

# Hebron Messenger

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NO 12

## "I WILL MAKE YOU TO BECOME FISHERS OF ME" (MARK 1: 17)

In John 21: 1-15 we read that Peter went fishing, and that though he toiled the whole night he caught no fish at all. Then the risen Lord appeared to him and asked him whether they had any food; but the answer was in the negative. Then the Lord told Peter to cast the net on the right side. As he obeyed the Lord the net was found to be full of fishes. They were brought to the shore safely, where they were roasted on the fire. The Lord said: "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught". This narrative can be used to illustrate various stages through which saints after salvation pass, before they are brought to that stage of spiritual maturity in which they will be of value in the service of the Lord. Let us look at these spiritual stages.

### FISHES IN THE SEA

Peter, Thomas and some other disciples went for fishing in the sea of Tiberias (John 21: 1). The fishes in the sea are typical of sinners in the world. This was exactly our condition before we were saved. Paul says: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world... Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind"(Eph.2: 2-3). What was true of the Christians in Ephesus before their salvation is true of every Christian before conversion. The fishes drank the water of the sea, and ate the small insects and herbs in the sea. This was also our condition before salvation. We drank the filth of the world, and ate the weeds of fleshly desires. Many fishes are found in the deep waters, and in the same way many of us were once right out in the depths of sin.

### FISHES IN THE NET

"And he said unto them, Cast the net on the, right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes" (v.6). "...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" (Gal.1 :3,4). In the seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, the last one is the parable of a net (Matt. 13:47). This net in the parable is the net of evangelism, and the casting of the net in the sea refers to world-wide evangelism (Matt.28:19-20). Now let us return to our story. In his profession of fishing, Peter trusted in his own experience and human wisdom when he cast the net, but the result was an empty net, disappointment and failure. Then he obeyed the Lord, and the net was found full of fishes. It is not our experience or cleverness which will bring souls into the net cast by preaching, but our obedience to the Word of the Lord. When casting the net of evangelism we must preach the message of the cross like Paul: "For determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor.2:2). "Christ, Who gave himself...that he might deliver us from this...world"(Gal.1: 3,4). It was the message of the cross, which delivered us from the evil world, and it is as you allow the cross to work in your daily life, that you will experience day-to-day deliverance from the world.

### FISHES BROUGHT TO THE LORD

"And the other disciples came in a little ship; ...dragging the net with fishes...they were come to land" (John 21 :8,9). "...ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19). Now we see that the fishes, after they were caught in the net, were dragged right to the shore. Here is an

illustration of God's purpose of complete separation from the world. "I have chosen you out of the world". The children of Israel were first delivered from Egypt, and then they went through the Red Sea: and were completely separated from Egypt. Deliverance and separation go together; you cannot separate them; they are interlinked. Once I was in Berhampur for special meetings, and I saw a number of fishermen dragging a net to the shore. Due to their negligence and the weakness of the net, some of the fishes jumped out into the pond. How often due to the negligence of the preachers, and their weak presentation of the Gospel message, people who appeared to have been secured in the Gospel net, have slipped back into the world! Then there is another side. If the fishes, after they are caught in the net are kept very near the shore, they will jump back into the sea if they get a chance. Some people are like that. Take for example, the case of Lot. First he pitched his tent toward Sodom (Gen.13:12}. A little later you find him right in Sodom (Gen.19:1 ). Demas was a fellow-worker of Paul, but he was again attracted by the world, and slipped back into it (2Tim.4: 10). If the Lord has delivered you from the wicked world of sin, keep yourself far away from the temptations of the world and live a life of complete separation from its vanities.

### FISHES ON FIRE

"As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread" (John 21: 9). First the fishes were in the sea, then in the net, next on the shore, and finally on the fire. Similarly we were once in the world. Then the Lord delivered us from the world, to live a life of full separation from its ways. But He also wants us to be prepared to go through fire, so that we may be ready and able to feed the people of God.

### THE FIRE OF SUFFERING

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet.1: 7). "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet.4: 12,13). In these passages reference is made to the fire of suffering. You must be prepared to go through suffering, hardship, difficulties and painful experiences. Perhaps you may be persecuted, tortured, badly treated and evil spoken of. You may go through sickness, poverty and calamity. You may experience tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or jail, or danger to life. But the Lord will use such things as fire to test and mature you. It is fire, which takes away the dross from the gold, and makes it pure, solid, shining and precious. It is fire, which makes the earthen vessel strong for use. It is the heat of the sun, which takes away the rawness, hardness, and sourness of fruit, and makes it juicy, sweet, ripe, and eatable. Other things, like fishes, we have to put in the fire, so that they may be made fit for food. How many times God's people murmur and grumble when they go through suffering! How many times saints are disheartened and discouraged and dismayed when they face hardship! How many of us are confused, perplexed and disturbed when we are permitted to go through sickness and poverty! How many times some of us reason with God and question His faithfulness and Almighty power when we are tortured and persecuted! How many have backslidden under painful experiences! If under difficulty, suffering or persecution, you have murmured, or have been discouraged or perplexed, or have reasoned, doubted and gone astray, you can ask the Lord's forgiveness, and He will forgive and cleanse you, but He will not spare you the fire. "Passing through the fire you will not be burned", but He will bring you to a "wealthy place". Taking you through the fire like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, He will burn all the various kinds of cords, which are binding your spiritual life, and will enable you to enjoy full liberty as sons of God. Yes, through that very fire He will bring you to maturity and readiness to fulfill all His purposes. God's ways are strange but wonderful.

J.C.K.

(To be contd.)

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## LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron,  
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Telephone No.27613066  
June 7, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

All honour and glory, praise and power, be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who hath led us into the sixth month of the year, in His infinite goodness and mercy. May His goodness and mercy follow us the rest of the year ahead, as we seek to be His servants and stewards in His House. We would profitably continue our study from 1 Corinthians chapter four, where Paul speaks about the metaphor of stewardship concerning Christian leadership and ministry. This has been taken from the writings of Bro. Eric Alexander, for our profitable pursuit in His service as the Spirit enlightens and empowers us. We are not only stewards of "The mysteries of God" (1Cor.4: 1), but are also entrusted with "The stewardship of criticism and praise", "The stewardship of gifts", and "The stewardship of suffering", as we can learn from the same chapter.

The stewardship of criticism and praise we see from verses 3 to 6. The fact that it is to God alone that we are accountable and that our life and service will come under His scrutiny, should put the judgment of men into its proper context. So after saying that it is required among stewards to be found faithful, Paul goes on to say, "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court. Indeed I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me" (N.I. V.). If you are going to be a faithful steward, then you need to keep your ear attuned to God's assessment of you, and not man's. That means that no Christian leader must ever become a reed shaken about by human criticism or human praise. "Some will hate thee, some will love thee; some will flatter, some will slight. But cease from man, and look above thee; trust in God and do the right". Such an attitude, God ward and God-centred, will save us from becoming the victims or even playthings of human praise or criticism. "It is the Lord who judges me". Secondly, it will save us from becoming the victims of an unhealthy introspection. "Indeed I do not judge myself", We are to give ourselves to serving the Lord and living before Him with a clear conscience and avoid wrongly looking inward to ourselves. There are however two exceptions we I may say, which need to be added -for it does not m mean that we are impervious or resentful towards; anything negative that is said about us, nor does it mean that God's servants do not need encouragement or guidance. The true stewardship of all kinds of criticism is that it should be deflected upwards to God. If it is negative criticism, we need to deflect it upwards to Him, asking Him to teach us whatever He may be saying to us in it and to deliver us from being harmed by it. If it is positive praise, we need to deflect it upwards to Him, for whatever glory there is, it must belong to Him. In this way we are safeguarded by being left under the scrutiny of God.

Now we may consider the stewardship of gifts (v.7). There is just a word about this subject. Paul has been urging them concerning the stewardship of Scripture, saying that if they do not go beyond what is written, they will not be tempted to take pride in one man over against another. So the stewardship of Scripture and the stewardship of gifts are linked. If our minds and spirits are ordered by Scripture, we will not take pride in one man over against another, nor will we set our gifts over against the gifts of another, as though we had something in which to boast. Notice how Paul questions them. "Who maketh

thee to differ? What hast thou that thou didst not receive? If thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" The point is that it is preposterous and ridiculous to boast in gifts that have their origin not in us, but in God. Whatever gifts He has given us, we are merely stewards of them, and it is the stewardship metaphor that helps us rightly to deal with this matter. Since God is our Master, it is not only ludicrous, it is blasphemous to rob Him of the glory that belongs to Him, Who has bestowed this gift on us. We have not earned them; we do not merit them; we are incapable of producing them; they are not ours but God's. How then do we dare to boast in them? We are but stewards and woe unto the man or the woman, who prostitutes the gifts of God to serve his own or her own interests or glory.

Next we consider the stewardship of suffering. We now come to the theme of the passage from verses 8 to 13, which is the stewardship of suffering. There was emotional and spiritual suffering, which Paul experienced as a pastor in the spiritual poverty of the Corinthians. Perhaps the most painful thing to him about their condition was, the illusion about themselves under which they lived and the complacency they displayed. That was what Paul sought to put an end to with the sarcasm and irony of verse 8. Spiritual poverty is one thing but to be perfectly satisfied with it is an alarming spiritual sickness. This verse has the sense, "My, but you are so easily satisfied! How quickly your appetite dies! How readily you congratulate yourselves on being rich when in fact, like the Laodiceans, you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked!" It is their lack of appetite, the death of any awareness of need, that really distresses the Apostle. It breaks his heart and tears his soul, because it represents the signs of a deep-seated spiritual malady. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" says Jesus, and the corresponding woe in Luke's version of the Sermon is, "Woe unto you who are full now".

So Paul suffered on their behalf agonizing over their spiritual condition. But he also suffered physically; "For I think God has set forth Apostles last of all, as men doomed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (v.9). The whole picture he sees as illustrated in the triumphant procession of a general after a war or a campaign. The spoils of his victory were brought in and last of all, trailing in the dust and often in chains were prisoners, who were on display. Paul sees the Apostles as trailing in the dust at the end of the procession, condemned to die. They have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels and men. They have become fools for Christ (v. 1 a). Then from verse 11 we have a picture of some of the extreme physical sufferings that Paul endured for the Gospel's sake, and he emphasises that this is not ancient history, but his present experience, "unto this present hour" (v.11), "even until now" (v.13). Now the question for us is, how are we to steward our sufferings for Christ? It is a stewardship that God has given us. He entrusts us with different kinds of sufferings that it may all be employed for His glory. In our next issue, God helping, we will consider how Paul did "steward his sufferings".

God's servant Bro. Ambrose together with our co-workers in and around Rajahmundry, besides the saints and brethren of the House of Peace, Danavaipet, would have us to thank and praise the Lord for answered prayers for the mini convocation held in the nearby college grounds from 26th to 30th May. An average of 2000 attended, and the weather was comparatively cooler than the previous years. Quite a number decided for the Lord, while others recommitted their lives to serve Him in His heavenly plan. God's servants Bros. Timothy, Paul Sudhakar, John Stewart, besides some of us, had liberty in the ministry of the Word for those days, based on the theme "Looking unto Jesus". They covet our prayers for the follow up work. Kindly pray for the health and recovery of God's servant Bro. Phillip of Porumamilla who met with a scooter accident, and was hospitalised at Tirupathi because of slight head injury. Also pray for God's servant Bro. Pavankumar of Paloncha who also met with an accident while proceeding on the scooter.

With a sense of sorrow we would mention the promotion to Glory of Sis.(Mrs.) Esther Khan, (wife of God's servant, late Bro. Jordan Khan) on the 25th of May, while at Trillidad (West Indies), with her daughter Beulah and family. Sis. Esther, with her sister (Mrs.) Ruth Martin were saved from a Muslim background and were led to the church at Jehovah -Shammah, from the inception of that work under late Bro. Bakht Singh and elders. She with other sisters and late. Miss. G. M. Stalley had served in the

ministry of the Gospel in the South, besides staying and ministering to the church in the Sisters' home that was provided for them, then at Madras, called Hephzibah. Later, after her marriage with Bro. Jordan Khan she served the Lord with her family faithfully in the North India and finally at Jabalpur. She rests from her labours (labours in the Gospel as Paul says in Phil.4: 3) besides the labours in the fellowship of the churches, with her husband. She awaits her reward as the Lord hath said, "to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev.14: 13; 22:12). Let us pray for the comfort of the family.

The saints and brethren in the church at Jehovah -Shammah covet our prayers for the early completion of the renovation work of the main building, as 12th July 2004 marks the 63rd anniversary of the Lord's work and testimony, established there through the instrumentality of late Bro.Bakht Singh. Last Sunday, 6th June, was an occasion to remember his 101st birthday anniversary.

Praying that we all may be enabled to fulfill our stewardship in the divers spheres of our calling and ministry faithfully, as those fully accountable unto our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ,

I remain,  
Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP

Luke 16: 10-12  
Rev. 2: 10  
Matt. 24: 45-47

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# Hebron Messenger

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VOI. XLII

June 27, 2004

NO 13

## "I WILL MAKE YOU TO BECOME FISHERS OF ME"- 2 (MARK 1: 17)

We have seen from John 21: 1-15 that through the net of the Gospel preaching, we sinners were brought out of the world to live a life of total separation from its ways. Then we are taken through the fire of suffering to be able to feed the people of God. The next fire is,

### THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3,4). "...Who maketh his...ministers a flame of fire" (Heb.1: 7).

We know that fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit plays a major and an important part in the spiritual growth of the saints, and God wants His servants themselves to become flames of fire. It means that the power of the Holy Spirit, like fire, must be manifested in the life and ministry of His servants. When God's ministers become flames of fire, and the power of the Holy Ghost, like fire, is released through them, their ministry brings cleansing and warmth in the lives of those who listen, and God uses it for their spiritual growth.

John Sung, the well-known Chinese evangelist, was called "Flame", because of the power of the Holy Ghost manifested in his ministry, which brought awakening and revival in many countries of South East Asia. Alas! Many times the ministry of God's servants is not in the power of the Holy Ghost. As a result, it only increases the Bible knowledge of God's children, without touching their spiritual inward life. That is why, even after many years of ministry, there is no growth or maturity evident in the saints. On the other hand, many believers do not allow the Spirit of God to work in their lives even though the Word is presented in the power of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord remove both these defects and raise up ministers who will become "flames of fire", -presenting the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost; and may He also prepare the hearts of the hearers to receive that ministry which is released in the power and fire of the Holy Ghost. Such ministry will bring spiritual growth and maturity among the believers.

### BRINGING THE FISHES TO THE LORD

"Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught" (John 21: 5, 10).

The Lord asked His disciples if they had any food to give Him, but they had nothing. How many believers are there who are full of anger, wrath, bitterness, jealousy, strife and evil -speaking! Can such things satisfy the Lord? How many believers, husbands and wives, quarrel among themselves, and have no peace at home! Can this give satisfaction to the Lord? How many believers are unfaithful to the Word of God in their business, and make money by unscriptural dealings! They have nothing that can give satisfaction to the Lord. How many carnal Christians have fleshly desires! The Lord does not get any pleasure from their lives. How many saints live inconsistent lives in their schools, colleges, hospitals and offices, and do things, which are not pleasing to the Lord! Many servants of God labour hard in serving Him, like Peter toiling the whole night. But they serve the Lord with fleshly zeal, and not in the power of the Holy Spirit, nor in the perfect will of God and hence give no satisfaction to Him. The Lord is asking you the same question that He asked His disciples, "Children, have ye any meat?" If the Lord shows you

your weaknesses, shortcomings, failures and sins, confess them frankly, immediately and fully, "O Lord! I have failed Thee in many matters. My walk, talk, family life, business life, behaviour in school or college, have not given Thee full satisfaction". He will then cleanse you, and if you are prepared to go through the different experiences, of fire, your life and ministry will be such as can satisfy the Lord.

### FISH FOR THE LORD

"As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught" (John 21: 9,10). Oh dear brothers and sisters, it is only those believers who have been through the fires of suffering and cleansing by the Holy Ghost that can fully satisfy the Lord. Isaiah prophesied concerning the Lord: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" -(Isa.53: 11).

### FISH FOR THE DISCIPLES

"Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise"(John 21: 13). First of all, our lives and ministry should- satisfy the longing heart of the Lord. Then it should satisfy the believers. How often the lives and ministry of God's servants do not satisfy the saints! Paul said to the elders of the church in Ephesus, "...feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28).

The fish was first roasted, then the Lord took them and gave them to the disciples for the satisfaction of their hunger. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"(Matt.5: 6). Like the roasted fish you should first be made fit by the hands of God to feed His people. Then, even as the fish was taken, broken and distributed by the Lord, so must you yield yourself completely into His hands, so that He can use you to feed His people. Then they will be satisfied and edified through your yielded life and ministry.

### FISH FOR THE MULTITUDES

"...and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6: 11, 12). First you see the fish satisfying the Lord, then satisfying the disciples, and finally satisfying the hunger of the multitudes. May the Lord lead you through the experiences of deliverance, separation and fire, and make your life and ministry satisfying to the Lord to feed His people, and also become a means of bringing true satisfaction to many perishing souls.

J.C.K.

(Concluded)

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## LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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June 21, 2003

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prevailing Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who would have us to be faithful servants and stewards in His House, to give them meat in due season, awaiting the Lord's return. Praise Him indeed for His promise, "Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods". The Lord make us all to live and labour in the reality and rejoicing of this promise (Num.12: 7; Matt.24: 44-47).

We would like to study from 1 Corinthians chapter 4, as to how Paul did steward his sufferings, as entrusted with many different kinds of sufferings in the service of the Lord. Three things may be considered from this passage. Firstly, the Sovereignty of God in our sufferings. We must not miss the little phrase in verse 9, "for it seems to me that God has put us Apostles on the display" (from another version). This gives us the perspective from which Paul views his circumstances. In this connection he does not present God's Sovereignty as a dry academic doctrine, but as a divine stabilizer in the storms of life, bringing the believer poise, peace and assurance. It is God Who put us in our present circumstances. That conviction is the ground of security of the child of God, and the perspective from which he is to view suffering and steward it.

This is precisely the perspective from which the Lord Jesus viewed His sufferings. When Pilate blustered and threatened Him with his authority, He calmly replied, "You could have no authority over me, except it were given to you by My Father". So the last word in suffering is never with man, but with God, and this will enable us to steward it by grace.

Secondly, the honour of Christ in our suffering. Having spoken of being made a spectacle to the whole universe, Paul adds at the beginning of verse 10, "We are fools for Christ's sake". This is the significant thing about the Apostle's sufferings. -they are for Christ's sake. When the sufferings as well as the blessings of life are taken up in the hands of God and woven into His eternal purpose to honour and glorify His Son, then that is enough for the Apostle and us.

Thirdly, the example of Christ in our sufferings. This is the third perspective from which Paul stewards and views his own sufferings. In this matter, the Lord Jesus sets us the perfect example. Verses 12 and 13 refer to our sufferings at the hand of others; "...being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we endure; being defamed we in treat...". Cursing, persecution and slander may be our lot, but the question is, "How do we react to it?" Paul says that we are to follow the Saviour's example. "When they hurled insults at Him, He did not retaliate. When He suffered He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him that judges rightly" (1 Pet.2: 23). This is precisely how the Lord Jesus taught us to steward sufferings. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you". There are three phrases, which will summarize this teaching about the stewardship of suffering. They are, "From Him" - He is the Sovereign Lord; "For Him" -it is His honour that will be the outcome of it; and "Like Him" -for the end in view is the likeness of Christ.

We would like to consider another metaphor which Paul uses for Christian leadership and that is the "Fatherhood metaphor". This is Paul's third and final metaphor in relation to leadership, as seen from 1 Cor.4:14. From this verse Paul explains that he is willing to exercise a stewardship of suffering on behalf of the Corinthians, because they are his beloved children. He has, of course, been an evangelist among them. He has fulfilled the function of a teacher sent from God. In verse 15, however, he is eager to highlight the distinction which makes him something infinitely more than either of these. They might have had many tutors or guardians, but they had only one father and "In Christ Jesus", says Paul, "I became your father through the Gospel". What he meant was that he was intimately involved in their spiritual birth. In his writing to the Galatians, Paul describes himself as their spiritual mother. "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Gal.4: 19); while to the Thessalonians he speaks of himself as a nursemaid, gently caring for her children in their formative years (1 Thess.2: 7). The point of these metaphors is that the Apostle is describing the most intimate, personal



relationship between himself and those he cared for in the church of God.

Two things may be said about his fatherhood.

Firstly, its origin -"I became your father through the Gospel" (verse 15). The implication is that he not only brought the Gospel to them, but was actually present to witness the miracle of regeneration as they were brought into the family of God. It was that which gave him a unique relationship with them. Secondly, there are several implications of being a spiritual father. Negatively, it implies neither authority nor superiority. It is in this sense that the Lord Jesus forbids the term, "Call no man your father on earth" (Matt.23: 9). In this way, Paul addresses his fellow -Christians not as their father, but as their brother. Positively however, there are several implications of spiritual fatherhood. We may consider three.

A father's example. This is where true spiritual authority comes from. "I became your father through the Gospel. I beseech you therefore be imitators of me". Spiritual authority does not come with age. It does not merely come with experience, education or position. Some were inclined to despise Timothy because of his comparative youthfulness. "Don't let anybody despise your youth, but be an example to the flock". Age does not confer authority, and certainly youth does not disqualify from it. Only an exemplary life of true godliness confers it. "Be imitators of me" (1 Cor.4: 16). The Lord write these words upon our hearts. God willing, we shall study in our next issue the other implications of spiritual fatherhood.

Bro. John Sundar Rao, with brethren and saints of Canaan, Marredpally, are thankful for the prayers of all fellow -believers in Christ, for the completion of their new worship hall, Canaan, at Mahendra Hills, Secunderabad. which was dedicated on the 18th of June. Fellow.-believers and leading brethren from the churches of the twin cities were present, when Bro. G. T. Benjamin and myself shared the Word, followed by a love feast. They covet our prayers for the ministry there and further construction of the upper floor to be completed.

The 22nd North America Convocation will be held God willing, at Le Moyne College facilities, (Syracuse) from 14th to 18th July. Let us pray for His ministers and all co-workers of Bro. Koshy of Syracuse, that they receive divine wisdom and sufficiency for all responsibilities pertaining to the holding of this Convocation and its blessings for those who will participate from the States and other countries.

Bro. Swami, who had been in association with us in the fellowship of the Gospel for more than four decades, was called Home to Glory on 9th June, after a prolonged period of hospitalisation at Secunderabad. The little flock at NOIDA, New Delhi, was blessed by his service as a shepherd for the past ten years. Indeed he laboured worthy of "the crown of glory" (1 Pet.5: 4). Pray for the comfort of his wife and children.

Praying that the Lord may enable us all to serve Him with gladness, according to His purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord,

I remain,  
Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP

Mark 10 .45  
Acts 20: 19-24  
Luke 2 .37, 38

## BAKHT SINGH

Many believers enjoy Bible Study, but they do not claim God's promises for their daily need. They depend upon their own will power. We can claim God's promises for safety and protection to defeat the enemy. We have to hold on to all the precious promises given to us to encourage us. Then we can see God working in our midst according to His faithfulness, fulfilling the promises, which are given to us during our quiet time or through the messages of God's servants. First of all, in Acts 4:23-31 we see how the early believers lifted up their voices to God. They believed in the greatness of God and claimed the promises, which God gave to David. "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" (Acts 4:25). They believed that all that had happened was in fulfillment of the promises, and so they prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word" (v.29). They did not wish their enemies any harm, but wanted the Lord to give them boldness before the people to preach Christ. When people oppose us, we need not think of taking revenge but claim boldness for the message to be given.

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thess.5: 16-18). These three verses go together. Pray without ceasing means pray for every matter with burden not occasionally but always. We do not pray sufficiently but casually, and that too on special occasions. Here it says, "Pray without ceasing", pray always, even for small matters. Before giving the word we can pray, "Now Lord, help me, touch my tongue, throat and lips". In an unconscious way we find our hearts crying to God even for small things.

The sixth weapon we find in Acts 12:5. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him". Agonising prayer is the sixth spiritual weapon. Not just occasional prayer but travailing in prayer with burden. There are times when we have to pray with agony in our hearts, for those who are suffering, through sickness or by any other means. In Acts 12 it was a wonderful prayer meeting. They were really travailing. Similarly, we read in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them". They prayed together to find God's perfect will or plan for them for the future ministry. It was a very important matter. They prayed through till God spoke definitely. We do not know how long they prayed, but God said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul". We must agonise in prayer till we hear the voice of God for our personal matters as well as for ministry.

Seventhly, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). They prayed by singing praises. They took no notice of the suffering they were going through, even though they were beaten, scourged and thrown into prison. "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely" (Acts 16: 22-23). Without any fault they were beaten, their clothes were torn and their feet were made fast in stocks. In their agony, they did not wish their persecutors any harm or wrath of God. They began to sing praises and claimed salvation for those in the prison, including the jailor. They prayed for those who beat them and falsely accused them and that is how the Lord shook the prison and worked mightily in that area. They believed God had allowed that suffering in their lives to accomplish the work of salvation in the prison. Instead of praying for the wrath of God to fall upon their enemies they prayed for their salvation.

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

(Concluded)