

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. 44

April 2, 2006

NO 7

UNION IN CHRIST-5 (The Testimony)

A Testimony is a visible outward act with a symbolic spiritual meaning. The Old Testament is full of such testimonies. Literally a testimony as in the Hebrew is "something recorded" or "something spoken again and again". For example, circumcision was a testimony that the works of the flesh were not acceptable to God. The feasts were called testimonies because God was speaking to His people through them. The Sabbath was a testimony that there was a spiritual rest into which God wanted to lead His people.

In the New Testament also we have testimonies. Baptism is a testimony that we have been united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. The Lord's Table is a testimony that our fellowship is with Him Who died for us and rose again from the dead and is coming again to take us to Himself, and that it is also with all who wait for His coming. Through these testimonies God explains and reminds us again and again of the deeper things of God which the natural mind of man refuses to understand and retain.

We have seen in the previous articles how important is this fact that we have been united in Christ as members in His Body, through which His power and glory are to be revealed now and in the ages to come. This is so important that God in His wisdom has appointed a testimony through which we express and acknowledge and at the same time are reminded again and again, of this our union with Christ and our fellow - believers. This is the testimony of the laying on of hands. This testimony of the laying on of hands is found both in the Old and in the New Testament periods. If we look carefully at them one by one we shall be able to see within all the different details and contexts in which they appear, there runs an identity in meaning. This we shall see in the coming issues. In the New Testament we find this testimony used in different connections; but at the time of baptism we find it used in four places. We shall examine these first.

At the outset we have to acknowledge that there is no explicit command to testify in this way to signify our union in the Body of Christ; - not explicit enough as to rule out all possibility of evasion. But to those who seek to please the Lord in all things there are sufficient hints to draw our attention and leave us restless in spirit until we have received full light from the Lord concerning the matter.

"For as yet he (the Holy Ghost) was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they (Peter and John) their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:16, 17).

These men and women of Samaria had heard the Gospel through Philip and believed it (vs. 5-17). They were baptized also. Yet they had not received the Holy Ghost. Why? We can understand why the hundred and twenty disciples had to wait for the day of Pentecost to receive the Holy Spirit. But after Pentecost in this dispensation of the Church we know that believers have no need to wait; they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit the moment they are born again. Then why had these believers to wait until Peter and John

came and laid hands upon them?

Some would suggest that God had given some special power to the apostles so that when they laid their hands upon any one they would receive the Holy Spirit. Simon, who had been a sorcerer before and believed, thought so himself. We read, "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:18,19). It is true that in this case Peter and John laid hands upon the Samaritan believers and they received the Holy Spirit. But it is not correct to infer that God had given such power to the apostles. The explanation seems to be different.

We must remember what a strong prejudice was fixed through centuries in the hearts of the Jews against Samaritans and Gentiles. In John chapter 4 we read how the Samaritan woman mentions that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans even to the drinking of water. Now this barrier was broken down by the cross. The Samaritans had believed. But the Lord delayed the giving of the Holy Spirit until Peter and John come and lay their hands upon them. It seemed as if God was waiting for them to come and acknowledge the Samaritan believers as brethren, and be eyewitnesses when God baptized them also into the Body.

God was leading the apostles gently but strongly into this wonderful revelation that in Christ, all national and social barriers had been broken down and there was now a new relationship because of a common indwelling Holy Spirit. We can read in Acts chapter 11, how the national feelings of the disciples who had been Jews, was rebelling against this revelation. The vision given to Peter (Acts chapter 10) was not only to help break this new revelation upon him, but also to help him break it upon others.

The laying on of the hands was not something new or something casual to Peter and John. They would at once remember how the Israelite offering laid his hands upon his offering, this especially being of frequent occurrence. They would also remember how Jacob laid his hands upon Manasseh and Ephraim; Moses upon Joshua; the children of Israel upon the Levites; and Aaron upon the scape - goat on the Day of Atonement. The laying on of hands would have meant to them an act signifying identification of two parties. It would have been with great significance that the Holy Spirit of God constrained Peter and John to lay their hands upon the erstwhile outcast Samaritans. And immediately these two apostles take this definite and revolutionary step and break away from their old stand, the Lord puts His seal upon it and gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to these Samaritan believers also. What a deep impression this incident would have made upon them! They now had clear ground to declare with boldness and conviction to their fellow-believers how the Lord led them into a larger place, how the Lord had enlarged their hearts to receive the Samaritans also in the Name of Christ (Acts 11:17).

In this connection we can remember how Joseph had been many years in Egypt and had married an Egyptian wife and had two sons Manasseh and Ephraim, by her. When Jacob in his old age comes later to Egypt, he sees them and says, "...thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine" (Gen. 48:5). Then he lays his hands upon them and blesses them, saying, "... let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac..." (vs. 14, 16). So the matter became very clear that these sons of Joseph, who had been separated from his brethren, were not to be strangers from the covenants of promise.

Putting the two together it becomes easy to understand that when Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritan believers, they were also saying that they were no more to be outcasts but had become equal members in the Body of Christ along with their Jewish brethren, and they were no more to be Jew and Samaritan but one in the family of

God. So also we testify in the laying on of hands that the new believer is an equal member in the Body of Christ along with all the other believers throughout the world and with those who have gone to be with the Lord and with those who are yet to be added to the Church.

II "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost..., and he ... arose, and was baptized" (Acts 9:17,18).

Here again we see that Saul had believed and yet had not received the Holy Spirit until Ananias laid his hands upon him. It is significant that at the time of the baptism of the Lord Jesus a voice came from heaven, "...Son..."; and now at the time of the laying on of hands there comes a voice from a fellow-believer, "...Brother...". When a child is born in a household, the parents say, "We have another son". But the other children say, "We have another brother". At the time of your baptism, you can hear by faith the Father acknowledging you as a beloved son; and at the time when hands are laid upon you, you can hear by faith the multitude of believers who cannot be numbered, acknowledging you as a beloved brother or sister in the Lord. Thus these two testimonies ought to be a very happy occasion, a spontaneous expression of our faith and our love.

(To be contd.) C.E.D.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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March 22, 2006

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, of Whom and through Whom and to Whom, are all things: "to whom be glory forever, Amen" (Rom. 11:36). The Lord grant that we may be led into an increasing recognition of this fact experientially, and hence render our exalted Lord Jesus the preeminence in all things - in the family and fellowship life of the church. It should be much more so, let us pray, in our laboring together in the up building of His Church and the furtherance of His Testimony in the land and regions beyond.

Now continuing our thoughts in relation to the building of God's House, we may receive further revelation and instruction from the life and service of David.

"All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chro. 28:19). At this time the Lord had given David rest from his enemies. He had conquered and subdued all. These victories of his, within and without, were all for a divine purpose. They led to the revelation of God's House. David's sufferings and his battles brought him to the place where God could show him something of tremendous value. Nor did it stop with vision only. The pattern of the House was given to him in writing. Here was a tangible blueprint for him to follow for God's building on earth. In it there was to be nothing of human scheme and plan. This was God's building, and the pattern was to be according to His own heavenly mind and thought.

It is this heavenly aspect, which is emphasized by the apostle Paul in relation to the Church of which His House shown to David was so symbolic. The Lord's Church was in the mind of God "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). The plan therefore was heavenly, from God. The Church was to be an expression on earth of all the love and harmony of the heavens and of the government of God there. The Church is not an institution to display natural gifts of man, nor is it a clubhouse for the gathering of the socially respectable. "...the palace is not for man, but for the/LORD God" (1 Chro. 29:1) - that is, it is not something to show forth what man is, but a spiritual building to be filled with the fullness of God and to exhibit His glory.

The temple of God was to be built on mount Zion. Zion was a high elevation. "Beautiful for situation (elevation), the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion" (Psalm 48:2). The heights of Zion were symbolical of our heavenly position in Christ. Sinai, where the Law was given, was in the wilderness. Zion was in the Promised Land. It jutted out of the world, though it was in the world. And a place in Christ in the heavenlies is the true position of the redeemed of the Lord, for God "...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). The Lord's satisfaction is in seeing His people in that position experientially.

There was a strange feature about the chambers attached to the temple. There was to be growth and enlargement as they were built upward. There was, as Ezekiel saw in his vision, "an enlarging... still upward" (Ezekiel 41:7). So with the pattern given to David: the bottom "was five cubits... the middle ... six ... and third (upper)...seven" (1 Kings 6:6). It was an enlargement upward, a pointer surely to the intent that believers were to be enlarged in Christ and "to grow up into Christ in all things". God willing we will continue in our next issue, further aspects concerning David's preparation for the building of God's House.

The Lord granted me the opportunity of fellowship and brief ministry of the Word on the life and times of David at Oak Flats, about 100 kms from Padstow Heights. The testimony in Oak Flats was raised almost 14 years ago. Bro. Grant Hayman, the senior minister and elder was blessed by the fellowship and ministry of His honored servant, late Bra. Bakht Singh in his early visits to Australia more than three decades ago.

On Monday the 6th March, Bro. Kenneth Timothy and myself reached with a few other brothers to visit Bro. Golsworthy who is in the aged care home at Salvin Park. Though he has become frail, seeing us he raised his hands saying Jai Masih (Praise the Lord). To bring him into remembrance of Jehovah - Shammah, I sang the chorus, "He said, I will do marvels..." which had been his favorite chorus while in the ministry at Jehovah-Shammah, more than six decades ago, with his honored servant, late Bro. Bakht Singh and other co-workers. With joy he continued singing the whole chorus with a smile on his face. Later, with Bra. Graham Zerk from the assembly there, we broke bread, Bra. Golsworthy also participating in the bread and wine. Later, Bra. Golsworthy prayed for India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other places and lifting both arms, he bid us farewell. Bra. Kuruvilla was also able to visit him about two Weeks before. He will be leaving for India via Singapore on the 16th March, halting there for the weekend.

On 12th March, the Lord's Day, I had the opportunity of fellowship and ministry with Dr. Paul McAuley in the church at Marrickville. The majority of the congregation is Greek and Armenian. The same evening I had the final gathering at Padstow Heights where saints from different assemblies in Sydney also gathered. They all covet our prayers for their effective continuance in the ongoing purpose of God, for the up building of His glorious Church.

Pray for Bro. Koshy who will be in New Zealand God willing, on 23rd March and later in Sydney on the 3rd April to minister at the Easter convention on the 14th April.

It pleased the Lord to call Home to Glory Sis. (Mrs.) Lydiamma. Augustine on the 20th March, at the age of 84. The Lord helped her to be a mother in Israel, as she labored with her late husband, God's servant Bro. K N. Augustine from the inception of this Testimony in Hyderabad for more than five decades. She rests from her labors and her works do follow her according to Rev. 14:13. The funeral was held on the 22nd March, in which a large number of saints and fellow-servants from Andhra Pradesh participated. Please pray for the comfort of all her children.

Praying that the Lord may give us a new burden of prayer for Sydney, Melbourne and New Zealand where many young families from the assemblies in India have gone for study and work and that the Lord may be pleased to use them for raising local testimonies there,

Jer. 33:3, Psa 2:8, Acts 1:8.

I remain,

Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

OUR HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

BAKHT SINGH

We want to share with you from God's Word the spiritual significance of the name "Hebron". Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD" (Gen. 13:18). God had spoken to Abraham very clearly, to leave the Ur of Chaldees and to go into a strange land, because he had desired and purposed to give him much blessing. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee" was His promise. God planned to give him much more than he had ever imagined. So he obeyed God, but not fully. That is why the fulfillment of the blessing and the promises was hindered. The Lord has promised, "from this day will I bless you" (Haggai 2:19). Whatever His command, charge and responsibility He might have given you, or howsoever heavy the burden He might have put upon you, if you do not question Him but accept and bear it joyfully, or whatever God has commanded you to give, if you do so cheerfully and joyfully, even from the day you obey the Lord, He will bless you. If you go on postponing your day of obedience, then your blessing also will be delayed. If you obey after one or two months, then the Lord Will bless you from that day. You begin to receive the blessings the day you obey Him and not earlier or later.

Abraham took with him Lot his nephew for whom God had not given any command He allowed him to go with him solely for sentimental reasons God had a greater vocation for Abraham, and Lot was very eager to accompany his uncle But God had told him clearly not to take anyone else except his own family. Feeling sorry for Lot, Abraham had allowed him to go with him. The result was, there were difficulties. There came a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot. So Abraham said: "...Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen for we be brethren Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee from me if thou wilt take the left hand then I will go to the right; or it thou depart to the right hand then I will go to the left (Gen 13 8 9) The time had come for them to be separated. Lot saw the well-watered plains of Jordan, was attracted by them, and chose the plain and moved on. Aft that God met Abraham (Gen. 13:14). If a man does not obey

God fully, he becomes blind spiritually. Partial obedience brings spiritual blindness. Unknown to Abraham he became blind. Even though he was walking on the land, which had been given to him, he did not know it belonged to him because of his failure to obey God fully. Now that Lot was separated from him, God told Abraham to "look ...northward and southward, and eastward, and westward," and promised to give him "all the land". He had been blind and was unable to see the boundaries, but the separation opened his eyes and God said, "Now you will see how much I have planned and purposed to give you':

There may be similar instances in our lives when we also like Abraham, become blind spiritually. Sometimes we do not know it, because we are so much governed by our feelings. Like Abraham we feel sorry for some of our friends, relations, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts and because of human sympathy, we do not obey God. Because of some affection for someone or because of some relationship we disobey God's commands Now humanly speaking, Abraham was only doing his duty towards his nephew.

(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

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. 44

April 16, 2006

NO 8

UNION IN CHRIST -6 (The Testimony - 2).

We saw in our last issue that in the Bible there are four instances when the testimony of the laying on of hands was used at the time of baptism. We have already considered the first two instances mentioned in Acts 8:16,17 and 9:17,18. Now we shall consider the remaining two instances.

"...they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:5,6).

These disciples had repented of their sins and been baptized by John the Baptist. They knew that the Messiah would be shortly revealed and would baptize them by the Holy Ghost. They were quite willing to believe on Him and receive the baptism. But evidently they had left Palestine soon after, and were now far away in Ephesus. Meanwhile the Messiah had come, been crucified, and had risen again and had sent down the Holy Spirit baptizing the believers into one Body. Of all this these disciples in Ephesus were ignorant, and they say, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost' (v.2). So Paul tells them the glorious good news, and they evidently believe implicitly and are baptized and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once they had only heard of the Messiah through John the Baptist. But now Christ had become their living experience.

So in the testimony of the laying on of hands we acknowledge that the new believer has not only heard of Christ, but Christ has become his living experience and he has been baptized into the Body of Christ, and now Christ has become his life.

IV "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

Here the apostle rebukes the people addressed, because they are still in the need of being taught "the first principles of the oracles of God." We know only too well how as human beings we so quickly forget and lose the precious things which God reveals to us. We are often like unfaithful stewards who through negligence, carelessness and corruption lose the precious vessels entrusted to them by their master. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor.4:1,2).

We know how quickly false doctrines began to creep in among believers even in the first century: the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, the doctrine of Balaam, the teaching that the resurrection is past already, the teaching that there is no resurrection, etc. No wonder that the doctrine of the oneness in the Body of Christ was also quickly lost sight of. Paul

mentions at least four divisions among believers in Corinth: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12,13). It is sad to see hundreds of divisions among believers today. Satan knows where to attack; and he attacks at the foundation. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3). We shall see in the coming issues in what ways the enemy brings in divisions in the church. Here we shall only remark that we should not be like those people referred to in the Book of Hebrews who had forgotten or slipped away from the revelation given to them.

They had evidently been very unfaithful stewards, and even the first principles which were taught to them fairly long time ago had now been forgotten and lost by them. So they still had "need that one teach (them) again which be the first principles of the oracles of God". They had need of "milk" and were unable to take "strong meat". The same doctrines which are called here "the first principles of the oracles of God" and "milk" (v.12) are again called "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" and the foundation" in Heb. 6:1. Among all the laws and commandments, sabbaths, feasts, experiences and prophecies of Israel, lie hidden the first principles of God's great mystery, which is the corporate "Christ", the New Man, in Whom you and I have been included by the grace of God. While the feasts, sabbaths, circumcision and other testimonies have passed away, the first principles remain and stand as the foundation. Now that the veil has been removed, these first principles themselves are revealed to us by the Holy Ghost through the Scriptures still more clearly and in all their relationship with Christ. They are summarized in Heb.6:1,2.

Some suggest that these foundational principles mentioned in Heb. 6:1,2 pertain to the Old Testament and are not directly meant for us. But when we examine each of them carefully we find that none of them is clearly mentioned in the Old Testament. Reference is made to them,, but they are all covered, so to say, with a veil. It is only after the Cross and Pentecost, in the dispensation of the Church, that the veil is completely removed and the foundational principles of God's great eternal purposes come fully, clearly and definitely into view.

The first one is Repentance from Dead Works. The Old Testament is full of exhortations to repent. After repentance the Levitical offerings were required and also obedience to the ordinances contained in the Law. It is only after Christ came that these Levitical offerings, sabbaths and ordinances passed away; and if anyone continued in them any more, these became only dead works to them. There are hints in a few places here and there such as Isaiah 1:11-14 that these ordinances given by the Lord Himself could become dead at all: but it is only after Pentecost that it became clear that God demanded turning away from all dead works.

Men of all lands have thought that they could satisfy God and obtain salvation by good works. But true repentance involves turning away from good works just as much as from bad works. Every work, good or bad, performed without the receiving of the new Life of Christ is a dead work before God. While this thought is not foreign to the Old Testament, it is fully unveiled oriyy in the New.

The second of the first principles of the oracles of God is Faith toward God. But before God could reveal that salvation is through faith alone, He had, perforce, to give the Law to His people so that through hard, bitter experience they could learn at last that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). There was need for a school master. "Wherefore the law was our school master to bring us, unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24,25). But when did faith "come"? It came with Christ. Now it has become absolutely plain : "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). The Jews although very familiar with the Old

Testament could not understand that justification and salvation are by faith. So Paul had to dig out of those very Scriptures and expose the fact that faith has always been foundational with God, and justification is by faith and not by works. "... if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain... Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness..., no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 2:21; 3:6,11). Here Paul takes out two verses from the Old Testament: Gen. 15:6 and Hab. 2:4. Whether before or after the Cross faith is a foundation principle for the fulfillment of God's purpose in Christ.

Thirdly, we have the Doctrine of Baptisms. In Hebrews 9:10, we read of "divers washings", mentioned among the carnal ordinances pertaining to the first tabernacle. The Greek word here for "washings" is "baptismos". This is significant as it links up the Old Testament washings with the New Testament baptism. In I Peter 3:21 their relationship becomes still more plain. The first was a carnal ordinance meant for "the putting away of the filth of the flesh", but the second is "the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ". The Old Testament washings were a type of cleansing from sin and deliverance from the sinful nature which were to be fulfilled and enjoyed fully after the coming of the Messiah. But the New Testament baptism signifies that the Messiah has already come and the recipient has received the cleaning and deliverance from sin and has now a good conscience before God. As Peter says, such a salvation (the receiving of a good conscience before God), is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here again we see that this also has begun to be expressed in the Old Testament and fully declared in the New. (To be contd.) C.E.D.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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Jan 4th, 2006

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

May all honor, praise and power be unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the beginning and the end, as He hath led us into the fourth month of the year, to know Him, love Him and serve Him acceptably with renewed vision. May the holy enthusiasm and zeal that dominated the heart of His servant David, when by revelation he came to know the plan and place for God's House, make us also diligent and dynamic in His service in this age as highlighted in Eph. 2:20-22. (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Chron. 28:2,19; 22:14-16).

David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel" and he added, "... the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death"(1 Chron.22:1,5)

I Chro. 29:1-3 he addresses the whole congregation speaking of the material he gathered for God's House, and the valuable material of his own personal contribution to God's House, for the very love of it. He said, "...because I have set my affection to the house of my God... I have given . . .over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house" (v.3).

David's own personal contribution was of the heavier and more valuable things - gold representing things of a truly divine character, and silver representing things of real sacrificial value. This was brought to the House out of David's own life's store. It represented not only what David believed, or what he taught, or what he sang, but "WHAT HE WAS". Only things of real value in the lives of God's people, can ever find a place in God's spiritual House.

The building and completion of that House by Solomon, David's son, and all who were with him in true submission, sacrificial service and spiritual oneness and unity was the means of bringing glory back to Israel then upon the earth. It is part of God's eternal purpose that there should be no schism or division among the Lord's people. His House is one building. He sees their unity in His Son. When that unity fin expression on the earth through a people who are going on unto spiritual fullness in maturity, then there is a vessel, which the Lord can fill with His glory. There will be one sound heard, praising and thanking the Lord, "For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever". The house was filled with a cloud; "... the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. 5:13,14).

The kind of preparation as seen from the life and service of David interprets for us the real purpose of life. We have to apprehend it as David did. Does what we are living for contribute to what God is building? Is our contribution weighed with spiritual value? Do we bring into God's House that which He can take up and use for His own holy temple - the temple which is to be filled with His own glory? Revelation such as this must surely lift us to spiritual elevation and set our goals and ambitions higher in line with His eternal purposes in Christ our Lord.

The building and completion of that House by Solomon, David's son, and all who were with him in true submission, sacrificial service and spiritual oneness and unity was the means of bringing glory back to Israel then upon the earth. It is part of God's eternal purpose that there should be no schism or division among the Lord's people. His House is one building. He sees their unity in His Son. When that unity fin expression on the earth through a people who are going on unto spiritual fullness in maturity, then there is a vessel, which the Lord can fill with His glory. There will be one sound heard, praising and thanking the Lord, "For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever". The house was filled with a cloud; "... the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. 5:13,14).

Thus did the glory of God return to Israel. Thus through a company of people who are redeemed by the blood of His Son, and are reigning in life through Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:17,21) it can return now also. Numbers have nothing to do with such a company. Spiritual measure is the criterion. What matters to the Lord is that we bring to Him something of weighty spiritual value, which He can build into a House for His habitation, as we read in Eph. 2:22. May the Lord write His word upon our heart.

On 29th March, we had the opportunity to spend some time in prayer with some of the members of the Trust Committee members and coordinators to understand the problems and needs of the assemblies, and prayerfully decide matters concerning the placing of God's servants for the future.

On 24th March, a special Thanksgiving meeting was held at Hebron Church at Marathahalli, Bangalore, as its ministry and administrative affairs have been entirely handed over legally to Hebron, Hyderabad. We are thankful for the prayers and practical help earnestly rendered by saints towards this successful! settlement. The gathering that evening witnessed a company of nearly 600 believers from various parts of Bangalore, besides the Lord's servants from Karnataka. Bros. G.T. Benjamin, John Stewart and myself shared the ministry of the Word, and the gathering ended with a love feast for all. Bro. Joseph Anandaraj with his wife Sis. Glory has been chosen to stay in the premises of

Hebron taking up the responsibility and work of the Lord, under our direction and oversight. We covet your prayers for their future ministry.

You may kindly remember the following requests and events in prayer even though these lines reach you late. Please pray for the dedication of the newly constructed Prayer House, Bethany, at Kothagudem on 4th April, God willing, in which Bro. John Stewart and myself would be participating with others. Also for Bro. Prasad Rao, God's servant, with the responsible brethren for the follow up work there. Please also pray for the Thanksgiving service of the new construction at New Jerusalem, Tirupathi, and at a neighboring Prayer House on the 7th April God willing, followed by the Lord's Day Service for which we are requested to be present and participate, together with other servants and saints from Rayalaseema area.

Kindly pray for the servants' gathering at Ephratha Prayer House at Rayadurg. Also for the dedication of the first floor newly constructed there. God's servant Bro. H. Samuel with the responsible brethren covets our prayers for their future ministry.

Bro. John Subba Reddy, together with the responsible brethren and co-laborers have been burdened to hold a Regional Holy Convocation, from 16th to 21st May. Since believers from the several districts around would be gathering, the preparatory work for a suitable site etc. needs much wise planning and labor. They covet our earnest prayers for the same. Also every need, spiritual and temporal, be met by the Lord's abundant provision. The Lord may minister His Word through His anointed messengers for every gathering, for the salvation of souls and the edification of the saints and the church as a whole, for His glory.

Please pray for the marriage of Bro. Arumairaj Isaac, son of God's servant Bro. & Sis. Manohar Pandyan with Sis. Hannah, daughter of Bro. And Sis. John Sampath Kumar of Kotagiri, to be solemnized God willing, on the 28th April, at Kotagiri.

Please pray for the full recovery of Bro. T.S. Augustine, God's servant of Kadapa area as he underwent open heart surgery at NIMS Hospital, Hyderabad last week.

Please also pray for Sis. Laila (wife of Bro. Paul Abhishekam, the Lord's servant at BHEL) that the Lord may grant her a successful bypass surgery and speedy recovery thereafter.

Praying that we all be renewed in the spirit of our mind as we begin this new month and walk in newness of life, at home as a family, and in our witness and service in the fellowship of the saints as well as in the place of our work,

Rom 6:4, I Thess 2:12,13 ,

I remain,

Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

OUR HEAVENLY INHERITANCE -2 BAKHT SINGH

Abraham could have said in his heart, " Lot is like my son; I have no son of my own and he loves me and respects me; so let me take him with me, and I will treat him as my son. As I have no child let me make him the heir of my property I will do my duty as an uncle, and he can help me when I get older and can become my heir". But God had a far better plan for Abraham, than the one in his own mind. He gave that plan to Abraham after his separation from Lot. After Lot went away from him, Abraham removed his tent and dwelt in Hebron (Gen. 13:18). Thus, first of all, Hebron stands for separation. God cannot give us His plan till we obey Him fully. There may be some who have become blind spiritually for the same reason as Abraham - sympathy for some earthly relation. If any of your friends, or relations, whether nephew or niece or aunt or uncle, hinders you from realizing your portion in God, it will bring strife between you and those dear ones. Like Abraham you must separate from Lot. You know and God knows that Lot-like relationship and friendship. It must be completely broken and then only you will be given a fuller heavenly vision of your heavenly inheritance (Gen. 13:17-18).

Abraham was commanded to walk through the length and breadth of the land. He might get tired of walking, but he could not exhaust the inheritance, which the Lord was giving him. We too may have received much from the Lord, but God is saying, "There is much more that I want to give you; much more than you have ever received so far." But be prepared to be free from every Lot-like relationship of a man or a woman in your life, however close it might be. Otherwise in a subtle way some human friendship, or affection, or relationship in marriage or business will make you blind spiritually.

Hebron means fellowship - fellowship with God. Because of disobedience, Abraham's fellowship with God was broken. Without fellowship no man can talk to God freely as a friend to friend. Let us take warning: God cannot bless us unless and until each one of us is willing to break every Lot-like relationship. Have you been deceived through marriage relationship, or business, or worldly gain? Has any Lot come into your life? Unless that person goes away, God cannot bless you. This is God's Word to us. Be separated unto God, and then learn to have true fellowship with Him. (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

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. 44

April 30 2006

NO 9

UNION IN CHRIST -3 (THE CHURCH).

Having considered the first foundational principles of Repentance from dead works, of Faith toward God and of Baptisms, we now move on to the remaining three principles (Heb. 6:1-2)

The fourth foundational principle is the Doctrine of the Laying on of Hands. It is significant that out of all the ordinances of the Old Testament and they are many, this testimony is picked out as foundational. This means that wherever the Lord required this act to be performed, He had been declaring an important spiritual principle. When the children of Israel were required to lay their hands upon the Levites (Num.8:10), God was showing them that although their ministries might be different, yet all of them were equally precious to the Lord, and although some may be performing a special ministry, they were only doing it on behalf of the whole nation. Again when the offerer was required to lay his hand upon the sacrifice, God was revealing to them that they were being forgiven and accepted only because of their union with Christ, and they were declared as righteous before God for the same reason. Thus the laying on of hands required on different occasions like these, stood for the Union of all God's people among themselves and for their Union with Christ. Needless to say that this foundation also is fully and strongly and effectively laid only after the Cross.

The fifth principle is Resurrection from the Dead. It will be clear to the student of the Word of God that the resurrection is clearly implied in many parts of the Old Testament Scriptures. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31,32). The whole matter is declared fully and clearly only in the New Testament.

The sixth and the last of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, is Eternal Judgment. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes declares, "...know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccl. 11:9). Isaiah speaking the end of the wicked says, "...their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (66:24). Not only will there be judgment, but the judgment is to be eternal. But this seems to be hidden in a verse here and a verse there. In the New Testament this is taken up and established beyond the scope of controversy to those who seek to know the Lord.

Thus it is clear that these doctrines would hardly have been summarized and declared fully by any Old Testament prophet. But after the coming of the Lord and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all believers, the Lord desires that every child of God should understand clearly these first principles of the doctrine of Christ. By these, a believer comes into such a comprehension of the Christ of God that he will be able to grow into God's fullness and so go on unto perfection or maturity.

We shall look over these six principles again. They fall obviously into three pairs - three

reminding us of the Triune God. The first pair is Repentance and Faith, both the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. The first sermon of the Lord recorded in the Gospel of Mark is, "repent ...and believe ..." (1:15). Without repentance and faith there is no salvation, and no ground in a soul for God to work upon. Repentance involves turning away from all works, good and bad, for all work without eternal life is a dead work, and is defiled (Isa. 64:6). Likewise faith involves coming towards God, in living relationship with Him. Thus "repentance from dead works, and faith towards God" are both foundational.

The second pair is the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands. They are both acts of testimony with symbolic spiritual meaning.

It is necessary to note that it is not "baptism" but the doctrine of it that is the foundation. The importance and value lies in the meaning and the purpose of baptism as revealed in the Word of God. Further, as we have seen, there are two baptisms, Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the inner experience, and baptism in water, the outward testimony.

In the Old Testament we see there was a layer in the Tabernacle as we as in the temple. The priests had to wash themselves in this water. But this they did for the putting away of the filth of the flesh. As we have mentioned already this washing of the Old Testament is described in Heb. 9:10 as "baptismos" in the Greek. Baptism though similar to these washings in some way (camp. "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..." Acts 22:16), went a step further both as to tense and as to nature, as the Apostle Peter brings out in his epistle. It testified that the conscience had already been washed in the cleansing flood, (i.e. not washed at the time of baptism), and the believer had now a good conscience and not merely a cleansed body. "...baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21). Thus the washing of the Old Testament leads on to the richer baptism of the New Testament.

The other testimony of the laying on of hands also is found both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We shall examine its place in both in the coming issues.

The third pair among the foundational principles of the doctrine of Christ is resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment, both events lying in the future at the end of the dispensation. These also are foundational, and therefore specific objects of the enemy's attack. Early in the Church history Paul writes, "how say some among you that there is no resurrection?" (1 Cor. 15:12), and again, "Hymenaeus and Philetus... concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure" (2 Tim. 2:17-19). A wrong teaching regarding resurrection is sufficient to overthrow a man's faith. Then as to eternal judgment, this also is being attacked severely by the enemy to overthrow the faith of many. He tempts them to ask, "How can a loving God condemn a soul to eternal punishment?" Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and others teach this false doctrine which denies eternal judgment and has ruined the lives of many.

The laying of this foundation is only the beginning. Having laid it the Apostle says, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb 6: 1), that is to say, to maturity or full-growth. Needless to say the perfection has to be built upon the foundation which the apostle here supposes has been properly laid and at least now the believers have taken warning and are ready for strong meat to go on to maturity. (To be contd.C.E.D.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

The church of Horeb
C.T.S. No. 29451K-1&2,

B Ward, Jawahar Nagar, Koihapur, M.S.

15/4/2006

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

All praise and honor and glory be unto Him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, "...made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead". "...crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God" writes the Apostle. Then he adds, "we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you". May this be experientially true of us as His saints and servants, as we have passed another Easter Season, since we have been called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom. 1:3,4; 2 Cor. 13:4; 1 Cor. 1:9; Gal. 6:14).

Apostle Paul never grew tired of reminding the readers of the cross. With a great sense of indebtedness to his Savior, "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), he moved and ministered among such, sinners or saints. His writings clearly show the supremacy of the cross in his life and ministry. The priority he gave to the message of the cross in his preaching is nowhere made more plain than in his first letter to the Corinthians. They were in danger of being entangled in the subtleties of Greek philosophy mingled with the carnalities of self. This he proclaims in 1 Cor. 1:24, "...unto them which are called ... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God".

Let us recognize afresh what the Bible teaches concerning the centrality of the cross of our Savior from Genesis to Revelation. We need to review our life as His witnesses and workers in leadership and stewardship over His flock, as to what proportion of our life, time, talents and treasure, is devoted to experience and thus express this centrality and sovereignty of the cross in power and wisdom. We have to admit humbly, that though we have the phraseology of the CROSS, we are in the periphery of its power and purpose. Hence the churches and fellowships of God's people are in a state of spiritual decline and discouragement. The Lord we pray, may make us, writer and readers, crucified men and women to be true messengers of the cross. May our inner man be fortified by the Spirit of Christ for true sacrifice of servant hood, walking in the way of the crucified One.

Let us consider some more thoughts from the writings of Apostle Paul, highlighting his ministry based on the centrality of the CROSS of Christ as seen from his writings. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" he writes in Gal. 6:14. He is one of the greatest servants of Christ who ever lived, and he has written down his opinion and judgment in unmistakable terms in his letter to the Galatians inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Now what did Paul mean by saying this? He meant to declare strongly that he trusted in nothing but "Jesus Christ Crucified" for the pardon of his sins and his salvation and the transformation of his soul. Let them, if they were ever so disposed, trust in other things, for his part he was determined to rest in nothing, lean on nothing, build his hope on nothing, place confidence on nothing, glory in nothing, except "the Cross of Jesus Christ".

Let us also consider what the Apostle did not glory in. If ever there was one on earth who had something to boast of himself, that man was this great Apostle of the Gentiles. He

never gloried in his natural privileges, being a Jew by birth, of which we read in Phil. 3:5,6. He never gloried in his own works. None ever worked so hard for God as he did. He was more abundant in labors than any of the Apostles (2 Cor. 11:23). No man ever preached so much, traveled so much and endured so much hardship for Christ's cause. He never gloried in his knowledge. He was a man of great gifts, a mighty preacher and a mighty speaker and a mighty writer. He was as great with the pen as he was with his tongue. He had been in the third heaven, he received the spirit of prophecy and could foretell things yet to come. But he never gloried in these things. He was a self-denying man and a humble man who thought himself less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners. He was a prayerful man and also a thankful man. His prayers and thanksgivings walked side by side. Now if the Apostle Paul never gloried in any of these things, who has any right to glory in them in our day? The Lord write these words upon our hearts that we may emulate the apostolic example, glorying only in the Lord.

Thank the Lord for enabling Bro. G Benjamin together with Bro. Paul Sudhakar and Bro. Ambrose to participate and minister in the dedication service of Hermon Prayer House, Narsipatnam, on the 8th April.

Please pray for the Vacation Bible Schools to be conducted in more than seventy centers this summer, mostly in Andhra Pradesh and a few other States, as well as Special Bible Classes for children in nearly twenty centers.

Sis. (Mrs.) Kamala Jeremiah, the Lord's handmaiden at Hebron, was promoted to Glory on the 13th April at the age of 91. She served the Lord for more than four decades, ministering to children, young girls and sisters. She rests from her labors and her works do follow her (Rev. 14:13). Praying that we may learn to follow the steps of the great Apostle, glorying in the cross of Christ, loving and honoring Him above all,

I Cor 2:24, John 12:24-26, Phil 3:8,10

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

OUR INHERITANCE-3 BAKHT SINGH

Abraham removed his tent and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron (Gen. 13:18). There he built an altar unto the Lord. God had said to him, "Arise, walk, and find out the extent of your inheritance - discover its boundaries". When you buy a land or property, before you pay down the money, you will demand a drawing or a plan of the property, so that you can know exactly what you are doing. You will note the length and breadth of the place, and its situation. You will find out who is living north, south, east or west of you. In the map you will mark roads and streets. The map tells the boundaries of the inheritance. Hebron was the boundary of the inheritance, which the Lord had given, to Abraham. There he built an altar that means, he learned to worship God (Gen. 13:18). Abraham had been living in Ur of Chaldea, the land of idol worship. He never knew how to worship God there, even though God had appeared to him. But when he came to Hebron, he built an altar there; he learned the meaning of true worship. Thus secondly, Hebron is a place where we can worship God in spirit and in truth. What a joy it is to offer pure worship to God!

Thirdly, Hebron reminds us of spiritual warfare. In Numbers 13:17-20 we read of the spies being sent by Moses to go and search out the promised land. "And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron" (v.22). The inhabitants had built a strong city called Hebron. The spies saw the city that it had strong high walls, and that mighty giants called Ahiman, Seshai and Talmai, were living there, and that they were the children of the giant Anak. It was a very fine city, beautifully located on a high mountain surrounded by beautiful valleys and rivers, and the land was full of fruits. Two men were needed to carry a bunch of grapes on their shoulders. It was a fine strong city, and the land was abundantly fruitful. But alas! there were giants living there. When the spies brought their report to Moses, the people began to weep and cry (Num. 13:26,28,30,32; 14:1). On the one hand, it was a wonderful land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and abundantly fruitful, with high walled cities. On the other hand, the city was occupied by mighty giants.

When God shows us from His Word our inheritance in Christ, the enemy comes in, and lets us see how many giants there are to conquer before we can take possession. We may see from God's Word that without doubt the Lord desires to give us the whole Kingdom. God has promised in His Word to give us the new creation and with it all things in Christ. But fear comes into our hearts ; who is going to conquer the devil and his hosts? We see them and we begin to weep. It is wonderful to hear sermons, get promises from the Bible, and sing good songs, but who is going to face these giants? So many giants will, seek to rob us of our spiritual inheritance. God says, "You have to conquer these giants". It is quite true, these giants are there, but they are allowed for a purpose. Out of the twelve spies only two men, Caleb and Joshua, were strong in faith but the rest said, "These giants will swallow us up". Hebron may be our inheritance, but there are giants to conquer. We believe from our hearts that the Lord has purposed to give us tremendous and abundant blessing. We believe it from our hearts because God has said that He is going to give us a heavenly inheritance, and He has showed us the boundary. It is a very strong city with high walls, but let us be prepared for the giants. They are there, but do not be frightened. If we want to possess Hebron we must ask God to give us the faith of Caleb, for Hebron speaks of warfare. Caleb said:

we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). We are well able by His grace, by His faithfulness, and by His Word. There will be giants, but if we believe God's Word and remain faithful and true, one day we shall see these giants defeated. This is the promise of God and we are going to believe it.