

Hebron Messenger

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NO 5

NUMBERING OUR DAYS - 2

"From the wilderness journey of the children of Israel we can see how serious it is to waste our days indeed (see Exodus 19:1; Numbers 10:11, 12; Deut. 1 :2). Kadesh Barnea was at the border of Canaan, so that upon leaving Mount Sinai they could have entered Canaan after eleven days' journey. Instead of that they wandered in the wilderness for forty years before their descendants finally entered the promised land. What a circle they travelled! Not three or five years, but forty long years! Likewise, how many days have we wasted in our spiritual journey? Whereas a problem or sin could have been resolved and set aside in three or four days, we have allowed them to remain unsolved for several years and wasted many years. Such a loss is truly serious and should not be viewed as insignificant. 1 Cor. 10:5,6,11 tell us that the children of Israel are our ensamples and so we need to be warned.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus Christ shows us how we must redeem the time by living for Him and working for Him (Matt. 20:1-8). If you are not living in the will of God, you are in God's sight as one standing idle, no matter how much of other work you might have been doing. The work done in His vineyard alone is recognised by Him. "All day" in this passage refers to a lifetime. Working for Him does not mean full-time ministry, resigning our jobs and going for full-time service, although God does call some for such ministry. But we all can serve Him faithfully in the place where He keeps us by doing His will. There are several kinds of work in His vineyard, not preaching only. The question is, what is your heart-attitude towards God's will? It makes individual consecration absolutely necessary (Romans 12:1,2). If you do not love the Lord whole-heartedly after being saved, your life is deemed as standing idle. According to 1 Corinthians 3:1,2 you will remain babes spiritually. The believers at Corinth actually wasted their time; instead of growing in the Lord, they became carnal. Therefore we need to pray like Moses, asking the Lord to teach us to number our days.

In Galatians 6: 10 we are taught to make use of the 'opportunities' to love the Lord, obey Him and serve Him. There are several examples of this in the New Testament. In John 12:3, Mary took the opportunity to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus Christ before His burial. The other women who went to anoint His body on the resurrection morning could not do so. Similarly, Zacchaeus in Luke 19 took the opportunity to set things right with the Lord and experienced the salvation although his background was very bad; whereas the rich young ruler lost his opportunity in obeying and following the Lord, though he was good in himself (Mark 10:21,22).

How do we redeem the time? It is by placing our lives and our time into His hands upon the altar. Often we cut short the time of devotion that we need to spend in His presence, to attend to other jobs. This leads only to loss. In the example of the five loaves and two fishes placed in His hands, the Lord could bless and multiply them. Similarly, when we place our time in His hands, He will redeem it for us and we will have sufficient time for everything that we need to accomplish.

When we look back upon our lives and on the lost opportunities, our hearts ache over the years we have foolishly wasted. We may lament and say, "My best years are eaten by locusts. What shall I do?" Thank God, He still gives us hope, comfort and assurance from His Word. "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25). Thank God, He still has a way to restore to us those years which the locusts and caterpillars have eaten away. As for the wasted days, our ten years may have been counted as only one day in God's calendar. But if we repent and seek His mercy and hereafter redeem the time, one day may become equal to thousand days. "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand" (Psalm 84:10a), The day on earth is not clocked in heaven on the basis of twenty-four hours. Instead, God has His way of computation. If our service is according to His will, one day in His sight may be reckoned as many days.

A young man who was about to die, heard the Gospel and on his deathbed he received the Lord and was born again. He lived as a believer only for a month and sorrowed that he did not have any opportunity to serve the Lord. He said, "I am not afraid to die; Jesus has saved me, but I have done nothing for Him. Must I go to Him with empty hands?" This incident prompted the hymn-writer to compose the famous hymn:

"Must I go and empty handed?
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?
Not one day of service give Him,
Lay no trophy at His feet?"

"Must I go and empty handed?
Must I meet my Saviour so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him?
Must I empty handed go?"

This hymn was published in 1878 and God has used it to challenge many to offer themselves to serve the Lord. Though that young man lost many of his days, he still retained a little desire for the Lord in his heart at the time of his death and the Lord fulfilled it.

May we all learn to number our days and plead with the Lord to restore our lost days. May each day be equal to thousand days as we walk in God's will step by step.

D.S.C.

(Concluded)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron,
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Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the Name of our risen and reigning Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec", "made after the power of an endless life." May He sustain us all in the enjoyment and empowerment of His risen life, for the furtherance of His Testimony (Rom. 8:31-34; Heb.5:10; 7:16,17; 2 Tim.1 :7-10).

Continuing our thoughts regarding the expression and manifestation of the power of that life, we must consider further along the following lines. That which is true in the case of an individual believer, can be equally true in the case of a church, the collective company. It may have life, eternal life, and yet there may be no express testimony of its presence, or but a very limited manifestation. This expression, this manifestation of the testimony of His presence is inseparably bound up with the supreme issue -the resurrection and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is at the right hand of the Majesty on High, in absolute Lordship, is bound up with an expression here, amidst and among that collective company which compose His Church, expression, let us repeat, of that life which is His RISEN life.

This as we know is no small matter. The last Adam was made a "life-giving spirit" -life giving, that is life manifesting itself, -life transmitted, life expressed. And if that is not exemplified in and through the believer, and through the Church as a whole, there is something taken away from the testimony of the Lord Jesus. How is there to be the proof, the demonstration, the evidence, the final establishment of the fact that Jesus is alive from the dead, and is Lord? It is by the triumphant expression of His LIFE in HIS OWN. It is not by a doctrinal statement. Christ is never proved to be alive from the dead, or to be

Lord, by doctrinal statements. Our statement of faith may include the fact, that we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and ascended to heaven, and is at the right hand of the Majesty on High, but how are we going to prove our statement?

What has God given as the evidence of that? We may believe it, and be willing to lay down our life for that faith. We may state it with tremendous emphasis, and yet thereby we are not proving it. You will never prove anything by saying, "I believe with all my might, that this is the case!!!" You will never prove a thing by standing up and declaring it, as something which you believe. You will never prove a thing by saying, "I believe in all the fundamentals of Christian faith", and calling yourself by the name which indicates that you believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Nothing is ever proved that way. We may reduce the whole matter to two points. Firstly, that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and secondly, on the basis of that, He is Lord of all. We still have to prove our statement after we have made it. If we appeal to the fact that the Word of God says so, even then we prove nothing. Our proof can never be by argument; because what argument can build up, argument can pull down; what logic can construct, logic can destroy.

How then are we going to prove that this is so? By the expression and manifestation of His RISEN life, that is all- but that is a mighty "all". That signifies that we are the embodiment of the thing which we declare, so that besides the doctrinal statement, there is the living expression. Thus the RESURRECTION and the LORDSHIP of Christ are bound up with this expression which is called "testimony". The testimony is not a system of truth. The testimony is that extra factor to the statement, and presentation of the truth, which is the power of a life that conquers death. How then shall we prove that Jesus has conquered death? The proof will be a death-conquering life, that expresses itself in us. God helping, we will continue these thoughts in our next issue.

The Tsunami deluge and the consequent disaster of 26th December, 2004, which had hit many parts of the South Indian coastline, including Andaman's, and Sri Lanka, taking its terrible toll of lives and property lost or swept away, was spoken of as a natural calamity by the media. However we believe, it is something God permitted to remind men and women of the brevity and insecurity of this present life and hence the vital need to turn to God in repentance. However, it has moved the hearts of people, nations and Christian organisations to send help and relief. Let us pray that the sufferers and those in bereavement, be given the Gospel of life eternal.

Sri Lanka, our neighboring country too was very badly affected. We felt some help may be sent to them to reach Bro. Neville Jayasundara and the elders of the Christian Fellowship Centre, 7, Vivekananda Road, Wellmatte, Colombo 6. The visit of Bro. and Sis. D.S. Christopher and their stay there at the Fellowship Centre from 3rd to 6th February has helped forward this ministry. The following is an extract of his report. "We had a blessed time of fellowship with the saints in Colombo, Winnepuwa, and other sister assemblies in the coast. Believers have been wonderfully preserved, except that about six of them lost their houses and belongings. One village in the east coast was entirely swept away by the Tsunami hit. In their blindness and hostility they had written blasphemous things about Christmas day, and such, and now they are silent, recognizing the hand of God. We ought to pray for all such. In one of the assemblies of the southwest coast, the servant of God with fellow-believers sheltered and fed about three hundred victims till official help came. This is the good work of practical Christianity, which we are exhorted to do- "...that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). This has softened the hearts of the unbelieving. Let us pray for their salvation.

" Sis. Caroline, (younger sister of Sis. Joseline, serving the Lord with her husband, God's servant Bro. Barnabas, at Comarole, near Giddalur), was married to Bro. John Manohar, at Hebron, on the 22nd February. Bro. G. T. Benjamin solemnized the marriage. They covet our prayers. Praying that life, life abundant may become our experience and enjoyment and we be an expression of the same individually, family wise and in the fellowship of the church, locally,

John 10: 10

Eph. 1: 19,20

Heb. 7: 16,24-26

I remain,
Yours in his grace,
K. Philip

EVERLASTING LOVE
(Some thoughts on the Lord's Supper)
BAKHT SINGH

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31 :3).

When we take part in the Lord's Table, what are we reminded of? Most of us will say that we are reminded of the Lord's death, but there is something deeper than that. In a very symbolic way the Lord is saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love". In Rev.13:8 (last part) we read, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." We know that our Lord Jesus died on the cross only about 2,000 years ago, but in the plan of God, He was slain from the foundation of the world. Long before any part of the universe came into existence, the Lord thought of us and planned our salvation. You may have been born again a few years, or even a few weeks or days ago, but in the mind of God you were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1 :4). God knew about us before this universe was created, -before the sun or moon or stars came into existence. If our Lord has thought about us for such a long time, surely this tells us that His love is everlasting. How can anyone comprehend such a love? The Lord's Table is one way by which God makes us understand the greatness of the measure of His love. God's love cannot be understood easily by any man, and certainly not by reading books, or by any verbal explanation, yet God has made a heavenly plan, by means of which His love can be comprehended, understood and enjoyed by His people.

In Ephesians 3: 14-19 we have the prayer of the apostle for the believers at Ephesus, and in that prayer all the believers are included. Those believers had made very rapid progress spiritually. Unlike the people of Corinth, who spiritually remained as babes through their carnality, the Ephesians believers became spiritually mature. When the apostle wrote to them, he told them that he was praying for them with a great burden. He was very happy that they were growing spiritually, and that they were able to understand heavenly things. But he wanted them to have a still greater experience, even that they might know the love of Christ which passeth all understanding. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and - length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, hat ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph.3:17-19). That was God's highest thought for them, and that was the substance of the apostle's prayer. He told them that the love of Christ cannot be comprehended or understood by human knowledge, or even by Bible knowledge, and that it is by knowing that love that we can be filled with all the fullness of God. That is something beyond our comprehension. If someone were to tell us that all the water in the whole world could be contained in a small bottle, would we believe it? How can the water of the oceans, so deep and so wide, be filled into that one little bottle? The thought of God's fullness and might is something even greater. The purpose of the great and living God is to fill us with His fullness. That is why He came into the world to die for us; that is why He rose again, and that is what He had planned from eternity.

When man wants to do a great work, he spends many years in planning it. Our Lord planned His great work from eternity, and because it is so true, so wonderful and so mysterious, He had to choose His own method to teach us so great a truth. That is why He ordained the Lord's Supper of Remembrance. Alas! the Lord's Supper has become a mere ritual and ceremony or formality in many parts of the world. On a day like Easter Sunday, for instance, you will find crowds inside and outside a church building waiting to take part in what they call the Holy Communion. Smokers, gamblers, fornicators, drunkards, who have not been to a church building for many months, and have not prayed one word of prayer for many months, go to a church building and take part blindly in what they call Holy Communion. Yet this is not a mere ceremony in which to take part! There is not the least suggestion in any part of the Bible, to indicate that it was intended to be a ceremony or rite. Our Lord Jesus Himself

ordained it. "This do in remembrance of me" He said (1 Cor. 11 :24,25). So simple and clear are His words: "This do in remembrance of me!", yet people take part in it like Hindus take 'prasadam' in their temples. Please note that the Lord's Supper is not a 'prasadam' or a ceremony.

(To be

contd.)

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NO 6

THE DEATH MOST REMEMBERED

"Twenty centuries have rolled by and yet... that one death is the most remembered by most people even today. It all happened to a young Man Who was just thirty-three. He had to His credit several miracles. He made the blind to see and the lame to walk. He walked on water, stilled the storm by a mere word and even raised the dead to life on three separate occasions. Yet His generation hung Him on a wooden cross. The crown of thorns, which punctured the head, marred that face with blood. The lacerated body through merciless whipping was suspended -partly through the nails driven through His hands and feet. He hung there as a spectacle before that sadistic crowd that watched and mocked. He was JESUS. The whole Bible, particularly the New Testament, is woven around this central event -the CROSS.

Why did Jesus die? Why should His death be remembered? Dear reader, the answer is twofold. Firstly, you and I had apart in that death. Secondly, Jesus' death alone has the solution for all our problems. You would soon discover that this twofold answer is the very reason why most people world-wide remember His death even today.

Beneath the masks of religion, region, culture and language, we are basically human, -finite but the most wonderful creatures upon earth. We can smile with justified pride that animals, plants and the material universe can nowhere be compared to our intelligence. We are special. Yet... mankind is the only species that is restless. We have no peace. Hatred, violence, bloodshed, lust, greed are our hallmarks. Even our crimes are high-tech. We are the most frightened lot, looking at people and events with suspicion. Diseases and hospitals, police, courts and jails exist at great cost just to keep humanity going without self-extinction. World Health Organization reported a few years ago that every forty seconds, someone somewhere commits suicide and the tragic, added comment was that only one out of ten cases come to the notice of the authorities. We are a directionless, depressed lot. What a tragedy!

God cares and the Bible names this tragedy as SIN. Sin originates in the heart of man and so the Bible says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer.17:9). God's Word asks us, "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).

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. We are not talking about the flesh and blood heart which any leading cardiac surgeon could rectify. We do talk instead of the heart that is the birthplace of deception, pride, hatred, lust, jealousy and selfishness. The Bible states emphatically three truths about sin. Firstly, we are born in sin. This is genetically inherited. Secondly, we cannot save ourselves from sin. Religions including Christianity and good works cannot save us from sins. We need a Saviour. Thirdly, God has provided a Saviour in Jesus. He died on the cross to legally settle the problem of sin. Jesus was made sin for us. That is the story of the cross.

Sin brings guilt and guilt brings unrest. SIN is a power that rules us and eventually ruins us. Guilt and power of sin are the two problems humanity in general faces and the ONLY person who found a solution is JESUS.

In the cross, the demands of God's justice and God's love were fully met. The Lord Jesus Christ look upon Himself the wrath of God which should have justly fallen upon you and me. He died in our place and the only reason He did so was LOVE. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were

yet sinners, CHRIST died for US" (Rom. 5:8). In God's court of justice the rulebook said, "...without shedding of blood is no remission" (forgiveness of sins) (Heb. 9:22). God now forgives any man or woman on the basis of Jesus' blood. "...the blood of JESUS CHRIST... cleanseth (purifies) us from all sin" (1 John 1 :7).

Did God accept Jesus' sacrifice? Yes, He did. On the third day Jesus rose again. His bodily resurrection, the stunning fact of history, attested by the open tomb in Jerusalem today, is a mute testimony that Jesus is alive. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). 'Justification' is a term where God removes legally the guilt of a sinner to offer him righteousness. A sinner is MADE RIGHTEOUS at the cross. This is the essence of the Gospel.

Un dealt and unforgiving sin eventually leads a sinner after death to an eternal hell - a place of unending torment. Jesus paid the price and now the sinner is set free.

Forgiveness, freedom and fellowship with God are now offered at the cross. If there could be any other way man could save himself, then the death of Jesus is the 'biggest blunder' God ever committed. My friend, there was no other way and hence Jesus had to die.

The Lord Jesus, though the POTENTIAL Saviour for the whole world, becomes the PRACTICAL Saviour to those who are willing to repent and believe this good news. The God of love sent Jesus, to die for you and me. Our sin demanded His death. Our deliverance is provided through His death.

Jesus died for you. Believe it to experience the joy of forgiveness, freedom and fellowship with God.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

May all honour, glory and praise be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has triumphed on the cross, spoiling principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly? "Now thanks be unto God", in the words of Apostle Paul, "which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the Saviour of his knowledge by us in every place". Such Saviour of His knowledge, to be manifested, demands the resurrection life of our Lord to be operative in us day by day (Col. 2:15; 2 Cor. 2:14, 15; 4:10-12).

Continuing our thoughts bound up with the expression "Testimony", we may profit from the following message of late Bro. Austin Sparks, who was also an exponent of the power of resurrection through his life and ministry, like his honoured servant late Bro. Bakht Singh. Death-conquering life that expresses itself in us, is the means by which it can be attested that Christ has conquered death. Though we do not put life in the place of Christ, we do say that such attestation of Christ is by the life. We do not mean the manner of life, but life-power, the impact or spiritual force, which emanates from Him as on the throne -afar greater spiritual power, than that of death and darkness emanating from the evil one.

Therefore the major weapon of the enemy will be death. Death is also a spiritual power. Thus it becomes a battle between two spiritual powers, the power of life and the power of death. The battle goes on and will go on, until the Church becomes so vitalised by this Divine power that, in a moment, those who are in the grave, and those who are alive and remain, are caught up in a mighty resurrection -ascension, to the Lord in Glory. The battle between these two great spiritual powers will go on till then.

This is a battle in which we find ourselves. It is an intensifying battle, and we had better recognize it once for all. It is difficult to accept that sometimes, even though we assent to it mentally. When things become difficult, we are surprised and wonder, and think it strange that it should be so. But it must be recognized and accepted that this spiritual warfare between life and death will intensify toward the end, and it will reach its highest point of tension, right at the point where the church is to be translated. That is undoubtedly made clear from the Word of God.

When we consider the sphere of the conflict, in the first place, we may consider the individual believer. Let us remember that this life of the Risen Lord, is linked with the Holy Spirit, Who is the Spirit of life, Who resides in the very deepest part of our being, in our spirit, in what the New Testament calls "the inner man". Therefore the most spiritual people will find that the conflict of life rages around their spirit. There is a direct assault upon their spirit to get it weakened, and to get it shut in and pressed down - even sometimes to such an extent, that in the depths of their being they feel as though they cannot breathe. One of two things will result. Either their spirit will be pressed out under this weight of spiritual death, and they will go under or else they will have to call earnestly upon the Lord, that they may be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3: 16), and exercise faith on the ground of their prayer and seek to assert their spirit against this thing. It would be good to recall the words of Apostle Paul in this connection, "...we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: ...we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. 1: 8,9).

The trouble with many of us, Lord's people, is that we do not so to speak, stand straight upon the feet of our spirit, -that is, we do not rise up in spirit and in the Name of the Lord and meet and resist that thing which is threatening to crush the very life out of our spirit. There is an accepting of things, there is a consenting, there is a passive attitude. Or else there is a getting into an awful swirl of questionings, doubtings, arguments, discussions with the Devil, so to say. One is tempted to go round in eternal circle of introspection, and analysis, which leads nowhere. As believers we ought, in our spirits, to rise up in faith, in the Name of the Lord, to resist that thing and refuse it, calling upon His Name, and the energies of the Holy Ghost. We must learn to do that.

Also there may be much that the nemy can use and play upon in natural conditions, making the most of all that is available of our own uman weakness, and perhaps our physical condition and our constitution, our make up, and our surroundings, nevertheless ultimately it is not a question of anything in nature but a matter of being strong in the spirit. The key to victory is our spirit - union with our risen and reigning Lord.

There are other realms of course in, which this death battle goes on. Sometimes it is upon the mind -a numbing, something like paralyzing the mind. The mind gets overclouded and death or darkness creeps over it. Thus the enemy makes assaults upon our minds, no doubt. He attacks our soul, not only the intellectual side, but every side. The enemy makes an assault upon the emotional side to freeze our feelings, to hinder us from heart function in relation to the Lord. The same is true in the realm of the will. There are times when it seems we cannot make a decision, cannot direct our will in the way of the Lord. The will comes under attack like that. Death breaks upon us in each of these spheres and the experience is more or less common to us all. That has been the history of the Lord's people. So it becomes a question as to whether the enemy is going to use that thing to undo us together or whether inspite of it we are to be found proving the power of a life which triumphs over it and carries us on. God helping, we will continue in our next issue.

Bro. D.S. Christopher and Sis. (Mrs.) Ruth Christopher covet our prayers as they leave for U.S.A., God willing on the 1st March, to be available and helpful to families and fellowship of His people, in the ministry of His Word, prayer and personal counsels. Please pray that the Lord may grant them travel mercies in the journeys for the next six weeks or so.

Though belated, we mention the Home-call of Bro. P.M. David of Ambur, on 24th January, after a period of hospitalisation. For more than four decades he served in the medical department in Doha atar, and was used of the Lord to gather His people on the basis of Acts 2:42. He finished his course and came to his "grave in a full age" (Job 5:26). Pray for the younger generation of his family.

Praying that the great ambition of the great Apostle Paul, in the words, "I may know him, and the power

of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3: 10) may re-echo in our hearts and find recognition and realisation in our life and ministry, in a humble measure,

2 Cor. 1: 8-1

Rev. 1:17,18

Heb. 13: 7, 8

I remain,
Yours in his grace,
K. Philip

EVERLASTING LOVE – 2 BAKHT SINGH

The Lord's Supper was ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ to enable us in a symbolic way to comprehend the love of God which passeth all knowledge. When we see the bread and the cup on the Table, we are reminded that our Lord gave ALL that He had. He could not do anything more than what He did to save us. He emptied Himself completely to redeem us, to make us His own. He emptied Himself of His heavenly glory, and in a human body came to a humble home. When at last He went to the cross, He gave His whole body. His hands and feet were pierced, and His face was spat upon. He gave His head to be crowned with thorns; He gave His back to the smiters; He gave His ears to hear the words of filthy abuse, which were spoken against Him. Finally He gave His life itself. Thus, He gave all that He had. In the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross of Calvary, He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. What a terrible burden it was to His sinless soul! That is why John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

The Lord Jesus Christ not only bore physical suffering when He gave Himself, but He suffered in His soul also. He was made sin for us. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor: 5:21). All the burden of our sins was transferred to Him. Supposing someone is asked to drink all the dirty water of all the filthy gutters; would it not be unthinkable? No one could even endure the smell of all that filth, much less drink it. But our sins are far worse than that filthy water. The smell of the gutter can be removed by phenyle, but the stink of our sins cannot be removed by any kind of soap or water or disinfectant. Yet the Lord bore the awful filth of our sin and travailed in the garden of Gethsemane, and when He hung on the cross, the sun was hidden and there was great darkness. That is why He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt.27:46). He bore all our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet.2:24). This is the first thing we are reminded of at His Table, that our Lord gave Himself for us and suffered willingly. He is not asking you to shed tears for that, for His purpose in suffering was that we might be filled with His fullness. He wants us to think of His love as we partake of the feast of remembrance.

When we have our food, it becomes a part of our body, being changed into blood. That is how we become strong in the flesh. Spiritually, we should receive new life in our spirit, every time we partake of the Lord's Table, and go on doing so till we are filled with His fullness. That is why, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we must judge ourselves and partake worthily, because symbolically we are partaking of His flesh and blood. He is our life. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1: 27) and again in Col. 3:4, "Christ, ...is our life", When you partake in the bread and cup, you are saying in a symbolic way to everyone around you, "My Lord is living in me. He is my life, my hope and my food. I know that one day He will make me altogether like Himself". When a child is born you know that one day it will be fully grown; so with hope you go on giving nurture to it, knowing how the bones will grow in the body. So also spiritually, by eating and drinking and feasting on the Lord Jesus Christ, one day we shall become like Him. He is our hope, our life, our joy and our glory, and one day we are going to be like Him.

As we take part in the Lord's Table, we are reminded again and again that God's purpose and plan is to fill us with His fullness, but for this we require the fellowship of fellow-believers throughout the world. It is not the question of merely taking part in the bread and the cup. The Table should remind us of our hope to see our Lord one day face to face. So before we take part, we should spend some time in worship together, that all those who take part may come into the understanding of what they are doing. The more we enjoy fellowship with the Lord together with the saints, the more we understand the fullness of divine love.

(To be contd.)

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