do not be satisfied because you got victory over a few temptations. That is no proof that you will not face any more temptations or fall into sin. None of us who overcame in the past can say, "I am safe". The devil makes us fall by simple things. Unknowingly you may put your foot on a piece of soap, fall down and break your leg. It is not done intentionally but a very small thing causes you to slip and fall and break the leg. Then you have to be in bandage for some months. None " of us can say, "I will never fall". That is why the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Watch". We may not know but it is possible to be overtaken in sin. The devil can come as an angel of light, or as a roaring lion, a flood or as a grievous wolf. Whenever we are not watchful, the devil comes in a subtle way to deceive us. That is why we have to learn the secret of getting victory by the power of the cross. It is not attained in one day, but as we appropriate that power day by day we get strength to defeat the devil.

(To be contd.)

Crossroads, Hyderabad -500 020. Edited by Bro. K. Phillip, Printed and Published by Bro. G. T. Benjamin for Hebron, Golconda
Crossroads, Hyderabad -500020