



Sharing God's Secrets

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1. The Secrets of God's Joy

JANUARY

January 1

'The joy of the LORD is your strength' (Nehemiah 8:10).

God's joy is for all His children. All can have it, who will allow His Word to enter their hearts day by day, and receive and obey by faith what He gives from it. In this eighth chapter of Nehemiah we see the children of Israel gathered together with one accord and one mind, to hear that Word anew. As God's servants expounded it to them, joy filled their hearts, and we read that "there was very great gladness" (8:17).

Our past may have been barren and full of failure due to our stubbornness and foolishness. But the Lord is willing to forgive all our past, and to restore us to Himself, giving us a new joy – "the joy of the Lord." That joy is to be our strength- a joy which begins the moment we turn to Him and then multiplies step by step as we go on with Him.

January 2

"Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10: 17,20).

The Lord Jesus says that the real ground of joy is the fact that our names are written by Him in Heaven. This is the ground of true heavenly joy. This gives joy unspeakable and full of glory – a joy that no man can take from us. For this is the beginning of joy, and tribulation cannot rob us of it.

Is your name written in the Book of Life by the Lord Jesus written with His nail-pierced Hand? Repent of your sins. Be washed in His blood. Be clothed in the garment of His righteousness. Then and only then is your name written there. Please make sure without delay that your names are found in the Lamb's Book of Life.

It is written that, "He hath clothed me with garments of salvation" (Isa. 61:10). There is a fullness of joy when we have those garments. They give us boldness and liberty to call upon the living God anywhere. They are the righteousness and life of our very Lord Himself. The life of the Lord Jesus Christ clothes our spirits when we receive Him as Saviour. It is in this that we "greatly rejoice."

January 3

"In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16: 11).

Joy multiplies as we live in the presence of God, and it is only there that full joy is found. Many can testify that their names are written in the Book of Life, but they cannot say that they are living constantly in the presence of the Lord. It is possible to live with the Lord's children, and to worship and work with them, and yet to be out of touch with the Lord. We can even be in a prayer meeting and not feel the Lord's presence – not be in conscious touch with Him.

But if you do not feel His presence, then you do not have full joy. This may be due to various things, but it may be your own fault. As a child of God your heart is pure and your conscience right before Him, you can feel and know His presence.

Our prayer is that you may learn this secret of dwelling in the presence of the living and loving God, for this is His intention and purpose for His people.

January 4

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psa. 37:4).

The joy which we receive at new birth, and which multiplies as we live in the Lord's presence, becomes stronger when we find our delight in the Lord and entirely forget our other desires, whether for eating or drinking, for friends or promotion or name, to even for expert Bible-knowledge. If we delight ourselves in the Lord, how much more will be given us in the joy of the Lord than these things can ever bring!

Is not our Lord the chiefest, the fairest among all people? And His glory does not fade. Let us then desire to see His glory more and more. Not what He gives us but what He Himself is; not because He heals our bodies or answers our prayers, but because we have glimpsed the glory of His lovely face; that is what fills our hearts with joy.

January 5

"I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:8).

When first we came to know the Lord, we did not know how to find the will of God, how to hear His voice, how to recognise where and how He was working. But, as we begin to walk with Him, and to live with Him more and more closely, we discover that 'we are workers together with God' (2 Cor. 6:1). When we hear the Word of God preached and see the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ being uplifted and received, and His work being done, then our hearts leap with joy.

When the Lord is our delight, His Name, His goodness and His glory are our exceeding joy, and we begin to long to know and to do His will. When we can say with joy: 'Lord, keep me here, or send me anywhere else'; when we can truly say with all our heart: 'Thy will be done', then that joy will be our strength to do His will.

Do you want the joy of the Lord to be your strength? Then learn to take delight in doing God's will. Find time, make time, give time to discover His will, and then make it your delight to do it. To do this, you may have to suffer hardships, and travel a long road, but the fact remains that you will be doing His will, and it will bring you fullest joy and pleasure.

January 6

"Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

Learn what it means to pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "All Power... in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18) was His. There lies the divine secret. And that power, that authority is to be exercised now on this earth through us. Our strength is in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When trouble comes, or the Enemy, what ought we to do? Where lies our strength at such a time? It is certainly not in our words, but in the exercise of the authority of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the enemy come in like a flood (Isa. 59:19); Let him come like a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8) we shall bind him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our joy and strength. In Christ we are more than conquerors.

January 7

"These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

When the hidden mysteries of the Word of God are revealed to us, our hearts are filled with a joy that makes us strong. Our strength does not lie in mere Bible knowledge. When the Lord Jesus Himself, by His Spirit, reveals to us the mysteries of His Word, then we are strong.

"I willshew thee great...things" (Jer. 33:3). When our loving Saviour opens up to us His living Word, that is strength. As God reveals Himself to us in a greater measure day by day while we meditate upon His word, so do we find our joy increasing more and more. Day by day He will give us something fresh as we wait upon Him, and as God's Word becomes real to us, it becomes our joy and strength.

January 8

"They departed...rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

When we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of being downcast and discouraged we should rejoice, because thus we see His glory in a new way, and in that joy we find a new and wonderful strength. In suffering shame for His Name we are promoted to a greater responsibility to serve and honour Him. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye" (1 Pet. 4:14).

Rejoice, then, that you are counted fit to be given the divine responsibility of suffering reproach for His name. That is true promotion. As you realise your privilege you will become strong.

May we every one of us learn how to enter into the joy of the Lord, which is our strength.

January 9

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

Earthly joy arises from possession. Men think that if they get all they want to have they will be happy, but sooner or later life brings disappointment and hopes are shattered. All that you think will give you joy will prove empty at the last. The Lord Jesus Christ, the living, loving Saviour, who died for sinners, is the only one who can give you joy. But the joy He offers you is not earthly joy. It is His own heavenly joy.

The Holy Ghost, who comes to dwell within us, works in us abundance of righteousness as God's gift, and that righteousness is the source of our peace and joy. Men struggle hard to become righteous before God and men, but what men call righteousness God calls filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Whether it be Jewish righteousness, or Hindu righteousness, or Buddhist righteousness, or 'nominal Christian' righteousness, God calls it filthy rags. God is ready to

give you His righteousness as the free gift of His love. He adds peace to love and multiplies it by eternity. That is His grace!

And to that love and peace He adds joy by the Holy Spirit. But if you let the Holy Spirit of God enter and work in you, you will become righteous with God's own righteousness, and as a result you will leap with the joy of God, because of the assurance of the Spirit in your heart that you are righteous in God's sight, and because day by day you will find yourself becoming richer and purer and stronger in Him.

January 10

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing, the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God" (Isa. 35:1, 2).

How simply and beautifully the Lord sums up His joy. When sin came into the world through one man's disobedience, it brought with it a curse, and because of that curse thorns and thistles, barrenness and disappointment are everywhere. Whatever a man may seek to do through his own advancement and culture, it only ends in thorns and thistles and desert sand. In every home there are thorns and thistles.

Your life is nothing but a desert waste, which cannot be changed or improved by any man. Then see what God's Word says: "The desert shall blossom as the rose.... It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing." This is the miracle of the grace of God. He is willing not only to forgive the sin which causes all the barrenness and fruitlessness in our life, but also, by His love, to transform that barren, fruitless life into a garden of roses.

January 11

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

See the miracle of God's grace. Even though your life has been so ruined and made a desert, yet our Lord says: "I will restore. I will restore. I will restore all that has been taken away". What a wonderful joy it is that He gives! All that has been ruined and spoiled and lost can be restored and made good again. By the miracle of God's grace all the years of sin and defeat can be restored to you. Not only so, but you are given back much more than you have lost.

Receive Him then fully. Receive that joy which He offers to you in fullness, so lovingly and freely. Do not receive in part. He gives us all, and He demands all in return. Let your Lord take all your love completely and absolutely. Then there will be joy, and gladness, and singing in your heart, and the joy of the Lord will be your strength.

January 12

"In thy presence is fullness of joy" (Psa. 16:11).

Because the joy that we receive at New Birth is not an earthly joy, but the joy of the Lord Himself, it must multiply and become stronger, richer and fuller throughout eternity. Moreover it is not a selfish joy. It is a joy that is shared by many people upon this earth and in heavenly

places --- by all those in fact that have come or are now coming into the same experience of New Birth. Earthly joys cannot be shared like this. But this joy is a heavenly joy which it is our privilege to seek to introduce to, and share with, many others on earth.

What was it that enabled David to rejoice with great joy, and how was he also able to make others rejoice with him? There were these several occasions in his life, each one of which makes a point of progress in his own knowledge of the joy of the Lord, which was his strength.

January 13

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13).

Like David each of us has been born into an earthly family; but have you ever realised that God wants you to be a heavenly King? Did you ever dream that your God and Creator had such a lofty purpose for you? Just read the Word of God, and see how much God loves and has planned for you. Then you will surely have a happy day.

Yet when you become conscious of the Spirit of God being poured upon you as a sign that you are His forever, it is only a beginning. Even though the joy of new birth is so wonderful, it is only a beginning. When you receive the gift of salvation, and the seal of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to know the real purpose of God in calling you and loving you and saving you. This is the beginning of joy to know that God has called and chosen. The joy of victory over evil is a great joy, but your God has a much greater joy yet for you.

January 14

"And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: ... And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great ... David recovered all" (1 Sam. 30:18, 19)."

When we fail God, and do things against His will we are bound to suffer. But David came back to his senses, and consulted God. As a result, "David recovered all".

Like David we also make many mistakes. Even though we are born again, and have been tasting His love, and have learned how to find His will, yet sometimes we also fail to seek the will of God, and do things instead in our own wisdom. Those who should be your friends may turn against you when you go wrong. But by coming back to your Lord, and doing His will, you are washed and forgiven and covered. You can rejoice that God has forgiven your folly and that you can again be used by Him; and your heart will be filled with the great joy of restored communion and answered prayer.

January 15

"Nevertheless David took the Stronghold of Zion: the same is the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:7, 9a).

The day when David conquered Zion was another occasion for rejoicing. Joshua had failed to drive out the Jebusites from Zion. These began to mock at David, but by God's grace and strength he drove them out. Yes, the day when he did so was a happy day for him, because then he began to see something more of the purpose of God in choosing him. He began to

see something of God's heavenly plan for his people, and how it could not be accomplished while the Jebusites remained in Jerusalem. It was part of the heavenly plan that they should be driven out only by God's people who had come out of Egypt. He had chosen His people to be His co-workers and partners in judgment. God relies upon you, His people, to fulfill His heavenly plan.

January 16

"So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel" (2 Samuel 24:24b, 25).

There was still another happy day in David's history, when God brought him to the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. He had been tempted to number the people, as though his strength depended on them and on the size of his army. So God had to punish him, and he repented at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

It had been a very grievous sin, but God had forgiven him, and that is why it was such a happy day in David's life. Is it not a very happy day in your life, when God forgives you some grievous sin done in blind disobedience to His will?

January 17

"Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof 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: 10,19).

The very spot where David was punished became the site of God's House. (2 Chron. 3:1). From that day David's true joy began. He had happy days, wonderful days, but nothing compared to the joy he found there at the altar, on the site for the temple of God.

God was now able to give to David the pattern for His temple, and the assurance that his son had been chosen of God to build it. The joy that David now experienced was an entirely different kind of joy. It was the joy that comes with the revelation of the heavenly plan for the house of God. The king rejoiced and the people rejoiced also. Yet David could not have rejoiced as he did now without going through all those other experiences. Every stage was necessary.

The joy of the Lord is your strength, but the joy of the revelation of the heavenly pattern, and of knowing that God has called us to share in it, supersedes all other joys that you may have experienced on other occasions. In this joy you enter into the plan and purpose of God regarding His people, both now and in ages to come. Pray then that the Lord will lead you on from joy to joy, till you come to the fullness of the joy of the Lord which is your strength.

January 18

"As for God, his way is perfect" (Psa. 18:30).

God always looks at the end from the beginning. This is something that we human beings cannot easily understand, but if we wait patiently, God Himself will teach us.

From the time God called David He had for him a very high and heavenly purpose, though David did not realise this for many years. We also, when we first come to the Lord in repentance, do not know what is in the mind of God for us in saving us, at that time we are only concerned about being forgiven, washed, cleansed, and made righteous before God, and when He does begin to teach us His own way we begin to question Him or even resist Him. But we see from the Word of God that, through difficulties of different kinds, God seeks to reveal His mind clearly and progressively to us. Everything experienced in life begins to have a deeper and a more heavenly and eternal meaning. We find that God is leading us in His own way, according to His own mind, thought and plan, we shall find that we have to wait very patiently to learn the mind of God.

January 19

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

You have seen human beings looking happy and joyful, but have you ever seen God looking happy? None of us can dream how our creator looks when He is joyful. Yet it is true that God rejoices. "The Lord thy God... will rejoice over thee, He will joy over thee with singing."

Suppose you could hear the Lord Himself singing! How would you feel if you could hear your loving and living Lord singing over you? After He has loved you, saved you and poured His love into your heart. He will begin to sing for joy over you. Watch a mother with a new-born babe. She is so full of Love for the little one, hugging and kissing it all over. Her face lights up with joy, and her song is sweet as she pours her love into her baby's heart. God too will sing over us like this when we are newly born again and ready to receive His Love. Then you will hear Him singing a song far sweeter than any angel's song. Such is the joy of the Lord. Such is the joy that fills us with divine strength.

January 20

"Then David said, this is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel" (1 Chron. 21:28; 22:1).

It was not for a mere earthly kingdom that God was calling David. He had for him a kingdom far higher and greater than that. We have seen the growth of joy in David's life, stage by stage, and we have seen what it was that gave both to God and to David the greatest satisfaction, even the revelation to him of God's plan and pattern for His temple.

Before God could reveal His plan to him, He had, as we have seen, to bring David by a path of sorrow to the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. Then David realised that that same plot of ground upon which he built his altar and burnt peace offerings was wanted by the Lord to build His temple. God could have told David from the very beginning to build His house in that place, but David was not ready then to receive such a command or instruction. It is only when we are truly ready and prepared that God can give to us the instructions of His heart.

January 21

Paul says: "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

A threshing-floor is the place where you separate the wheat from the chaff. All were saying what a wise man David was, but throughout his history, there often appeared little else but chaff in his brain. Through his failures God said to him: "Look at the chaff". Only after being brought to many 'threshing-floors', was David's brain delivered from the chaff. Though he was a king, he had to be rebuked by God many times, and had to pay a great price for deliverance.

We have all of us to pay a heavy price to be God's servants. We have to be prepared to be delivered from our chaff, and first of all from the chaff in our brain! What is that chaff? In God's sight it is all that we have secured through our own intellectual ability. In Isaiah 40:6 we read: "All flesh is grass". He is the grain of wheat – He is our true wisdom. All our experiences are designed to teach us to depend on that wisdom alone.

January 22

"Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.... So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God" (1 Chron. 15:28; 16:1).

When the land had been purchased by David, he longed to bring the ark of God there, but once again he failed the Lord. He wanted to do so by a worldly plan, with worldly means, and in a worldly way.

In the book of Numbers, the Lord had given His heavenly pattern for the transport of the ark. No man has any power or authority to change the divine order. God brought David to his senses and in 1 Chronicles 15, he gathered the Levites to carry up the ark of God to that same spot purchased from the Jebusite. What a happy day it was for David!

With great joy and gladness they brought up the ark after many years of wondering – "with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals sounding by lifting up the voice with joy". It was a time of great joy, --- with singers singing right from the heart on that day of gladness and David himself joining in the celebration (verse 27).

January 23

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22).

When we eventually see the ark of God coming into its place, we shall be filled with great joy. The Ark is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He must be given His rightful place in your heart, in your home, and in your church order. When that is so, there is great joy. David won many battles but none gave him the same joy of heart as that which he had in seeing, the Ark of God coming to rest in this very spot that he had purchased from Araunah. This is our joy and strength, when we see the Lord Jesus Christ enthroned in believer's hearts as king of kings, in their families as Head, and in the Assembly as Lord.

There always are three things to be observed: Firstly, the Lord Jesus is to be your personal Head; secondly, He is to be the Head of your family; thirdly, He is to be the Head of the

assembly of which you are a member. Only when this is true have you brought the Ark of God into its proper resting place. That is our Joy, but again it is only the beginning.

Can you truthfully say that the Joy of Lord is your strength? Because you are entering more and more fully into the heart of God, is your joy increasing?

January 24

"I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:8).

The joy of Lord which is our real strength in all our circumstances and experiences and responsibilities, is the secret of true spiritual growth.

It is quite possible to remain a spiritual babe for many years instead of for only a few months and, sad to say, many do. But God wants every one of His children to come to full growth and responsibility. God's intention is that you should grow daily. As you read and meditate on God's word you get to know Him, and so you have a growing hunger to be in His presence. It is by spending time with God that you grow in the knowledge of Him.

As we begin to delight in the Lord, we begin to have a real pleasure in doing His will. "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" (Psalm 40:8). Sometimes the Lord keeps us waiting months or years to know His will, and as we wait we learn valuable lessons. We learn how to exercise the authority of His name; we learn to understand the hidden mysteries of His word; and from this we pass on to the place where we are willing to suffer shame for him. As we go through all these experiences we grow into spiritual manhood, and that means that we are ready to bear the spiritual responsibility that God has for us and is waiting to share with us.

January 25

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

The most wonderful day for David was when God committed to him in detail the whole pattern for the temple (1 Chron. 28:19). God could not have revealed this to him at the beginning of his life. God had to wait for David to grow spiritually before He could give him this revelation. Many people today speak of 'the church' or 'the Body of Christ' very freely, but very few really understand the meaning of these words. Very few understand God's true thought for the church. In spite of their 'spiritual' talk many show by the strife and jealousy in their lives that they do not really know that which they profess to know. The purpose of God is to reveal His power and wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places as it is expressed in the fellowship of the church.

January 26

"As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee" (1 Chron. 29:17).

Only as you are trained spiritually, and brought through many experiences to spiritual maturity, will you ever know God's full thought for His house, the Church. David fought many

battles, but it was in these very battles that he gained his spiritual training. In 1 Chronicles 26:27, we read that it was the spoil of the battles that was dedicated towards the beautifying of the House of God. If you are a child of God and have begun to walk in obedience to Him, then God will never leave you until He has given you the full, clear pattern, even as He gave it to David. In all his many experiences David was gathering material for the temple.

Every dimension, every material, even the windows and doors and colours were to show forth the glory of God by displaying, in type, the Lord Jesus Christ in His church. The church is not an earthly building. It is a spiritual building in which is to be revealed the love of God in Christ for man's salvation.

January 27

"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (1 Chron. 29:5).

At last, after many years of experience and training, David had come to a position of spiritual responsibility for the vision of God's house, and could say, 'Now I know why God has chosen me'. Having showed the pattern to Solomon, he gave all his mighty men the opportunity and privilege of having a share in this task. The privilege was only for those who were of a "willing" heart.

We may be preaching, or praying, or teaching, or merely doing some menial task in the service of God, but if it is done under man's pressure, then it will not be acceptable to God. If you perform anything for God at any time simply under compulsion, or for what you can get out of it on earth, then there will be no reward for you in heaven. God demands willing service.

January 28

"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the King rejoiced also with great joy" (1 Chron. 29:9).

Perhaps we can truly say that this was the happiest day in the life of David, and indeed in that heart of the whole nation. The joy of the Lord was their strength. Who among you are willing now to offer yourselves for the battle and for the service of God? --- Not for an earthly so-called church, but for the Heavenly Church, His body?

Now please listen to His words as He stands before you holding out His nail-pierced hands and pleading: "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (1 Chron. 29:5). This was what made David truly rejoice; will it not much more make your Saviour rejoice if you come and give Him freely and willingly your life, your money, your talents, to be used in this great and heavenly building?

Then only you will know the fullness of the joy of the Lord, which is your strength. This indeed is true joy, and it will bring joy to the whole church too.

January 29

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. 62:5).

The above verse indicates at once that the object of all His dealings with us is fellowship with Himself. That goal, towards which He is drawing us on step by step, so that we cannot draw back, is the highest joy of perfect oneness and union with our Lord. The Bible says: 'the bridegroom rejoices over the bride'. That speaks of the pure joy that rises only from a fellowship of life, which is the gift of God.

God's purpose in giving Eve to Adam as a companion was for fellowship. God wants us all to have that true fellowship. This word fellowship is a unique word in the Bible and no one can truly understand it who is not born again. The fellowship with the Father and the Son is wholly and solely and entirely for those who have received new life from Him, and who abide with Him and in Him forever and ever. That is how we define the love of God. It is the life of God flowing into us and our life flowing towards God. True fellowship is mutual and will bring into us a real divine likeness and conformity to the image of His Son.

January 30

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb, is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

In Revelation 21 the Church is compared to a bride adorned for her husband -- a bride prepared to receive in fullness the love and joy and wisdom of God and the very heart-secrets of her Lord. When you go to heaven the Lord will share everything with you without any compulsion, and yet you will be glad to be in subjection to Him throughout eternity.

Now do you understand why your Lord wants you to be His? Now do you understand why He is calling you, loving you and disciplining you? It is even that He may rejoice over you with heavenly rejoicing, and that you may have intimacy with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that the angels can never know. It is that you may enjoy the sweetest love through all eternity -- that you may know the great joy of being loved with a heavenly, everlasting love.

All the heavenly powers are waiting to see God's glory and beauty in you and God wants you to be the object of His delight and affection. Will you not allow Him to bring you into that enjoyment?

January 31

"At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).

God will not rest till He has received from us that for which He has been waiting from eternity. The mighty and Holy God offers to you His own righteousness in which there is no flaw or fault. God wants to present us spotless in His own presence before the angels of heaven. The righteousness of God in you is of such a nature that if you possess it, even the angels cannot point a finger at you in condemnation. Have you received such a righteousness or are you still trusting in something else?

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). "And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2).

God seeks a dwelling place in us - a rest such as He cannot get even from Heaven without us. He is gathering out of this earth a church, a company of chosen people to give Him

pleasure and rest and satisfaction. It is this joy which is your strength, and it is this joy and great love which we offer you in the in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Secrets of God's House

February

February 1

"To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:9-10).

When we, by God's grace, are redeemed by the Blood of His Son, we are like vessels of clay, which are given into the hands of a Master-Artist. Unknown to us the skilful Hand of God is working out designs, heavenly designs upon us. Day and night He goes on working upon us His heavenly designs. A day is coming when He will present us before all the heavenly angels, and will say: 'Come, my angels, look at this vessel called Paul!' And they will say to God: "How did you make him so beautiful?" I am not telling you fairy stories, but the truth from God's Word! When we see our Lord face to face, and become like Him, we will be admired by all the heavenly hosts.

As we read our Bible from Genesis to Revelation, we may see how in fact God plans to do so. He is working out that plan even now, for God purposed from eternity past to show forth His glory to us and through us.

February 2

"And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth.... and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:13-14).

Jacob was blind; he could not understand what he saw, and what he heard; but even though he failed completely to comprehend the purposes of God, that did not change them. It was because of fear that Jacob could not understand.

As long as there is fear in our hearts, we will never understand what God is saying. The devil will bring all kinds of fear into our hearts at all times, and through this fear we are kept from understanding God's purpose and plans. Jacob had to learn many very hard lessons before he knew what God meant. It took over 20 years for him to be delivered from fear. But we have the Holy Ghost to teach us all things, so that we can be entirely and immediately free from fear. It is only by the divine understanding of God's house that we can know how much blessing is ours to receive from the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through His Church and in His Church that God can give blessing to others.

February 3

"Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

Some hundreds of years after Jacob's day, what God said to Jacob in Genesis 28 was now made clearer to Moses on the Mount, when he was shown the pattern of the Tabernacle. From the mountain Moses saw many things, and amongst them the House of God in its glory. In Hebrews we see that what Moses was shown on the Mount was but a shadow of that House which is now being built by God. As the Apostle says in Hebrews 3:6, we are the House of the Lord Jesus Christ, provided we hold fast our confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm to the end.

How can God give us a share in that House? Our Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter: "Whom do you think that I am?" Peter had answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then the Lord said to him: "Peter, that revelation has not come to you by flesh and blood. It is my heavenly Father who has revealed to you who I am, and upon that revelation I will build My Church'. It is not a bodily revelation of Christ that we want now, but a spiritual revelation, for the more we know our Lord by divine revelation, the more we are able to bring material to build the House of God.

February 4

"Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven and he fell to the earth and heard a Voice" (Acts 9:3-4).

When Saul of Tarsus was on the way to Damascus, he saw a great light and heard a Voice. But he could not go forth and build the Church upon that only. Afterwards he began to see who Lord Jesus Christ was. For this he had to go into the wilderness (Gal. 1:15-17), and it was there that he began to see the spiritual meaning of the Church. Only then could he tell people about the mystery of the Church, for it is something that comes only by revelation from God.

We find the same truth revealed more fully in the book of revelation. There we see the House of God, the heavenly Tabernacle, the Holy City of God coming down from heaven. What is now being built is there complete. But before that day, the old things will have passed away (Rev. 21:5). Only then will you be able to see the full glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, God's Sanctuary, God's House. Are you prepared to give up your old life? Let go everything of the old life and let Him make you entirely new.

The Lord says: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). In the House of God, there must be *only* what is new. May God reveal to us His heavenly plan, and that in His heavenly House all things everywhere are new.

February 5

"They shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof" (Exodus 25:10).

Before we can understand the fuller message of the Tabernacle, we need to get a bird's-eye view of its structure. We need to study, verse by verse, chapters 24 and 25, of Exodus. First we read about the Ark, which was in the inner Sanctuary of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:10-22). This box, made of shittim wood, was overlaid with gold inside and outside. The cover, or lid, which was made of pure sheet gold, was God's 'Mercy Seat'. Of one piece with this gold plate and overshadowing it were two cherubim, and it was from between these cherubim that God used to speak.

The inner sanctuary where this Ark was placed was called the Most Holy Place, and in front of this was another, larger room called 'the Holy place'. In the later was a candlestick, an altar for incense, and a table for shew bread (Exod. 25:23-39; 30:1-6). Dividing the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was the veil (Exod. 26:31-33).

February 6

"Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them" (Exodus 26:1).

Now mark carefully the coverings of the Tabernacle. In the Tabernacle the walls were boards of shittim wood covered with gold, but the ceiling was made of curtains (Exodus 26:1). There were four coverings. The first layer, was made of ten curtains of fine twined linen joined to one another by 50 blue loops and 50 gold taches. Together they formed "one tabernacle" over the sanctuary.

The linen was interwoven with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and cherubim were embroidered upon it. The same materials were also used for the veil and for the hangings at the door of the Tabernacle and at the gate of the court. Every small detail has something to teach us about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second set of curtains, was woven of goats' hair, (Exodus 26:7-13). In this case there were not ten curtains, but eleven. Together they formed the "tent" of the Tabernacle. Over this was a third covering of rams' skins dyed red, and on top of this again, was the last covering of badgers' skins (Exodus 26:14).

February 7

"By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

"Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." (Heb. 10:19,20).

As we have seen, the inner part was called the Most Holy Place and the outer part was called the Holy Place. The priests could enter the Holy Place every day, to keep the lamps alight and the incense burning day and night and to change the shew bread each week. But only Aaron, the High Priest, might pass through the veil to enter the Most Holy Place and even he could do so only once a year. Others could not enter there at all. Such a veil hung also, in the later temple at Jerusalem, and it was the rending in twain of that dividing veil when our Lord died on the cross that signified that the way into the Holiest is now open through the Blood of Jesus. (Heb. 9:12; 10:19,20).

February 8

"Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount". (Exod. 25:40).

Between the tabernacle and the main entrance of the outer courtyard was an altar 5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high, made of shittim wood, but covered with brass (Exodus 27:1-2). Near it there was a brass laver (Exodus 30:17-21).

The outer walls of the courtyard were of white linen hung on pillars, which stood in sockets of brass (Exodus 27:9-18). The north and the south walls were 100 cubits long, and 5 cubits high and the west wall was 50 cubits long. The length of the east wall was also 50 cubits, but it had a gate in the center 20 cubits wide, hung with embroidered linen.

The meaning of all these things you must seek in the Bible itself. The Bible is the best commentary we have. But concerning them all God said one thing to Moses very clearly: "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40). Surely this says to us that, whether we understand all the details or not, they are meant to speak to us of heavenly realities.

February 9

"And all the people answered with one voice, and said; all the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3).

Moses alone went up the Mount. What God revealed to him, he then came and told the people. The response of the people was, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (verse 3).

Those who are not prepared to obey the Lord can never understand what the Lord is saying. There is plenty of Bible knowledge, but people will not do the things that they learn, and *light that is rejected becomes darkness*. Before we can go any further we must give God the promise: 'O God, whatsoever Thou shalt teach us we will obey.'

God was about to make a very important covenant. In preparation, Moses built an altar, upon the altar was laid the sacrifice, the blood of which was sprinkled upon the people. This teaches us that only those who come under the Blood of the Lord Jesus can understand what God is saying. No one will really understand these things who has not been purchased and washed from his sins by the Blood of the everlasting covenant.

Our first step to the understanding of heavenly things is to be brought and kept under the Blood of the everlasting covenant. The Blood speaks of two things --- cleansing and life. In this figure of the slain offerings, the elders were seeing (Exodus 24:10) the Lord Jesus Christ suffering and dying for all sinners everywhere. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

February 10

"They saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." (Exodus 24:10).

From that mountaintop, God was about to give Moses laws, commandments and the pattern of the Tabernacle. But first those seventy nobles of Israel were made to see heaven. Then only did they see Moses go up the mount of God and enter the cloud.

By studying the details of the Tabernacle, we get some idea of God's Spiritual House. Naturally speaking we might say 'Why should we waste time in studying all these details?' But when we recognise that they are things of heaven, reflecting heavenly principles, then we will read them with love and reverence. God has planned to teach us about heaven in this very simple

way. First, Moses was made to see only God's glory on the Mount like a devouring fire for six whole days. Then on the seventh day, God called to Moses, calling him to enter the cloud. The cloud covered him so that no man could see him at all. There followed forty days and forty nights in which Moses heard God speaking to him. Before God could speak to Moses, Moses had to see the glory of God.

Only the humble, contrite heart can truly commune with God. Before Moses could be God's mouthpiece. God's servant, he must go through every test. This again in God's order. It is by learning how to suffer. It is when we are prepared to go through suffering and hardship and tribulation for our Lord's sake, that God will reveal these things to us in a simple way.

February 11

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering" (Exodus 25:1, 2).

For the work of God and for His Sanctuary, God will not accept any offering that is given by compulsion or from a wrong motive. I ask you: Do you know the secret of giving to God all that you have, joyfully, cheerfully, and without holding anything back? Do you know how to give God your very best?

God said: 'I want only a willing offering.' There is a secret hidden here. It is the secret of the willing heart that gives its best to God. If you really want to do any service in the House of God, whether it be praying, or teaching, or visiting, or any other form of service, you must do it joyfully and cheerfully.

Never think that God wants for His work money for which you beg or which you have to get by compulsion. Such money God will never use. Men may accept it, but God will never do so. He will only abhor it, for it is a willing, joyful offering that God wants. As you are constrained by the Holy Spirit, so you must give.

February 12

"And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass" (Exodus 25:3).

What is the spiritual meaning of gold, silver, brass and shittim wood? and for what reason has God demanded those materials? Gold speaks of the divine nature. We all need divine wisdom, divine strength, and divine knowledge. And God has provided these in His son (1 Cor. 1:30). When we do things according to the divine plan of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are gathering gold for His Sanctuary.

Silver speaks of redemption. Our Lord was sold for the price of a slave. But He gave His own life-blood to save us. Wherever you see silver in the Tabernacle it speaks of redemption, of the price our Lord paid to save us. When we are born again, we become the "purchased possession" of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our spirits and our bodies now belong to Him. We are "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20). Now I can no longer say that my hands, my feet, my lips, my eyes are my own. They belong to the Lord Jesus Christ because He has purchased me, and bought me by His own Blood! (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Our bodies are the temples of the His Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). That is why we must glorify God with them, through our dress, our habits, our manners, our speech (1 Thess. 4:4-5; 1 Tim. 2:9-10). That is the pure silver. My body and my spirit have become the purchased possession of my Lord, and now I cannot dress as I used to do. Now I cannot waste my money upon worldly things, and upon worldly glory. Now, I must glorify my Lord through my dress, manners and ways. It is the privilege of every believer thus to bring silver to God's House.

The brass speaks of judgment. Those who looked on the serpent of brass, acknowledged thereby that they themselves were under judgment and that it was the devil (the serpent) who was responsible for their disobedience and death. By His Cross our Lord Jesus has defeated our enemy. He has crushed him, and through faith we have the victory in Him.

Gold speaks of the divine nature; the silver of that price of redemption that our Lord has paid for us; while brass speaks of the judgment, which our Lord had to bear on our behalf. All of us are commanded to gather that material, and bring it to Him.

February 13

"And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen" (Exodus 25:4)

Ten curtains for the inner covering of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:1-6), a veil in front of the Most Holy Place (26:31-33) and hangings for the door of the tent (26:36-37), and for the gate of the court (26:16-17). All these, together with the garments of the High Priest (28:4-8) were to be of fine twined lined embroidered with needlework in these three colors.

Blue is a heavenly colour. So the colour blue remains us of our heavenly vocation while upon earth. A heavenly vocation and a heavenly service are the privilege of every true believer. Are you living up to your heavenly vocation? Are you winning souls for your Saviour? Are you telling people about your Lord? Is God's glory being seen through you? Is the devil being defeated through you because of your faithfulness to your heavenly vocation?

Purple is a royal colour. It speaks of the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ. The purple colour in the Tabernacle was placed there to remind the people of their royal calling (Exodus 19:6). The divine plan is that we should actually become kings and princes of God.

The scarlet tells us of that cleansing which we receive by the precious Blood of Jesus (Isa. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:19, 1 John 1:7). Though your sins be as scarlet, the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can wash away every guilty stain.

Lastly we come to the fine twined linen. The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19:8). "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10). We are righteous because we are clothed and covered with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

February 14

"And goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins" (Exodus 25:4-5).

The first additional covering was the "tent" of the tabernacle and was woven of goats' hair.

A he-goat can climb the steepest hill. The steepness of the hill does not discourage it, because it is accustomed to graze at the top. It looks very noble as it climbs upward, seeking the heights. That too is how we ought to walk. The Christian life is like climbing a very high hill. Do you want to enjoy the presence of God? Do you want to see the glory of God? You have got to climb hills of difficulty, refusing discouragement and with no turning back.

The next covering of the Tabernacle was of rams' skins dyed red (Exodus 26:14). It covered the tent completely, and outside where it hung down, you could see only the red. This again is a type of the provision made by our Lord to keep us all covered by His Blood. And in the Old Testament interval we have the long history of the offering for sin of the blood of bulls and of goats and of rams—all pointing forward to Him.

The last covering was of badgers' skins. It covered the whole Sanctuary – the whole Tabernacle. The badger is extremely watchful over its young ones. It is always on the watch, and will not allow any other animal to come near and attack them. So, by the covering of badgers' skins, we learn a further lesson, namely that our Lord watches over us as an eagle over its young (Deut. 32:11-12) or as a shepherd watches over his sheep (Ezek. 34:11).

The sick, the suffering, the needy, the poor, must be shepherded, but where are the men who will be God's true shepherds? We need to pray: 'O God, give to Thy Church true shepherds who, like the badger with her young, will watch over us'.

February 15

"And shittim wood" (Exodus 25:5).

The Ark in the Most Holy Place, the altar of incense and the table of shewbread in the Holy Place, the boards and pillars of the Sanctuary, the pillars of the outer court, and the great

brazen alter—all were of shittim wood. The shittim wood comes from a tree of the Acacia family. It is the most common wood to be found in any part of the world and is very little used for anything except firewood.

The Lord Jesus, the Lord of Glory, took upon Himself the form of a common man. As an ordinary man He came and lived amongst the poorest people. The Lord Jesus became as shittim wood—perfect Man—that He might help you in any trial, at anytime, anywhere. It is a very difficult job to make a straight board from shittim wood. Yet all the boards of the Tabernacle were straight boards—the crooked was made straight. How was this done?

The shittim wood that was used in the tabernacle was of the black acacia tree that grows only in the dry barren deserts of Arabia. This shittim wood is hard, tough, smooth, without knots, and extremely beautiful. It is so hard and solid, as to be almost incorruptible, and so large that planks twelve cubits long can be cut from it.

What a wonderful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was no crookedness, no deviation no corruption in Him. Yet He came as a root out of a dry ground (Isa. 53:2). All of us are by nature very crooked. Our Lord became as shittim wood to make us straight.

February 16

"Oil for the light" (Exodus 25:6).

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 25:13 we see that we must keep our vessels filled, and our lights burning, as we wait for the coming of the Bridegroom.

In Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit." We have seen that, in the Holy Place, the outer portion, there were three pieces of furniture. On the south side was the golden candlestick having seven branches.

In Zechariah 4, the prophet was made to see in a vision a golden candlestick being fed continually with oil from two living olive trees (Verses 2,3 and 12). The angel of God said to him: 'My work cannot be done by human minds or human power, but only by my Spirit' (verse 6). Through the seven lamps burning day and night in the Sanctuary, God was saying to His people: 'My work can be done in one way only: not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.' How clearly and beautifully God was speaking.

God says 'Remember! I have made you to be like a candlestick of pure gold, that My light should shine upon all people, that men may know My greatness and glory.' So these two olive trees speak of a faithful, loyal and true testimony. If you will read Genesis 8:11 and Psalm 52:8, you will see that the olive tree speaks of God's mercy and grace. Through the olive trees God was saying to Zechariah, 'Go and proclaim my message of grace everywhere. Even though I must judge sin, my mercy and grace must never fail or change.'

Unless you shine like golden lamps, burning beautifully day and night, you will never be able to manifest God's glory. That was the main message of the candlestick. We are to shine as lights of God, burning with the living oil of God's Spirit. All the seven lamps were of one piece, and speak of true oneness among God's children.

February 17

"Spices for anointing oil" (Exodus 25:6).

Special spices were required by God, to be used in making the anointing oil. Read Exodus 30:22-33. That oil could only be used in the temple and in the Sanctuary, and upon those who were serving in the Sanctuary; it could not be used for any other purpose. The spices called myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia were used, along with olive oil.

In Song of Solomon 4:12-16, the Church is compared to a garden where those spices grow. Imagine a garden where frankincense, myrrh, aloes, cassia and calamus are all growing together. After much careful cultivation the bushes begin to blossom. Then the North and the South winds begin to blow, and the sweet fragrance of mingled spices flows out, giving great joy to the one who walks in the garden. Can you sing to the Lord Jesus Christ! 'Come, Lord Jesus Christ, into my heart, Thy garden of spices'. If you are not living a life to the glory of God, the Lord can smell no spices. But if you are living a life pleasing to Him, then that garden of spices, your heart can give joy to Him. We read in 1 Corinthians 3:9 that "We are God's husbandry", God's garden, and in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, that "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ". That is how our lives ought to be, so that, when our Lord Jesus Christ walks in His gardens, He may smell their fragrance.

February 18

"Spices... for sweet incense" (Exodus 25:6).

Spices were also used to make the incense for burning! Read the instructions for preparing them in Exodus 30:34-38. The anointing oil speaks of service which we should render in the House of God, and the incense speaks of the intercession which ascends from the hearts of believers before God's throne.

In God's Sanctuary the incense burned day and night on the golden altar in the Holy Place, the whole day and the whole night. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psa. 141:2).

We are God's co-workers; that is why we have to pray. And even though we may never receive an answer to our prayer upon this earth, when we reach heaven we shall know God's answer to every one. No prayer ever goes unanswered. The High Priest had to first burn incense before the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:12-13). Then only was the blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:6, 15-16). All this was a type or shadow of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He brought His own Blood inside the Most Holy Place, thereby wholly satisfying God (Heb. 9:11-12).

February 19

"Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate" (Exodus 25:7).

Firstly, Aaron wore a white coat, over that a blue robe, and thirdly the ephod. The ephod was made of fine twined linen, embroidered with blue and purple, scarlet and gold (ch.28:6-8). On the shoulder of the ephod were two onyx stones or "stones of memorial unto the children of Israel". They were engraved with the twelve names of the tribes, and, we are told, "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders" (verses 9-12).

This tells us that our Lord carries us upon His shoulders. Let the Lord Jesus carry your burdens. Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you (1 Pet. 5:7). When you learn that lesson, and let the Lord carry your burden, you will enjoy His perfect rest and peace.

Over the ephod was the breastplate of embroidered linen with its chains and ouches of gold. Upon the breastplate were twelve stones, upon which also were the twelve names of the twelve tribes (Verse 15-21). These twelve stones were very near the heart of the High Priest. Wherever he went the stones went with him and by them God reminds His people that He wants them to be very close to His heart.

February 20

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me" (Psa. 43:3-4).

Underneath the twelve stones, within the breastplate, there were two more stones, one called the Urim and the other the Thummim. Their nature is a mystery, a secret which God has never revealed to us. We only know that with the help of these two stones, the High Priest could discover God's will.

In Psalm 43:3-4, we may see an allusion to these two stones. They can be compared to the Light of God and the Truth of God. God has given these to every believer. Even as the High Priest could find God's will through the help of these two stones, so, with His light and His truth in our hearts, all of us can now find the will of God. Before we go anywhere, before we spend our money, before we make any plans or any decisions, for ourselves, for our children or for the future, we should find out God's will.

February 21

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14).

Here we have a vision of the wall of the Holy City, which have twelve foundations, on which the names of the twelve Apostles are written. These precious stones speak of the strong Apostolic foundation on which we are built (Eph. 2:19-22). Now the Apostles were only ordinary men, they were men of like passions as we are, yet they were made strong by God. We know what kind of a man Simon Peter was, yet, in spite of his failure; he became God's precious stone.

How did Simon Peter become a precious stone? That name 'Peter' means just an ordinary rough stone, but the same rough stone became in the end a very precious, shining foundation stone. "The first foundation was Jasper (Rev. 21:19). Peter, the rough stone is now linked to a shining, bright, beautiful, precious Jasper stone. How did he become like that?

Precious stones have to go through extreme heat under the ground to become so brilliant. God asks us to believe in His perfect will and to allow the trials He may send to work His will in us. That is how He can make of us shining stones. If we allow the light and truth of God to work in us, we shall become like precious stones drawn close to the heart of God, to enjoy His full love and affection.

February 22

"There was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the Sanctuary. And after the second veil the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all" (Heb. 9:2,3).

The Sanctuary was a dwelling place for God. Men went to it, not in order to pray, but to do their duties. The great Sanctuary was built to wooden boards. These boards were each 15 feet high and 2 feet 3 inches wide. They were overlaid with gold both outside and inside (Exodus 26:15-25). The Sanctuary was divided into two parts: the front portion, called the Holy Place, and the smaller back portion, the Most Holy Place, the former being twice the size of the latter.

That Sanctuary in the wilderness was a shadow of the true Heavenly Sanctuary of which the High Priest is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb. 8:1,2). For this reason God told Moses: "See...that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" (verse 5). Every detail of the Sanctuary, however simple, was given to Moses by God, and it is quite obvious from the details that such a building and structure would never have been designed by any human architect.

February 23

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The outer part of the Sanctuary, Holy Place, speaks to us of the earthly vocation of the Church. The inner part, or Most Holy Place, tells us of the heavenly vocation of the same Church. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has that double service. Both have to go together, if there is to be manifested the divine plan for the church. Let us look first at our heavenly vocation.

In Revelation 4 the Apostle John was given a heavenly vision. He saw in heaven a central throne, and around it twenty-four seats. Then he saw a rainbow round about the throne, and seven lamps of fire burning before it. As you know, there are seven colours in the rainbow, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. God made seven covenants with mankind. It is because of seven covenants, that we will have a right to share His throne.

February 24

"There were seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 4:5).

John saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. They speak to us of the perfect seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8). He indwells the believer (v. 9); He quickens (v. 11); He leads (v. 14); He becomes in us the pledge of sonship whereby we can call God our Father (v. 15); He witnesses in our hearts that we are the children of God (v. 16-17); He intercedes for us according to the will of God (v. 27); and He helps us in our infirmities, giving us power to overcome every weakness and to become more than conquerors through Him that loved us (vs. 26 and 37). It is because of that perfect work of the Holy Spirit that we shall be there in Heaven, because of the work of those seven lamps of fire – the indwelling Holy Spirit in His fullness. The *indwelling* Spirit will deliver us from bondage to the flesh v. 9. The *quickening* Spirit will overcome mortality and corruption (v. 11). The *guiding* Spirit of God leads us day by day (v. 14). The Spirit of *adoption* takes away every fear, and gives us a deeper love and knowledge of God. (v. 15). The *witnessing*

Spirit helps us to realise the fixed plan of God for us as His children and heirs (v. 16-17). The *interceding* Spirit teaches us to pray according to the will of God (v. 27). And finally, the *Comforter* leads us on from victory to victory till we are seated with Christ in His heavenly throne (v. 26, 37).

Behind the throne John saw the rainbow with seven colours. *Before* the throne he saw the seven lamps of fire. *Behind* us is the covenant of God. Within us the Holy Spirit working. Thus has God made full provision for His Church in her heavenly and earthly vocations.

February 25

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of Life" (Rev. 2:10).

We have now to say a word more about our earthly vocation. We have seen that each board was 10 cubits long. The number 10 in the Bible is the number of maturity – spiritual maturity and responsibility attained through testing and trial. Spiritual maturity does not come by head-knowledge. You may have much true knowledge, but it is only after hardships, trials and tribulations that you become spiritually mature, and your life here on earth is your training ground.

Now those wooden boards, the were 10 cubits high and 1 ½ cubits wide, each had two sockets underneath, sockets of silver for their support. God could have used gold for the sockets but He chose to use silver. Why? Because silver is, as we saw, a symbol of redemption in the Bible. It is a symbol of the price our Lord Jesus paid to redeem us to Himself.

The number two in the Bible is a symbol of unity in fellowship (Matt. 18:19). Each board had to rest upon two sockets; otherwise it would not be steady. The two tenons resting on the sockets of silver tell us that we have all been bought by the same redemption price, and are all equally precious to the Lord.

February 26

"And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end" (Exodus 26:28).

Uniting the boards of the Tabernacle there were four rods or bars of wood, overlaid with gold, which were put through golden rings on the boards to bind them together. Four of these rods could be seen from the outside. The fifth rod was made to go through the middle of the boards from end to end, to keep all the boards united (Exodus 26:26-29). All the boards, put together speaks of the whole Church throughout the world. *These five tie rods* speak of five spiritual bonds which bind believers together into one. To have real spiritual unity in the Church of God, we *require five things*. There are four outward bonds and one hidden central bond to unite us all. The central hidden bond is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ which binds together all believers throughout the world.

The four outward bonds are mentioned in Acts 2:42. We are told that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." This is how they grew spiritually in the grace of God. If these four things are manifested in assemblies everywhere we shall see union and strength. We can dispense with none of these. But the chief and the most important bond is that indwelling life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the hidden rod going through the boards from end to end. When the Lord Jesus Christ becomes Lord of our being, we cannot help but love everybody because the love of the Lord Jesus Christ goes out from us to all His children.

February 27

"The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4).

In the heart of the Sanctuary, the Most Holy Place, the only piece of furniture was the ark of the testimony: a box of shittim wood, measuring 2 ½ x 1 ½ x 1 ½ cubits, overlaid with gold and having a solid gold lid or cover – the Mercy Seat – upon which, and of one piece with it, were two golden cherubim.

From the day on which the children of Israel journeyed into the wilderness until the day they entered the land forty years later, they had a daily supply of bread from heaven. This manna, which looked like dew and tasted like wafers with honey, had to be gathered at sunrise and there was always enough, to satisfy all the people. One omer was put in a golden pot in the Ark of the covenant as a witness that God had made an abundant and sufficient provision of heavenly food for every man.

Secondly, in the Ark there was the rod of Aaron which had budded. This, with its blossoms and fruit, was a reminder of the kind of service that God wanted. He chose only Moses and Aaron, because they had been proved and tested for long years in the wilderness before they were given this great responsibility.

Thirdly, in the same Ark were two tables of stone. In Exodus 40:20 they are called "the testimony". The Word of God had to go right into the Ark for safe-keeping. Our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). Let the Lord Jesus take control, and then hide in Him, and there will be abundant life.

February 28

"Over it, the cherubims of glory shadowing the Mercy Seat" (Heb. 9:5).

One with the Mercy seat there were the two golden cherubim (Exodus 25:18-20). They concern Ministry (Ezekiel 1). God had a very important message, which He wanted Ezekiel to convey to the nations, but before he could understand it, God gave him a vision of the cherubim.

Before Ezekiel could speak on behalf of God or be a true witness, prophet, or servant of God, he had to become identified with God, and that spiritual identification was demonstrated to him through the meaning of the cherubim.

Although these living creatures looked so impressive and inspiring, yet they had the form of a man (v. 4) and the hands of a man (v. 8). For though Ezekiel was only a man, God wanted to accomplish through him a great ministry. How much, for example, can be wrought by a single man through prayer. When people learn the secret of how to pray, and how to agonise in prayer, how much power is released through them to all parts of the world!

The living creatures also had wings (v. 8). They had their wings joined together (v. 9). This meant that, wherever any one creature went, the other three had to follow. That speaks of

true spiritual unity. Together they had to move and together they had to rest. They could not just go independently, each in the direction he chose. They could go only as a single unit. And that is how the Church of Christ has to work. As you grow spiritually, you should see the spiritual oneness amongst you as God's co-workers.

February 29

"Moses finished the work. Then ... the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:33, 34). The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1).

In the Most Holy Place there was no natural light. Unless God fulfilled His promise and took up His abode there, the Sanctuary would remain in total darkness. But God had promised. In Numbers 7:89 we read that Moses "heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubims." Glory is not a vision or a wonderful" sensation. It is always something related to a plan of God: and if we are ever going to come into the knowledge and experience of the glory it is essential that we fully come into line with the divine pattern and plan.

To be shown God's glory is with a view to a ministry for the whole Church. What we need is to hear the voice of God and to know what He is saying, so that we can convey His message to men. We need to hear the voice of God that we may fit into the plan of God and find our place in the structure of the City of God. Let us be found faithful, for the end of that process is glory. It is a Holy City, God's dwelling place, "having the glory of God."

3. The Secrets of Bethany

MARCH

March 1

"Now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11).

It is recorded in the Gospels, that the Lord Jesus Christ visited Bethany eight times. As far as we read in the Scriptures, He never once stayed overnight in Jerusalem. He would go there in the morning, heal the sick and perform miracles, and then go to Bethany or the Mount of Olives nearby. The Mount of Olives and Bethany are side by side, and either He would go to the Mount of Olives to pray, or He would go to Bethany (Mark 11:1,11,19). On each occasion, after healing or teaching or performing miracles in Jerusalem, He would return to Bethany or to the Mount of Olives in the evening. Finally it was from Bethany He ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50). All this goes to show that the Lord Jesus had special lessons to teach His disciples in Bethany and it was at Bethany that He gave the last message and command to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel."

March 2

"And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs, and they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered" (2 Kings 20:7).

The word Bethany means house of figs. In the Bible figs speak of health c.f. 2 Kings 20:7. Figs are a part of the normal diet of the Jews. In 1 Samuel 25:18 we read how Abigail brought the best things to David, hoping to appease his anger, and amongst them were two hundred cakes of figs. On another occasion in 1 Chronicles 12:38-40 men of war came to make David King, and there was great joy in the whole Kingdom. There was feasting, and the best things were available for eating and drinking. Amongst those good things were cake of figs. This is an illustration of the value of the figs among the Jews, for feasting and also for health. Bethany as house of figs is also house of health.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to bring us true health. All men are sick of sin and the sickness of sin cannot be healed. Other diseases may be healed by medicines or by some other treatment, but this disease of sin cannot be healed. So the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to heal men and women from the sickness of sin.

March 3

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3).

In Jeremiah 33:6 to 8, we read that because of rebellion and sin, the people of Israel became captives in Babylon for seventy years. Because of His love for them, God promised to bring them out from their captivity after seventy years.

He said: "I will pardon your sins and transgression and iniquity," and said also: "I will give you health and cure." The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to pardon our sins, transgression and iniquity, and to give us spiritual health. Because our unhappiness and miseries are due to our sins, when our sins are forgiven we become happy and full of joy and spiritual prosperity. Then we have liberty to call upon the Lord Jesus Christ for everything we need.

Bethany speaks of spiritual health and cure. The Lord Jesus Christ was speaking to show to through Bethany how man can receive health spiritually, and true peace. He went to Bethany a number of times, and on each visit, He revealed something more of the secret of how He gives and how we can receive true spiritual health. All diseases caused by sin, and even death itself. In Bethany there is healing, provided you come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

March 4

"The Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psa. 133:3).

The first time the Lord came to Bethany is recorded in John 11:1. The Lord had a special love for the family of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. They had many shortcomings, failures and inward weaknesses, but still He loved them. In the same way He loves you and me but unless we are fully prepared to receive that love, we cannot enjoy the life and joy and health He offers to us.

Man can be prosperous, but very miserable inside. Earthly prosperity is no sign of divine love, but that very wrong conception exists in many hearts. Men think of health and prosperity and spiritual blessing, but God's blessing is for eternity (Psa. 133:3). True blessing is always in terms of eternal life, and whatever we enjoy through eternal life is true blessing. When we have inward peace we enjoy true life, and in spite of whatever God may allow in our lives whether sufferings or difficulties, because of eternal life we can enjoy true blessing. Blessings come to us in different ways. In fact, in Psalm 119:67,71 we see how David regards affliction and trials as blessing. He is thankful in his affliction because he learns how to keep and understand God's Word (Psa. 18:19, 35 and 36). Through the very same affliction, he comes into enlargement. In the same way in Job 42:6, 12, 13, through many painful trials, Job received a double portion of blessing. Whatever God may permit in our lives, even though it may be painful, because we enjoy eternal life it becomes a blessing.

March 5

"I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

To show His love to Martha and Mary, the Lord Jesus Christ came to Bethany again and again, but they had to be prepared to receive His love in fullness. The first time He came to show them their true condition. If we really want to receive God's love fully, we have first to see our sinful and corrupt condition. There is nothing good in us, as Paul testifies (Rom. 7:18). It takes us many years to learn that lesson, because we do not want to think that there is nothing good in us.

Outwardly the family at Bethany were very nice people. They looked after Lord Jesus and loved Him. They were not like the Pharisees and Sadducees who found fault with Him. This family had great respect for the Lord Jesus Christ, and welcomed Him with great joy every time. Whenever the Lord Jesus came from Jerusalem, He must have stopped there on the

way. Even though His visits are recorded only eight times, He must have gone there many more times than that. The Lord knew very well their condition and it was not because they were perfect that He went there. He knew how much He could accomplish in them by going there so He kept on going. The first time He went, it was to show them their true nature and condition, for He only can see our hearts.

March 6

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:17-18).

No doubt Martha and Mary belonged to a nice family. When the Lord Jesus came to the house, straightaway Martha would begin to cook food, and straightaway Mary would come to the feet of the Lord Jesus. What a nice family they were, very generous, kind, loving and so hospitable, and above all a God-fearing family. But the Lord had seen something which others could not see. Unless a man becomes totally new, he cannot receive God's love, power and grace. Even though outwardly he may look nice and well-behaved, none of these human virtues can satisfy God, unless they come from an inward change of nature. We remain under condemnation as long as we do not come to the Lord Jesus. Whatever we have through our old nature, our good behavior and manners or that which we call virtue, is nothing but filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). It is only as we receive new life that our nature becomes new.

So the Lord Jesus Christ came to Bethany to let them see first their true inward condition, for only then could He bless them. Patiently and lovingly He came to Bethany, till He found a change in the whole family. The Lord Jesus Christ very lovingly comes to us, and sends His people to us and His servants again and again till we are brought into full possession of new life. Then our yea become yea and our nay becomes nay, and every step will be controlled by Him. That takes time, but the Lord knows all our difficulties, and very lovingly comes to us again and again.

March 7

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

In the beginning we find there is not mention about Lazarus. Evidently, he was not interested at first. He was a good man. There was no charge against him, for he was honest and hardworking, and a good brother. We know that, because Martha and Mary wept so much for him when he died. If he was a bad man, nobody would have wept for him. There are some very nice people who are very kind and very loving. But somehow, they do not have any hunger or thirst for the things of God.

In Luke 10:40 we see how kind Martha was. As soon as she saw the Lord through the window, she got busy getting the fire ready and began to prepare the food. She was very hospitable, kind-hearted, and a very good cook. But she was also full of jealousy and bad temper. She went on cooking for sometime, but kept one eye upon Mary and one eye upon the food. She waited for a while, but her heart was burning, till, looking very angry, she went to the Lord Jesus, and said "Lord look at that woman! Tell her to come and help me." By the Lord coming into her family, all her hidden weaknesses came out.

Whenever the Lord uncovers sin, He does it to bless us, but human beings uncover sin, to shame us. He went to Bethany not to shame them, but to allow them to see their own condition, to realise their own folly and weakness, and how they could be transformed and become new.

March 8

"Now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

In every way Mary was outwardly humble. Straightway she came to the feet of the Lord Jesus when He came into the house. She was so hungry for the Word of God, but judging by her attitude in John 11:20 she was too proud. It was true that the Lord Jesus had not come to them when they wanted Him, yet He was worthy of respect. Even though Martha was in sorrow, when she heard the Lord had come, she straightway left the house and went to receive Him. She knew she must welcome Him properly, and to show her respect went to meet Him, but Mary sat still weeping and saying: "I won't go! I won't go! Why did He not come when we called Him? We loved Him and served Him! I won't go!" She was too proud.

The Lord went to Bethany in order first to let that family realize their true inward condition. Before God can bless us and help us. He must show us also our true nature. Unless we humble ourselves and see ourselves as the Lord Jesus sees us, He cannot bless us.

This is a picture of a true Church. In every visit to Bethany He revealed something. He wants to teach us also how His love can come into us fully. Our Lord wants our heart, home and Church to be a Bethany, and then there will be a triumphant life, a happy home and a living Church. This threefold secret is revealed by our Lord going to Bethany.

March 9

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).

The first visit of the Lord Jesus Christ to Bethany is described in Luke 10:38-42. The second visit was at the invitation of Martha and Mary. The first time He went of His own choice. But in John 11:3 the sisters sent for Him to come home, because there was a special need at that time. Their brother was very sick. They did not know then what a great blessing the Lord Jesus Christ had in store for them by not coming immediately.

In the beginning of our Christian life, we go to the lord only when we are sick or any need. We pray only for our personal needs or problems. We think only for our personal need. We find however, that when the Lord delays in answering prayer, it means that He wants to give us a greater blessing. We can see from God's Word that the power of resurrection is the highest power in the world (Phil. 3:10). Paul was not longing for miracles, visions or the third heaven. He was longing for two things, viz., "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."

The Lord Jesus Christ went to Bethany for the same purpose—so that Martha, Mary and Lazarus might know Him more intimately, and so that they might have a personal experience of the power of His resurrection.

March 10

"Jesus said.... I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

In John 11:22 Martha said: "Whatsoever thou wilt ask God, God will give it thee." In verse 24 again she says "I know that he shall raise again in the resurrection". When Jesus said that Lazarus would rise again on that very day, she could not believe it, though she believed he would rise at the last day. Even though the Lord Jesus was about to raise Lazarus, Martha came in His way and said: "Lord by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead for four days." The Lord had already told them to roll away the stone, but their faith was merely a mist. The Lord used a painful experience to reveal to Martha and Mary the power of resurrection.

Our faith is mostly head faith. When Mary rose up hastily and came where Jesus was as in verse 32, she said: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died", as if healing depended upon His going to the house. They had no living faith. Lazarus came out of the grave wrapped with the grave clothes (John 11:44). This was for a purpose. If God wanted He could have brought him out without the grave clothes. But Jesus said: "Loose him and let him go." Others had to come to help him. Thus Lazarus became free. New power came into him and automatically power came into Martha and Mary. So Martha, Mary and Lazarus became a happy family, and because of the change of heart, there was no strife in the family. Once we receive the power of resurrection, we are in a better position to enjoy God's plan.

March 11

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Lord took Paul through many painful trials (2 Cor.12:7-10). Nobody knows even today what his thorn in the flesh was, but we believe it was something very painful. That is why he besought the Lord thrice to take it away from him. He was not a man to grumble. He never complained to the Lord, nor did he murmur against the trials he went through (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). With all these sufferings he never once complained. He knew how to go through the most painful sufferings. Never once did he say, "Oh Lord don't take me through these sufferings any more." Then came this thorn in the flesh. It was so painful that he prayed thrice for the Lord to take it away. He said "I cannot bear it any longer. This is too painful for me." The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The thorn was for a purpose. First of all to keep him humble, lest he should exalt himself above measure, and secondly to prove the power of resurrection to him. In Philippians 4:11-13 he said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

There were times when he had to do without food for some days, and had other needs as well, yet he felt strong in all his trials. God permits in our lives many painful situations and circumstances that we may have an opportunity to prove His faithfulness, and so that the power of resurrection will come more and more into us.

March 12

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee" (Gen. 12:2).

To prove resurrection power, God made Abraham to wait till he had become old and his wife had passed the age for child-bearing. Unless God had put new life into those two bodies they could not have had a son. You can imagine the agony which they had to go through for twenty five years after they left Haran. Abraham was a righteous man, but he had no son (Gen. 12:2,

15:2). He had waited for a son for a long time, and at last decided to make his will to the steward of his house. For many years he had been through agony and trials, and doubtless many mocked at him saying, "You said God would make of you a great nation! Why did He not give you a son? If He had wanted to, He could have given you a son long ago." Thus people may have mocked and ridiculed, and God was silent till Abraham knew the power of resurrection (Rom. 4:18-25). But that faith was given to him only after he had waited for 24 years. Then he began to see that God had poured into him and his wife the power of resurrection though they had passed the age of child-bearing. Unless God had put new life into their bodies, that miracle would have not been possible.

In the beginning, Abraham had some faith when God appeared to him. Straightway he had left his home and followed the Lord. But the Lord was not satisfied. He wanted the faith that would claim the power of resurrection.

March 13

"Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

It is only with the resurrection power that one can overcome all limitations, and trials and temptations. It is only with resurrection power we have an intimate knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Such an intimate knowledge of God comes by resurrection power. That is why Paul had no longing for vision, or dreams or signs; nor did he desire to be caught up to the third heaven. He longed to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Such a faith will not come easily till we have had many failures. After we have failed many times we will say, "O Lord, I confess I am no good." Consciously or unconsciously we depend upon our own strength, our wisdom and our knowledge. Paul said, "I die daily." (1 Cor. 15:31). As human beings we all remain weak in spite of our Bible knowledge, cleverness and past blessings. With our old nature we think we can conquer temptation. The devil brings something into our path every day, by thought, word or deed, and the Lord puts into our life some disappointment, some painful situation some trial or difficulty to teach us how to depend upon Him constantly. "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). For all things you can depend upon Him. Generally, we go to the Lord for big matters and not for small matters. That attitude brings us into many failures. We have to recognize the power of resurrection for small matters too, for every burden for every ministry, and for every need.

March 14

"Against the day of my burying hath she kept this" (John 12:7).

In John 12 is the record of the third visit of the Lord Jesus Christ to Bethany. On that occasion Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with costly ointment of spikenard. The house was filled with its odor and the sweet perfume must have been smelled from a distance by the people passing by, it was so strong and sweet.

That is how our Christian life should be, and also our Christian home life and our Church life. The sweetness of the Lord Jesus should be smelled and felt by all who pass by. The house speaks of peace and joy and victory, but before it was a house of sorrow, tears, unbelief and of murmuring almost everyday. Now it has become a house of joy, peace and happiness. Before we are born again, we are like a house of mourning, and our lives are full of defeat and failure and many problems, like Bethany was in Chapter 11. In some houses the people are full of murmuring and complaints, and this house was once like that, but it is now full of

peace and joy, and a house of fellowship, worship, and victory, because His power has come into the family. In John 11 we saw how they all experienced the power of resurrection collectively.

March 15

"There they made Him a supper; and Martha served" (John 12:2).

Mary, Martha and Lazarus had to face extreme difficulties and sorrow and shame, but with the same sorrow they experienced the power of resurrection; and in John 12 we find that the home is entirely different. Imagine the Lord sitting on one side of the table and the Lazarus on the other side and perhaps some other guests also. There, is Martha serving joyfully and Mary pouring the most costly ointment on the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. These five things speak of grace for a triumphant life, a happy home and a living Church. Very lovingly and joyfully they have made the Lord Jesus Christ the Head of the family. Till that time He had been there as a guest only. Every time he came, they received Him as a guest, honoured Him, gave Him food and entertained Him. Then He was only a guest, but now they have found by experience that He is their Lord and Saviour and Creator, and must be the Head of the Home and their lives, so they have given Him the charge to comfort and console them, but had no power to take away their sorrow. But the Lord Jesus solved all their problems, wiped their tears, and turned sorrow into joy; so willingly and joyfully they made Him the Head of the family.

March 16

"Continue ye in my love" (John 15:9).

Many Christians regard the Lord as Head in the same way, but the Lordship of the Lord Jesus is not evident in their lives. It is only after many failures and defeat that they realize the importance of giving everything over to Him as the Head. I suffered for two years seeking to have that power in my life. I was reading the Bible the whole day, spending many hours in prayer and Bible Study, attending meetings, and keeping myself from worldly associations. But there was something lacking in my life till the Lord showed me the secret of living a victorious life.

One night the Lord met me and said to me: "Tell me, Bakht Singh, how were your sins forgiven?" I said, "Lord, I acknowledged that I was a great sinner, and I believed that You died for my sins, and have forgiven me for my sins." Then the Lord said to me, "Do you believe that you are the weakest person living and that you have no power over the flesh?" At once I got the secret: that for even the smallest thing I had to consult Him; and that I could depend upon Him for wisdom, knowledge and strength for every detail, as a child holds the mother at every step because it cannot depend upon itself for anything. That is how we have to cast ourselves upon the Lord for everything (John 15:5). For the smallest thing we have to go to Him.

March 17

"We have been planted together in the likeness of His death ... also ... resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

We have to acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the Head of our family life, individual life, and Church life. Before we make and plan for prayer, for Sunday ministry or personal work, we

should go to the Lord and make our plans in His presence. In practice however, we go to Him about big things and not about the small things. For our ministry on Sunday we pray two or three times, but for Open Air meetings we do not pray at all. That is how men treat lightly the things of God. However for everything we must go and consult Him, whether for family life, individual life or Church life, whether for a small or great ministry. Then we will know new life flowing into us, into the family and into the Church. But remember this: death and the power of resurrection go together.

When we are born again, we are planted or grafted into the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "planting" is important. Here it means "grafting". After grafting, the trees which formerly yielded sour fruit begin to yield good, sweet and large fruit. Paul uses the same words for grafting into the Lord Jesus. Not only has the Lord Jesus forgiven us our sins, but spiritually we are baptized into His death, burial and resurrection, and by the power of His death we are able to die to our old nature.

March 18

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20).

Many people believe in the death of the Lord Jesus, but they will not die to their old nature, because they fail to appropriate the power of resurrection to make them new. As we are planted into the death of the Lord Jesus (Rom. 6:5), we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. It is very important that we claim by faith every moment and every day the power of resurrection for a triumphant and victorious life. Every time we read the Bible, we must pray and begin to read, if there is service to do, we must pray and begin to work. We must receive the power of resurrection by faith for everything. The gift of God must be received every moment. It is an active and living faith as Paul says in Galatians 2:20 "the faith of the Son of God" – not our faith.

You must be conscious of the Lord Jesus Christ living in you, and then exercise faith for all your needs, responsibilities and trials. The same power can be received for our daily duties, and we receive the same power for times of temptation or hardship. It is a wonderful power that is available to us. The two things go together, first, we receive into us the power to die to ourselves, and secondly the power of resurrection by faith.

March 19

"At the name of Jesus every Knee should bow... and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:10,11).

The Lord Jesus represents the Head. Lazarus represents the power of resurrection. Thirdly, there was food on the table, which speaks of the Word of God which we enjoy through our fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Then there will be true growth, both personally and with the family. Fourthly, Martha was serving joyfully (John 12:2).

Mary was full of devotion and worship (v. 3). Before she had been so proud. Outwardly she was humble, but inwardly she was proud. They now all acknowledge Jesus as their master, Lord, Creator and Resurrection; and say "Thou art worthy of all worship!" When you see Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, honor Him as such.

There are five simple divine principles for a triumphant life, a happy home and a Living Church. Firstly, we must go to Him for everything and get His approval all our plans; secondly, we must seek the daily appropriation of the power of resurrection for all our needs and problems and trials; thirdly, we must have fellowship, and be subject to the Word of God; fourthly, there must be joyful service; and fifthly true devotion and worship with humility and gratitude. This five-fold secret is for a happy home, and a happy home fulfills the divine order. May our Lord give us this experience.

March 20

"Thy King cometh unto thee ... lowly, and riding ... upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

At His fourth visit to Bethany the Lord planned to reveal His Kingship. He wanted His friends to understand this, and how they could enjoy the privileges of that Kingship, and paradoxically how to be humble and meek. Many believers only accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. They want Him only to forgive their sins and eventually to take them to heaven. They do not understand the real longing of the Lord Jesus to make them His co-workers and partners, and that, for that purpose they have to be brought under His Kingship and Lordship constantly. After many years of defeat and failure, they understand and give the right place to the Lord Jesus in their hearts as heavenly King. He has to be our King of our hearts, home and church, and His authority must be fully exercised in our midst constantly, individually, as a family, and as a Church.

Though our Lord could have commanded any beast, even a lion to ride upon, He chose purposely a colt of an ass. Among all animals the colt of an ass is a very rebellious animal. The colt of an ass will not allow anybody to ride on it and those who try to do so do not have an easy time, yet He chose an unbroken colt. When they brought this unbroken colt to Him, straightaway He sat on it and there was no kicking. It carried the Lord Jesus with great joy and obedience.

March 21

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).

Many believers, alas! are unlike the colt and need to be beaten many times. That is our nature; we are so stubborn. We do not yield to the voice of God easily. We only want Him to bless us and deliver us from difficulties. When it comes to doing His will we do not want that. We only want our will to be done. That is why many believers do not grow spiritually. They do not obey the Lord Jesus Christ implicitly. Yet with what joy and humility the colt carried the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus was showing His disciples at that time, if they wanted to be His true disciples, if they wanted to serve Him and follow Him, then they should be like that colt. By nature it was stubborn, but in God's presence it was perfectly humble and obedient. No man can break our will. All of us are very stubborn, and it is only after many years of beating that we become humble.

There are different kinds of pride in all of us and that is why we find it hard to obey the Lord implicitly. The Lord has to break our pride in many ways. Sometimes the breaking comes through sickness.

March 22

"The Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lords" (1 Sam. 17:47).

God has His own way of breaking all of us. David himself testified in 1 Samuel 17:47, and declared very boldly that he was not depending upon the sword or any other weapon. Yet, after winning many other battles in the strength of the Lord he wanted to take pride in numbering his people, to show to others that in his kingdom there were many mighty men of valour to fight the enemy. He commanded Joab to number the people. Joab reminded him that he had not fought any battle in his own strength, nor by the strength of his army, but that it was the Lord that had fought for him. Yet the King's word prevailed and Joab numbered the people, till God's wrath fell upon David, and he was brought to the threshing floor, (2 Sam. 24:15,16) to break his pride. A threshing floor is the place where men separate the grain from the chaff. David had begun to take pride in his knowledge, schemes and plans, but God was telling him: "David, what you called cleverness is nothing but chaff." He had to be brought to the threshing floor to be humbled and emptied, and to break and take away his strength and self-sufficiency. God does the same to us to make us depend upon Him completely. That very threshing floor later became the site for Solomon's temple (2 Chronicles 3:1).

March 23

"Jesus said ... If a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14:23)

Many people take pride similarly in the work of God. They are ignorant of God's Word, and think it is old-fashioned. Instead they take pride in their degrees and their philosophy, and to impress the crowds they use worldly means. They do not use God's Word as they should. In preaching they use references to break up what they say, but men can never go against God's Word. God uses different methods to break our pride in culture, in nationality and education. It is only through humility and full obedience that we can build the house of God: only through acknowledging the headship and kingship of God. To show this, the Lord Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on the colt of an ass, as a humble person and not in all His glory. We find this colt of an ass walking on garments and honour given to it.

How that colt was honoured! We have the same honour when we uphold the Lord Jesus in the right way. We in ourselves have no honour as God's servants, but when we obey the Lord fully, wherever we go we are showered with Love and kindness in so many ways. If, however, we start kicking like an ordinary colt we also will be beaten.

March 24

"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mark 11:9).

This forth entry of our Lord Jesus into Jerusalem from Bethany was on a colt and showed that He was entering as a King. First of all, we have to enthrone Him as King in our hearts, then in the family and lastly in the Church. Then only can we go with boldness and authority to preach the Gospel because we have the heavenly King enthroned within us.

Only when we give the Gospel with full authority and purity and in all humility can there be any results. We see in Mark 11:8 what great joy began from Bethany and continued into Jerusalem.

Though Bethany was a small village joy came from that place. It is with a small remnant that the Lord will accomplish His purposes these days. Though we are few in number God can do great things through us if we keep humble and obedient. There should be wholehearted and

implicit obedience without questioning. Do what He commands you to do. We find that when certain of them nearby asked the disciples what they were doing (Mark 11:4) loosing the colt, they replied that Jesus wanted it, so they let it go. So whatever the Lord demands of you give it quickly and willingly and joyfully and you will find the secret of His power for a triumphant life, a happy home and a living Church.

March 25

"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22).

In Mark 11:11 we have the account of the fifth visit of the Lord Jesus to Bethany. After He had seen the condition of the temple, our Lord came back to Bethany (v. 11). That day He had seen what was happening in Jerusalem in the temple. Before He could pour out His wrath upon them He turned back to Bethany perhaps to share His burden with those there. As in Genesis 18:17-22 God appeared to Abraham before He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, saying, "How can I hide this great secret from my servant Abraham, because he is My friend.

At Jerusalem He had seen with His own eyes what was happening in the temple (Mark 11:17). He had openly said that it had become a den of thieves. Such was the condition of the city. As we begin to grow spiritually, we begin to know what it means to have partnership with the Lord. As was the condition of the people in the day of Malachi 1:6,7, so it was then, and as the Lord Jesus went about with His disciples, He could see the priests offering polluted sacrifices (v. 8).

The Lord Jesus was found without sin, for He had no sin. He was perfectly blameless in thought, word and deed. To foreshow His moral perfection, the people had to offer an animal without blemish, and the priest was supposed to examine the animal before it was sacrificed. Otherwise, there was no value in the sacrifice. God was foreshowing how for their own salvation somebody had to be offered on their behalf without blemish.

March 26

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29).

All the things the Lord Jesus saw in the temple and among His people in Jerusalem as described in Matthew 23:13, 15-23, He must have told His friends at Bethany. I can imagine the Lord Jesus Christ with a very sad, heavy and burdened heart returning from Jerusalem to Bethany that night, and before He scourged the temple, He told them that secret. As we become co-workers with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord reveals many secrets which He has hidden from other (Matt. 13:17; Deut. 29:29).

In this way God's people can enjoy partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are growing spiritually, many things will be revealed to us before they happen. The Lord has warned us through His prophets of coming events like earthquakes, famine etc., and again and again before anything happens, the Lord gives us the privilege to prepare His people for the coming judgment. Thus we enter into the hidden secrets of God's heart. The fifth purpose of the Lord Jesus in visiting Bethany was to share His secret and burden with those who had become His co-workers.

March 27

"The Lord thy God... will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His Love" (Zeph. 3:17).

Now we read of the next or sixth visit of the Lord Jesus to Bethany in Mark 11:19. Having cast out the people from the temple vs. 15-17, our Lord is returning from the city (v. 19). It had been a very hard task for the Lord Jesus Christ. He had shown love and compassion to all the people, but because they did not accept it, they had to be judged. He had thrown down the tables and had turned the people out with a scourge. He was feeling very sad, and turned back to Bethany where He found real rest and satisfaction. In Jerusalem there had been nothing but sorrow, grief and pain, but in Bethany He knew that there was a small group who would give Him real rest and satisfaction.

The Lord Jesus Christ never regarded Jerusalem as His home, but Bethany, where He could share His burden and sorrow; a place where he could be comforted and strengthened. What a mystery! The Lord Jesus our Creator was seeking comfort from His people. He was showing how He was longing to be comforted. In Bethany He had no sorrow because of the warm welcome given to Him by those few who loved Him. In Bethany He found real rest and peace and comfort, and those who were longing to listen to Him.

March 28

"Lord! What will thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

Many children go to their father only when they want sweets and other things, but they never say: "Father, can I do anything to help you? You are looking so tired and sad. Can I do anything lessen your burden?". There are very few of that type. Yet there are some children who look at their father's or mother's face and say: "You take rest. I will do all the work." That is the right attitude!

Do you say, "Now Lord, tell me in which way I can please Thee and satisfy Thee and give Thee comfort and rest?". He will answer those who ask. He will tell us what He requires, as He did to those at Bethany who ministered to Him satisfaction, comfort, rest and peace. If we want to grow spiritually, our daily attitude should be: "Lord, I am not concerned about my own problems or needs of any kind. Please tell me: Do you want me to go anywhere, or to meet anybody, or help anybody? Is there anything I can do for you which will be in accordance with Your perfect will, which will give you more joy and happiness and peace?" Then He will tell you where to go and what to do. It is a wonderful thing to obey God, and the way He helps us to obey His will is also wonderful. Then it happens automatically and unasked that the Lord helps us and supplies our every need.

March 29

"She brake the box, and poured it on His head" (Mark 14:3).

For the seventh visit, let us turn to Matthew 26 and Mark 14:1-9. In Matthew 26:2 it says, after two days was the Passover, and the ointment was poured on His head. In John 12:1 we read that six days before Passover He came to Bethany. In Matthew 26:2, our Lord said again to His disciples that the time had come for Him to suffer, to be reviled, to be killed and to rise again. Even though He said this a number of times, yet His disciples could not understand or believe what He was saying.

In contrast the women believed what He said. While all those disciples could not understand what our Lord was saying so clearly, Mary understood! (Matt. 26:2,12). She just came to

prepare Him for His burial (John 12:7). Somehow her eyes had been opened, and she began to understand that He was giving His life willingly for the whole world (John 10:11,14,17,18).

The woman must have spent all that she had to buy that box of ointment. Then she brought it to the Lord Jesus and broke the box and poured the ointment upon Him (Mark 14:3). She wanted every single drop to be poured upon Him, so we read in Mark 14 that she "broke the box". Nothing could now remain. She poured it all upon His head that His whole body might be anointed.

March 30

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto... the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

This woman only wanted to exalt the Lord Jesus. She could not do anything else, so she came to anoint Him, saying in that act: "Now Lord, I believe You are dying for the whole world. You have said so. You are giving Your life for the sheep and dying as the Lamb of God. You are my Creator and King". So she brought the most precious ointment to Him saying by faith. "Lord, I am prepared to pour out all for Thee. Now you demand anything from me, and I am prepared to give it to You". That is true worship.

When we too believe the words of the Lord Jesus, the light of God begins to shine in us, and we will begin to see that He is our Creator, King of Kings and Lord of Lords and worthy of true worship and we will say, "I will give all I have." We will be willing to pour out on Him all that is precious to us, and willing to be at His feet. Then we will be exalted by Him; and the more we exalt Him the more we will be exalted.

"Worthy is the Lamb to receive all power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour."

March 31

*"Tarry ye ... until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).
"Go ye ... and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15).*

The eighth visit of our Lord Jesus to Bethany is recorded in Luke 24:50. The Lord ascended into heaven from Bethany (v. 51). In Acts 1 we are given details of what happened before the Lord ascended (v. 4). He commanded His disciples that they had to wait first for God's time, to be "endued with power from high". If they wanted to be His disciples, they had to wait for His time. Often we go ahead or behind God's time, but we should always wait for God's command and God's time.

Secondly, we must be governed by the Holy Spirit completely (Acts 1:5), and led only by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14).

Thirdly, the disciples were not to dictate to God or to interfere with His plans (Acts 1:7). We must get God to take charge of the whole situation. He is sovereign. He won't allow anybody to interfere with His plans. As we obey Him, we come into His plan.

The disciples became witnesses of His ascension (v. 10). While they were gazing up into heaven, two men came and said to them: "Why are you standing gazing up into heaven? Go back and tell people what you have heard. You tell them how you have seen the Lord go into

heaven and also how He shall come again in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven." That is the last message: "In the same manner He will come again".

4. The Secrets of God's Glory

APRIL

April 1

"When they were filled, he said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that have had eaten" (John 6:12,13).

Our Lord does not like wastage: and that is why He commanded that nothing be lost. If He was so particular about those fragments left behind, how much more He is particular about our time, money and energy! When we look at our lives, we have to admit that much of our time is being wasted, much of our money is being mis-spent, and much of our energy is dissipated.

I was at a standstill. I was not growing spiritually. So when I prayed, "Lord, what is wrong with me?" The Lord showed me that I was serving Him in my own strength and wisdom, and that I was wasting time. He showed me how I had cut short my quite time both morning and evening in order to be out serving. I repented of my negligence and determined that I would wait for the Lord's plan first before going out. I wanted to see fruit.

I had been praying for three hours, when the Lord told me that I was to go to "Soldier's Bazaar". The Lord gave us souls every day not only one but many. That is how God began to give me fruit. He expects us to see fruit.

April 2

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

The same principle applies in our use of money also. Do we misuse our money?

In the olden days, I would carry many coins in my pockets, because I was in the habit of giving to anyone who would ask me for money. But one day, when I gave, God spoke to me, and said, "It is not your money, it is Mine. Who are you to spend My money?". From that day, I decided never to spend even one paisa without asking God's permission.

Your time and your money both belong to God. I never regarded money as my own. I never buy anything until I am sure God has a purpose in my spending the money. I remember in America I needed a haircut. I had the money, but the Lord never gave me any freedom to get it cut. I kept praying for three weeks, while my hair was getting very long.

I came to Minneapolis, and the Lord told me to go downstairs to the barbershop where I would get a good haircut. And while the barber was cutting my hair, I asked him, "Mr. Bruce, can you tell me whether you are born again?" He said, "No, but I want to be". So after he finished, I took my Bible and explained the way to him. He knelt down and accepted the Lord. He

refused to give me the bill; so the Lord gave me a hair-cut and also the privilege to lead the barber to Himself. I believe from God's word that we will have to give account for our time and money.

April 3

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

We had meetings in the open field for seven days in Martinpur. In the last prayer, as I was praying, somebody suddenly fell on his face before me, as though he had been bitten by a scorpion. Then one after another, people were seen falling to the ground crying out for mercy. I saw with my own eyes, people throwing dust into their faces, beating their chests, and pulling on their hair. After three hours of this, the elders came beseeching me to stop it. I said, "I didn't start it ... ask God to stop it".

We saw hundreds come under conviction by the Spirit, confessing their sins and be saved. We would stay for three to five weeks in each place having cottage meetings, Bible studies, and going out in processions selling gospels. But when I would return to those places after a few months, I would find to my great disappointment that a very small number were really going on with the Lord-the majority of them had gone back. For some time I left others to carry on the work, even though people were sadly backsliding.

But God began to show me that as evangelists, we are not only responsible for their conversion, but also for their growth. Are they not our children, and if so, must we not be prepared to shepherd them? I had to acknowledge that I had failed them and that I was to blame. These people were truly born again and naturally they would look to us for guidance. We were responsible to lead them on and bring them into maturity and into the plan of God. I saw this truth very clearly from Ephesians 4:11-14. According to this passage of scripture, it is the duty of apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers to see that new converts are properly cared for and brought into maturity.

April 4

"Till we all come in unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man" (Eph. 4:13).

Let us look again at Ephesians 4:8-12, because here we are made to understand clearly that God's burden is the church in its full expression. The five-fold gifts are given by our Lord to the Church, and not just to a certain group. And it is our privilege to ask for these gifts. Just as we ask God to move in revival, so we must ask Him for blessings ... such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, which, when they function together, establish the believers on a strong foundation. So I began to see that it was our fault that we were not seeing these gifts manifested among those who were being born again. We had not asked God for these gifts. Apostles are given authority to establish churches, appointing those called of God for the work of the ministry. Prophets are those who find the mind of God and declare it to the church.

Evangelists have the main responsibility of preaching the Gospel, and bringing unbelievers to repentance and salvation. Teachers reach people of all classes, and with patience, sympathy and kindness instruct them in the Word. Pastors are like fathers and mothers, nurses and

shepherds. They have the care and oversight of the flock of God. All these gifts can only function effectively when they are together and not by themselves.

April 5

"In the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man" (Rev. 1:13).

Whenever we want to come into God's plan, the devil will fight fiercely. When God performed miracles, the devil was quiet, but when God was showing His heavenly pattern, the devil was furious. Now the devil seeks to prevent us and attack us when we come into the heavenly plan. He will not mind if we go on doing what we think is best. It is only when we want to work God's perfect order, that the devil will create difficulties which are hard to overcome. God has given this burden to the Church.

The apostle John was downcast as he saw the persecuted people of God scattered, and remembered the many who were killed. Then, on the Lord's day, as John was praying in the spirit, he heard a Voice from behind; and he turned round to see who was speaking. John was looking in the wrong direction! That is no doubt why he became discouraged. And the Lord Jesus was saying to John: 'John, you are looking in the wrong direction; turn round, and get a new perspective'.

The first thing John saw was seven golden candlesticks. You might think that he should see the Lord Jesus Christ first. But no! In verses 12 and 13 we are told that he saw the seven golden candlesticks first, and then the Lord Jesus Christ, in a High-priestly garment, walking in the midst of candlesticks. It is as if the Lord were saying: 'John, if you want to see Me walking and working, you can only see it in My Church. You will not see Me through signs and miracles; but you will see Me in My Church'.

April 6

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices: and the glory of the Lord filled the house" (2 Chron. 7:1).

There are certain divine principles according to which God works. His glory is seen only when we are willing to abide by those principles. In Exodus 40, we see how the glory came by the fulfilling of those divine principles. In verse 16,19,21,23,25,27,29,32 and 33 we read this phrase:- "As the Lord commanded Moses." And in verse 33, "So Moses finished the work". Then in Exodus 40:34, "And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle".

That fragment, "As the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated as if the Lord Himself was examining the whole work which had been done, and He was fully satisfied in every small detail. It is only when the work is finished according to God's standard that the Glory comes down. That is how the Bible defines the descent of the Glory of God.

See what our Lord Himself says in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His Work." It is only when a work is finished according to God's perfect revealed will, and according to His heavenly plan, that at His command the Glory comes down. Just the mere manifestation of some power or miracle or sign is not God's glory. It is a finished and complete work, done according to His command and order, which brings down the full Glory of God.

April 7

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and He spake unto him" (Numbers 7:89).

How can we prove that God's glory is among His people? From the day that God's glory had filled the tabernacle He began to speak from between the cherubim, from above the mercy seat. God had spoken to Moses before, from the burning bush: He spoken to him when He called him, on the mount, and there He gave him the whole law and the pattern for the tabernacle. But now we find this speaking is different altogether. From now onward God began to open His heart to Moses to reveal His whole mind, from between the cherubim.

Here we get the proof that God's glory was amongst His people. God was speaking and He was making His mind clear to all those that came to Him. It was the privilege of anybody among all the twelve tribes that for his personal or family problems or for any other matter concerning the congregation, he could go to Aaron, the high priest, and find out the mind of God and the will of God. Then Aaron would go to God hear Him speaking from between the cherubim above the mercy seat. Speaking of God is the one great proof that God's glory is among His people.

April 8

"The cloud covered the tabernacle" (Numbers 9:15-23).

This is the second great proof that God was with them in His full glory. Their eyes were constantly upon the cloud resting upon the tent of the congregation. Whether the cloud lifted in the morning or mid-day, or evening, or mid-night, children of Israel moved only when the cloud lifted. When the cloud tarried for a day or a week or a month or a year or even longer, they have to stay; they could not move; but whithersoever the cloud went, they had to go. By these two great signs, we know that God's glory was dwelling amongst His people. Now we find in 1 Samuel 4:22, that the glory departed. They were many causes responsible for that. Let us consider a few of the causes that were responsible for the spiritual decline of the people. In Judges 21:25, the first great cause of their failure and their bareness was that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

In 1 Samuel 2:12-17 we see a second cause of failure. These sons of Eli, the high priest, began to despise the sacrifice; and not only that they began to use force. We are told in verse 13 that they had with them a fleshhook of three teeth, to take away the flesh which was meant for God. Nowadays, the very same thing is happening through fleshhooks of three teeth; that is, the honor that ought to be given to God is being given to men because of (a) Love for money (b) Love for Power (c) Love for fame.

April 9

"The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. 4:22).

Also, we find that Eli knew all this! Yet he would not rebuke his sons. That is why God had to punish him so severely. Then we see in 1 Samuel 4:1-6 that Eli knew that his sons were living in sin, and yet he permitted them to carry the ark into the battlefield. These are few of the causes responsible for the barrenness and death found in those days among God's people.

It gives me a shock when I see servants of God begging for money. One day on the train, I saw a Hindu lady in the same compartment. She said to me, "How can God meet your needs? You say that you don't belong to any society, how can God meet your needs?" I said, "Tell me, do you believe as I told you before, that God forgave my sins? I gave you my testimony of how I struggled hard and tried to get my sins forgiven by every possible means. I was prepared to spend any amount of money and go anywhere to someone who could forgive my sins. But nobody could. The day came when I heard these words clearly, 'My son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' I can tell you again that the Lord Jesus Christ forgave my sins more than thirty years ago."

If you believe God can forgive a sinner, it is very easy to believe that the same living God can supply all my needs. I believe it. I know it also by experience. We do not have to ask for money; to do so is lack of faith. If we are God's servants, God will not fail His servants.

April 10

"I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth shall he be lent to the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:28).

From the first book of Samuel through to the end of second Chronicles, we come across the name of four people who play a very important part in bringing back that departed Glory.

The first is Hannah, the second is Samuel, the third is David, and the fourth is Solomon. In the Six books we find that these four characters play a very big part in bringing back the departed glory. As we go along we shall see how these four names speak of four divine principles. In fulfilling these principles we shall find God's departed glory coming into our hearts, into our assemblies, and into our work. First of all turn to 1 Samuel 1:2, the name Hannah means grace.

We are told that as Hannah was being so sorely provoked she went and fasted and prayed, yet it seemed that God did not hear her prayer. So she continued weeping, and went on praying with faith.

All her tears were for her need. She did not know that God could also have some need! Then her prayer changed; "Lord, now I forsake my own selfish need, and promise that if you give me a man-child, he will be lent back to thee." Somehow, when she discovered God's need, God answered her prayer and gave her a son.

April 11

"The child Samuel ministered before the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:18).

"The child Samuel grew before the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:21).

We as God's servants must find out what God's need is today. What is God's need in India, - north India, or south India? What is God's need in Africa, in Europe, or in America? We must find this out by prayer. I believe we learn in Hannah how to pray. Even though Hannah prayed with fasting, and tears, and with faith; even though she was a sincere, godly woman; nevertheless, God did not hear her prayer. He waited till she understood His need! God has His own way of working. He wanted a man, for He cannot work without a man. He wanted a man who was given to Him willingly, and for that He waited. We have no right to dictate to God; He has ways that are higher than our ways, and we can safely wait for Him.

What about God's purpose in the matter of Hannah? God was waiting very patiently, and He was pleased to choose Hannah to be His partner. He permitted that barrenness in the life of Hannah to make her a true partner of God. What an honour to be given to Hannah! She had been praying: "Lord, take away my reproach". God was saying, "Hannah, what about My need? My name is also being reproached". We must learn how to pray in-order to find God's need or what He is after. If we want God's glory to come down, we must first of all learn how to pray thus.

April 12

"And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the Word of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:21).

This is the second divine principle which has to be fulfilled if we want God to send His glory into our midst, if we are going to allow God to reveal Himself. We need the fearless, faithful witness of men like Samuel. We have good Bible teachers, and many scholars who can write very good books and some very good preachers also, but not many Samuels. We want men of God, men who are actually the mouthpiece of God; men who can boldly and freely say: 'Hear ye what God saith' and 'Thus saith the Lord'.

God's word came to Samuel as a small boy. God first told him, "You go and tell Eli". How could he, a small boy, go to an old man, his master and give him God's message? But even though it was a difficult and terrible message, he obeyed God and gave it. God wants a man who will be His mouthpiece, who will not be afraid of any man's face. I feel that in these days there is a serious need for a man like Samuel.

I believe with all my heart that unless we are men like Samuel, we will not see God's power fully manifested. He may use us, but not fully; He may bless us but not fully; He may work among us, but not deeply, unless we are men like Samuel, and God's Word can come and go out freely as He gives it.

April 13

"Let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth" (1 Chron. 16:31).

The third name is David, illustrating the third divine principle --- the necessity for God's order. To make him humble, God even permitted in David's life many temptations. In God's work we have to be extremely humble and broken. So whenever we are going through a testing time, remember, it is that God may make us humble vessels.

Perhaps we have the same temptation that David had (1 Chron. 13:1-11). He thought that by making some change he would make a better impression. But in God's work, we can never change God's order. Whatsoever has been revealed in the Bible is to be followed, for every period of time, for every worker and for every group. You cannot change it. When you are tempted and make some change, there always comes loss.

We think that we are living in different days; but I can see from God's Word clearly that unless we follow the heavenly pattern in our day, we cannot see God coming in His full glory. Sometimes we have to be brought on the 'threshing floor' because, in God's work, we are

depending far too much on human wisdom and cleverness; but we cannot make any improvement on the heavenly plan.

April 14

"And the house when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings 6:7).

Solomon illustrates the fourth divine principle to ensure God's glory. When you follow God's plan in your individual, family, and church life, you will find unity, co-operation, openness, fellowship, and spiritual joy in living together. Otherwise there is strife. When we have God's plan, and we know our ministries, there will not be any jealousy. Much work has suffered because of jealousy.

Even as God's servants, we can be jealous of each other, and it brings loss. There is no doubt about it; we may have to pray together for a whole night or longer to make sure of God's mind. And then we find oneness. "Lord, make me like Samuel, thy true mouthpiece, that I may know Thy message and have Thy authority and boldness to give that message". "Lord, make me like Hannah, that knowing thy need, I can learn how to pray, and have the privilege of meeting that need, as Hannah did, when she offered her son to the Lord".

"Lord, give us men like David; men after Thine own heart, who will be completely free from worldly wisdom; and who can receive Thy pattern". "Lord make me like Solomon, a man of peace, building God's temple by living stone fitly joined together by unity and openness. It is only by such oneness that we can finally see God's glory coming down.

April 15

"Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon the rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day" (Acts 27:29).

The Christian life is like a journey in a sea, full of storms. There are storms in the house, storms in the family, storms in the neighbourhood, and there are storms in the country round about. All of these try to shake and weaken our faith, with doubts and fears. But God knowing our need, has made provision for us, and given us four anchors. By these we can be perfectly safe. We see from Acts 2:41,42 what these four anchors are which God has provided for every believer.

"Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers". That is how the work began on the day of Pentecost. God's Word was preached in power and authority by these men of God.

That Word began to prick those who heard it. They believed straightaway and were found obedient to the Word given to them. Then there were 3,000 souls added unto them. At the very same time they were given these four anchors we have mentioned, as found in verse 42. They began and continued first of all in the apostles' doctrine, secondly in fellowship, thirdly in the breaking of bread, and fourthly in prayer.

April 16

"And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient of the faith" (Acts 6:7).

These four anchors were a protection against the onslaughts of the Evil One for those early believers. We see from the whole book of Acts how the enemy came in like a flood, in an attempt to discourage, weaken and rob them of their faith and joy in the Lord. But we see also, despite all that, how triumphantly the Word of the Lord grew.

- Acts 12:24 *"But the Word of God grew and multiplied."*
- Acts 13:49 *"And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."*
- Acts 19:20 *"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."*
- Acts 16:5 *"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."*
- Acts 13:52 *"And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."*

The believers were fed and nourished in the apostles' doctrine, the pure Word of God. The apostles did not depend upon their own wisdom or qualifications. They were men taught of God, anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit. They taught the pure, unadulterated Word of God as the Spirit led them. They grew in "fellowship." They met together as often as possible to share what they had received from the Lord.

April 17

"He was known of them in breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35).

They grew in the "breaking of bread." In Luke 24:15-30 we read about those two disciples on the Emmaus Road after the resurrection of the Lord. When He sat with them in the breaking of bread, their eyes were suddenly opened. It was then that they recognized their Lord.

That is how they were taught. Our Lord is so great, so mighty, and so wonderful, we cannot see Him with our ordinary eyes. He is beyond human comprehension, far above the understanding of our human faculties. And yet we can know Him! He can be more real to us than our kith and kin. He can be more precious to us than anybody else in all the world when we know Him in His true glory.

The table of the Lord, and the breaking of bread to remember the Lord's death till He come, provide us an opportunity for an inward sight of Him which is not possible otherwise. It is a place of worship. It is the place where we grow spiritually, and come to know His true worth. That is what worship means, "worth-ship". It is to be able to say in broken language: "What is my Lord to me? What will I give back to Him in return?"

April 18

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2).

The wise man had seen this unusual star in the east; and had begun their long journey; perhaps it took them two years. They were prepared to pay the price, even though they had no previous experience of the Lord Jesus Christ themselves. When they had come to the house, they saw the young child and Mary, His mother. They fell down and worshipped Him. Then they presented their costly gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In coming such a distance they acknowledged His worthiness. When they found Him, "they worshipped Him". When they brought such precious gifts, they acknowledged in a symbolic way that:

- (i) The One Whom we have come to worship is God----Gold
- (ii) The One Whom we have come to worship has come to suffer for us---Myrrh.
- (iii) The One Whom we have come to worship is going to save us and be our High Priest—Frankincense.

The Lord Jesus Christ is also very precious to me. He loved me and died for me. I am prepared to pay any price to show my love for Him. I can say that I love Him more than I love my father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children or anybody! But it must be from the heart. We might say in a meeting "O Lord, I love Thee," but when we have to pay the price, we do not pay it! How often we deny Him! How often we grieve Him! How often we fail to obey Him because of fear, thinking: what will my neighbour say? What will my friends think of me? What will the world say? We simply do not pay the price the Lord demands!

April 19

"And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11-14).

This is a picture of the work of service completed in heaven. This is what it is going to be when we see Him face to face!

At the Lord's table we have this very same message: My God is coming back! He must come back, that the work which He began may be perfected. It won't be complete till He comes back. That is exactly what we do at His table; we declare by faith that we are waiting for that Day. We believe it will be a wonderful Day when we shall be like Him, and reign with Him!

In Ephesians 3:18, I would like you to notice the importance of being together. His love and purpose can never be comprehended by ourselves; we require the help of all saints, "that we 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, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God".

There is a great mystery here. You will find love comes in greater measure, fuller measure, when we are brought together as one family. In this family, there is no Jew and Gentile barrier; all are free, all are one from so many families, countries, nationalities, all partaking of the same Lord.

April 20

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

We as God's servants, should always remember, that whatever we do for God that has His blessing will remain for eternity: and that all that we do is going to be tried, tested and proven. It may appear very good and acceptable in the eyes of our fellow-workers and fellow-men,

but in the end, God will apply His own test. Remember that God always thinks of His work in terms of eternity.

What is in the mind of God in asking us to go and preach the Gospel? Why does He want souls? Why is He, our loving God, so concerned in seeking a lost sinner? Why is He so much after us? It is because He wants a sanctuary. He wants a house! We have to tell people from the beginning, just what is God's purpose in saving us: He has desired that you and I build that house. Every believer must be given that privilege: though he may not accept it, yet he must be made conscious of being part of God's sanctuary.

All the material used in the building of the tabernacle was to teach them in the first place about the Lord Jesus Christ, His grace, goodness, holiness, power, beauty, glory and fullness. And in the second place, how all of us become part of that fullness in becoming a member of that sanctuary—God's habitation.

April 21

"Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16)

In Ephesians the apostle uses seven names for God's people. He calls them the "Church" of the Lord Jesus Christ, because they have been called out from the world—God's peculiar people. He calls them the "Body of Christ," because the same life flows through every member. That Body contains God's fullness, the fullness of Him, which filleth all in all. The health of that life is supplied to every tissue, nerve and fiber. He calls them "one new man," no more Jew and Gentile – all human and national differences forgotten. He calls them, the heavenly "family" that we may be able to enjoy the divine love of the Father.

Then He says, "Ye are God's building". Again He calls them "God's Temple." Then finally, the "Bride" of Christ. Now why are we called "God's building?" Because a building is constructed by a plan. To become God's building, we must be built, first of all, upon a strong and deep foundation, a rock foundation. As God's servants we must be sure that we spend enough time studying God's Word with the people; otherwise they will remain weak spiritually. We must know that our responsibility is not only to preach, but to take the people deep in the foundation truth of the faith.

April 22

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteous? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

After many months of prayer the Lord gave me a fearful message. He told me clearly: "I want you to go to all parts of India and make every man who bears my name to possess a full Bible. Whether they are literate or illiterate. Tell them that if they are called by My name, they must have a Bible. Secondly, teach them how to use the Bible. Thirdly, teach them how to pray, how to come to Me for their needs".

Now we see in the Bible, that there is a heavenly plan for the work of the Lord. We cannot have fellowship anything with unbelievers. Preachers and missionaries often say to believers that they must not marry unbelievers. If you are a born again Christian, they say, "then make sure that your life partner is also born again". But these verses in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 teach

truth which goes beyond that. It applies not only to marriage, but also in church matters. How can we labour effectively with unbelievers? It is impossible!

We cannot build the church of God with a mixture; it won't work. We can only lay a good foundation if we ourselves have a deep, and a living experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Chief Corner Stone. We build upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets. What we have been taught we practice, and declare what we have fully obeyed. We cannot be governed by our own fancies, and practices, however good that might be! Our safety lies in obeying God's Word.

April 23

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28-32).

Now the Bible has given us a complete plan for all our need. Just as the apostles and prophets were sent by God in other days, even so now, they can be raised up by prayer. We need to follow God's Word accurately in determining how to be shepherded, how to be controlled, how to gather for worship.

Now as an apostle, Paul had several types of ministry. He had to function as an apostle, and also as a prophet, evangelist, and as a pastor. God's servants have the same ministry today, but are we fulfilling it? If we ourselves cannot do this work, let us pray that God will rise up men so that His flock will be protected.

Spiritually, we must stand together. Our safety is in oneness. When we as a Church remain one, we are better able to withstand the attacks of the Evil One. You cannot stand alone. God may have used you mightily, and we can thank God for that, but remember when you are being attacked by the devil, you suffer alone! It is by oneness that we can defeat the devil – not by knowledge, nor by miracles, nor by science, nor by wealth, nor by any other thing, but by standing together in the power of God.

Spiritual oneness is only possible in the Church, where we are brought together first of all as a family, then as co-workers and fellow-partners of the Lord Jesus Christ, having one common Head, though being many members in one Body. We must remain together as a Church, for it is only then that we can be benefited by all the gifts of the Church; the apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors, all working together and in oneness.

April 24

"So shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards" (Numbers 2:17).

When I was yet a Sikh, God seemed so very, very far away but now I can say, He is so near! I know that His life is flowing through me! For every believer there is a plan of God. Others have no business making choices for me. I must stay where God has put me. I know my calling. I know my place and position in God's heavenly plan. Have you found your place in God's plan? Can you truthfully and joyfully say, 'I know my ministry'?

When we say 'Yes' to God, then it is His business to train us, equip us and thrust us forth. It was like a miracle with me in the beginning---a man with so many handicaps! It is only by grace! I know one thing: I am in His plan. If I want to be a true Levite I must stand on a

strong foundation. He has the first place in my heart, life and ministry. Every believer must be what and where God meant him to be.

The first thing to learn is to praise God. We must praise God from morning until night! When the Lord gives you His Word, you must be His mouthpiece. Do not hold back from Him anything that He demands of you. It is because we don't give willingly to Him that we don't know how to praise Him. God gives abundantly. He never slumbers; He never forgets; He knows my need, and at the right moment He meets it.

I do not know of any occasion in the last thirty years of ministry when God has failed us. Little from God is more than much from man. So we praise and thank Him even before the answer comes. We must keep on praying that God will make us true Levites, strongly joined and living close to the heart of God, enjoying unbroken fellowship with the living God.

April 25

"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:31).

I want you to notice especially that last part of this verse. "No man forbidding him" or "no man hindering him". The Christian life can be compared to a hurdle or an obstacle race. As I have read these twenty eight chapters of the book of Acts, I seem to see at least twenty-eight hurdles to be overcome by us as God's servants: and how wonderfully and perfectly the Holy Ghost moved through God's servants in different places, in overcoming every one of these hurdles, no man forbidding.

As long as we are conscious of God's abiding presence in His service, we will see every mountain falling down before His presence. Our purpose now, is to consider, not all, but a few of the obstacles placed before God's servants and how they went on jumping over hindrances, and saw the mountains falling down, by the grace of God. We shall begin with:

Acts 1:10 --- "And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel."

That was the first hurdle they had to overcome. The Lord Jesus Christ had been taken up into Heaven, He was gone!

April 26

"Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

The Lord had just commissioned them to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They knew that the Lord meant what He said, but He had left no detailed instructions of any kind, no plan, no blueprint to follow! He simply went off without writing any plans! The only thing He told them to do was to wait in Jerusalem for the power of the Holy Ghost to come upon them.

Numerically, they were very few; that was a great problem. But in addition to this, there were three other great mountains which were against them; and which they had to overcome.

- The nation of Jews who hated them.
- The political Roman rulers who kept them in bondage.

- The Greeks with their idolatrous culture.

Whenever we receive a message from God, or a charge of any kind, the first question we ask is, "How do we begin?" You may also be feeling that is a very heavy responsibility, and that 'our case' is different. We would therefore like some clear direction. But God doesn't work that way. They were so disturbed that He had gone; that their Lord Jesus had gone! They had been told plainly that the Lord Jesus Christ would be coming back again, and they had only to believe Him and wait. They must go and wait, as they were told to wait, and in God's time, He would Himself tell them what to do next.

April 27

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

First of all we have to learn to wait for God's time. We have to wait patiently, for God has a time for every work, and He works in His own time. We must not move until we have received clear marching orders from the Lord; and certainly not at the command of men.

In the beginning, the question the disciples raised was: "We are too few!" But here in the second chapter it is otherwise: 'We are too many!' Now the second obstacle faces them: How to shepherd them; how to keep order; how to keep discipline? Then next verse gives the divine answer, and it has ever remained the governing principles upon which God works: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (v. 42).

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' *doctrine*". It was the pure Word of God. For this reason, we compel people to read God's Word, and not so many other books. The believers must become familiar with the Word of God. They must learn of God's plan through His Word. Then comes fellowship. The apostles encouraged true fellowship; fellowship is a strength to the believers. By sharing together of God's faithfulness, we encourage each other, and grow spiritually. Then the apostles began the *breaking of bread straightaway*. We have found to our joy, that in the villages where we have begun worship gatherings only a short while ago, the believers are progressing happily and spiritually. At first, they could not even read the Bible, but now how they *pray*! how they worship! and they have learned to give joyfully, even though they are so poor! This is because they have first learned the secret of worshipping the Lord. They also testify boldly in the open air; simply because they have seen the Lord in worship." Similarly, they learn to pray for each other, and with each other.

April 28

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Now for the third obstacle, let us turn to Acts 3:6: "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none." No money! What a confession for a man of God to have to make! And yet he does not say so apologetically. Peter is joyful because he already has the answer: "Such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk". We too may use the authority and power of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When God first spoke to me concerning His service, He made it very clear that if I wanted to be His servant, then I should withdraw all claim from any property in the Punjab; I was never

to join a mission or a society or material need. After that I was only to look to God. I gladly submitted to these conditions, though I knew nothing about the life of faith. With that faith I came back to India. The question is, Are you sure you are in God's will? Are you in God's plan? If so, the matter is settled, and God is committed to it!

In chapter 4 we find the fourth obstacle to be of a different kind (v. 16). The apostles were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus. But in spite of their threatenings, the apostles continued to testify boldly in the Holy Ghost that: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard; are we justified in keeping quiet?" They judged things that were right in the sight of God and not men. Let me ask you, are you justified in keeping quiet concerning any spiritual truth which God has shown you?

April 29

"He shall give His angels charge over thee" (Psalm 91:11).

Now turn to Acts 5:17 to see the fifth obstacle: The council had now fulfilled their threats, and put the apostles in prison. God does not always use super-natural means to protect us, but He did in this case. "The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (verse 19).

Now in the next chapter, we shall consider the sixth obstacle of murmuring. Whenever a work of God increases there are bound to be murmurers in every congregation. But the apostles recognized that their first commitment was to the ministry of the Word and prayer; and under no circumstances must they leave that, in order to serve tables. Let us proceed to the seventh obstacle and consider the barrier of being falsely accused (Acts 7:54,55).

This man of God, Stephen, was full of the Holy Ghost. He allowed them to do what they wanted. He ignored their false charges. He gave no word of retaliation. He forgave, praying: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Shall we go further into chapter 8, verse 14 for the eighth obstacle? There is a definitely the barrier of nationality arising here. In a very subtle way the devil would create a big barrier of a communal nature. Be careful of distinctions. Don't yield to the pride of nationality. We have worked on the principle of giving God's message in English with as many interpreters as are necessary, with the view to maintaining this oneness of living together and serving together.

April 30

"And when I saw him, I fell at His feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last" (Rev. 1:17).

As we see the end time approaching, we should read the book of Revelation again and again. The message of this book is especially written to those who want to overcome. Divide this book into seven parts. You will see the Lord Jesus Christ giving a seven-fold glimpse of His glory: Chapter 1 gives a glimpse of the glory of His person. Chapters 2-3 show His glory revealed in His Church upon the earth. In chapters 4-5, we have a glimpse of the glory of the Heavenly Church. Chapters 6-9 reveal a glimpse of the glory of His throne. Chapters 10-19 show the glory of His judgments. Chapter 20, the last part of this chapter shows the glory of His great white throne. Chapters 21-22: In these we have a seven-fold glimpse of the glory of the new creation.

This book is the book of Glory—the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of Peace and also the God of glory. The first thing we see is, that the Lord gave John a vision of Himself. Are you feeling downcast? Are you discouraged? Are you facing problems? Ask the Lord to give you a new glimpse of His Glory.

When you see the Lord face to face, He will answer every question of yours. It does not matter how complicated your problems may be, they will disappear when you get a new glimpse of Him and His glory. Then you too like John will fall down at His feet.

5. The Secrets of Recovery

MAY

May 1

"David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away... and there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great" (1 Sam. 30:18-19).

David and his men had suffered a great and heavy loss. All their houses had been burnt down and their women and children and possessions had been taken captive by the Amalekites. Their loss was so great that even though they were strong men, they all began to weep loudly. Here were strong military men weeping, so much and so loudly that they had no more tears to shed (vs. 4). Their tears were all dried up, their throats were hot, and their heads were aching, so much so that they could not weep any more. So great was their loss, and, humanly speaking, beyond all hope of recovery.

By God's help and grace, they recovered all that they had lost and much more beside, so much that they were able to pay all the debts that they had incurred during the previous years. They had been given shelter and food. Now David sent gifts to acknowledge kindnesses shown, and to pay back his debts. It is a peculiar joy to recover what we have lost, and especially when there has been no hope of recovery.

We have many spiritual losses because of our faults and failures. There are many in fact who have lost their joy. Some, because of trouble and trial, may have lost their faith. Others may have lost their consciousness of God's Presence. Others have not yet learned the secret of finding God's will. Many have lost the old power they had when they were first born again. Others have lost their first love.

May 2

"The Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man." (Gen. 3:23, 24).

How many hearts there are with some spiritual loss. They are not enjoying their Bibles as before. They have not got the same burden for prayer as once they had. Some weep openly and some secretly, but they have no faith to recover what they have lost. They want to recover it but they do not know how to recover it, and worse still they have lost the hope of recovery. They are saying in their hearts, 'Maybe I will never get my former joy and peace again.' They may be saying: 'I can never do the Lord's service as before'. Whatever it may be that you have lost spiritually there is hope for you. Your loss can be recovered. Rather, you can receive much more than you have lost.

Though in the beginning Adam lost everything, yet man is able to recover everything through our Lord Jesus Christ. In Gen. 1:28, God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. He also gave him power and dominion over the whole earth and over the fish and the birds and animals. In a very real sense he was the king of the whole earth. Yet in chapter 3 he was driven out as a thief and the Word of God says it was God Himself who drove him out. In the beginning he could talk to God as man to man, but now he was being driven out from the presence of

God. He was driven out from his home in the Garden of Eden and had to surrender all his rights. What a tremendous loss! No man can estimate the loss incurred by the first man, Adam. But in Revelation 21 and 22, we find man ruling the new creation, which will be far more glorious than the old.

May 3

"Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God" (Joel 2:13).

In fact God has given to men more than what was lost in Genesis 3. God began the recovery by the power of the Cross. Every loss of every sinner and every loss of every believer can be recovered by God's grace and by His help, as revealed in the sacrifice of Calvary. Are you of any use to God? Can you say God has used something of your life? Please be honest and truthful with yourself.

Are you willing and desirous for your sins to be forgiven? Jesus Christ came into the world and died and rose again, that we might recover every loss. Even though we have wasted our lives all these years, now we can again become God's co-workers and partners (1 Cor. 3:9).

Every loss incurred by your sins can be recovered. Because of your sins you have brought reproach upon your own name, your family name and the name of your God. Through your sins you have ruined your life, health and body. Because of your sins you are far away from God. You have not the least understanding of the things of God. You are a fool before God and whatever you are doing is a waste. You will die without hope.

Do you want to be transformed? We have a message for you. Come to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Come with a repentant heart, feeling sorry for your sins. This day the Lord will forgive you and transform you. That is why He came into this world to seek and to save you.

May 4

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them, freely". "Return unto the Lord thy God" (Hosea 14:4,1).

Thirty-one years ago my life was being wasted; completely and absolutely wasted. I was then living a life of shame, defeat and barrenness, but I can testify that all that I now say and do are of eternal abiding value. If I do something wrong my Lord is there to correct me and chastise me and bring me back.

David suffered four great losses in his life-time, and we too as believers suffer in our life-time great losses. By the grace of God and His help David recovered all these losses. And not only what he had lost, but much more beside. We also as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, suffer many losses because of doubts and folly, blindness and defeat, but from God's Word we can see how every spiritual loss in a believer can be recovered.

You have lost your appetite for God's Word, lost your burden for prayer, lost your understanding of God's Word, and you do not know how to enjoy God's Word, and you do not know how to enjoy God's presence. You have lost many privileges in the House of God. Please tell God frankly of all your losses and then pray: 'Now, Lord, do thou help me to recover all my losses.' You are assured from God's Word that you will recover much more than you have lost.

He will give you much more than you lost. But you must be honest and truthful and sincere and tell Him all about your loss. We will see from God's Word as we study further, how David recovered his four losses, and then how we also can recover all that we have lost spiritually.

May 5

"Be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things" (Joel 2:21).

The Scripture tells us that whatever is lost spiritually can be recovered. It may seem impossible, but by the help of God, by His grace and by His Word, there can be recovery.

That simple lesson is taught to us in the story in 2 Kings 6:1-7 about the young prophets. Those young men were studying with Elisha and they found the place too small for them. They wanted a larger house, and for this they needed wood. They had to go beyond Jordan to cut the wood; so they all got together and went there, and even though they were young men, and the sons of prophets, they had some wisdom, and took with them Elisha (verse 3). Young people today think they know so much more than their elders. So the young people question why they should go to such old men and women with their personal problems.

These young men however had understanding, and showed it by their request for Elisha to go with them.

While they were there felling the wood, one young man lost his axe head, which fell into the water (verse 5). That axe did not belong to him but he wanted to return it. Being a wise young man, however, he went to Elisha, an old man, rather than to the young men (verse 6).

He said 'Alas, my Master, due to my negligence, I have lost the axe head. I want to return it, for it was borrowed. Tell me, my Master, what I should do?' Elisha said, 'Show me the place where the axe fell.' So the young man pointed it out, and Elisha cut down a branch of the tree and dropped it into the water. Immediately the axe began to swim. It is a simple story, but full of deep meaning, to teach us how every spiritual loss can be recovered.

May 6

"Praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you and my people shall never be ashamed" (Joel 2:26).

Make it a point, whenever you go anywhere, and wherever you go, to make sure that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Elisha, goes with you. Secondly, when you do lose something, do not be ashamed to confess it. Confess your faults readily. Do not cover your folly and shame; and do not go to others for help, go direct to the Lord Jesus Christ. Go to His feet. Humble yourself and confess your loss and failures to Him. Let your prayer be: 'Alas, my Master, what shall I do?' Let Christ take you to the place where the loss took place. Be willing and prepared to see how God will help you. That stick cut by Elisha speaks of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. For our sins He hung on a tree and died for us, and by the same cross our loss can be recovered. It is by faith we apply the cross in our lives, and through it we will see every loss recovered.

Remember this simple rule. First of all, show Him the place where the loss began in your life and go to that very place and say; 'Yes, Lord, on such a date, and at such and such a time, I behaved like a fool, and that is why there is this loss in my life! If you go to the Lord with that confession, by the power of the cross, He will help you to recover every loss. The cross is the

power of God, and faith is necessary—a simple and living faith. Our Lord is with us. He said: 'Lo I am with you always.' Do not hesitate to go to Him. Tell Him your losses. Believe also that He died on the cross on your behalf to help you to recover those losses.

May 7

"They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel" (Psalm 106:13).

However great your loss may be and whatever its cause, it can be recovered, and in fact, in recovery we receive much more than we have lost. However, we must be willing to obey God's Word and His divine laws which no man can change. Even though David was a good, wise and kind king, and a man after God's own heart, he was deceived by the devil on four occasions and suffered four great losses, but with the help of God, and by His grace he recovered all. Let us look at the causes for the four losses, and then see how he recovered all that he lost. The first is in 1 Samuel 29:1-4. David wanted to join the army of the Philistines against Saul. Saul was David's enemy and tried to kill him on several occasions because God had chosen David to be king instead of Saul.

The Philistines, led by their princes, gathered together and went to battle against Saul. David went with them but the princes of the Philistines did not believe David and he was compelled to go back, very sad and disappointed. David knew that Saul had been anointed king by Samuel and though Saul had been disobedient to God's Word, yet he was still God's anointed. That is why God had not allowed David to touch Saul but David had become impatient. David knew that on many occasions God had been with him to help to help him, yet on this occasion, without consulting God, he had joined the Philistines.

May 8

"David enquired, at the Lord: ... and He answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them and without fail, recover all" (1 Sam. 30:8).

When David and his men returned to Ziklag they found their house burnt. They found their women and children gone, and their stuff looted by the Amalekites. All this was due to David's failure. He ought to have consulted God before going to the Philistines, but had been depending upon his own wisdom and strength at that time.

Then suddenly he came to his senses (verse 6). Underline these words, and one day they will help you when you are forsaken by your dear ones, and when even those whom you love forsake you. David encouraged himself in the Lord. He came to his senses and said, "O God forgive me for my failures, for not finding your will before I joined the Philistines. Lord, forgive me." Then David sent for the priest, Abiathar, and asked him, "Please, find out God's will for me. What shall we do? Shall we go against our enemies the Amalekites?" God said, 'Yes, go'. Again he said, "Now, Lord, if we go will we recover all that we have lost?" And God said: 'Without fail, you recover all' (verse 8, last part).

David found the place where the Amalekites were encamping, and they were eating and drinking and dancing with joy. Suddenly David and his men came upon them and recovered their wives and children, and stuff, and also spoiled the Amalekites. The spoil was so great that they were able to pay in full all the debts they had incurred. David also sent gifts and presents to all the people with whom he had been staying.

May 9

"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel" (Psalm 73:24).

We read in 1 Sam. 31:3-6 about the battle of the Philistines against Saul. In that battle Saul died. When David had tried to kill Saul, God would not allow him to do so, because Saul was God's anointed. Now, Saul and his sons had been killed in battle. There had been no need for David to fight against Saul. Unknown to David, God was working on his behalf. God had chosen David for a great and high service. He was not only God's king but had been chosen by God as a prophet. He was not only God's prophet, but one who would also receive from God His heavenly plan. That is why he had to be refined in many refining fires. We, as believers, have also been chosen by God for a very high and lofty purpose, and that is why we too have to go through extreme suffering to be ready that calling. It is for us to find out God's will for our lives.

God Himself is my high priest. I can go to Him at any time. The priest was given two stones, the Urim and the thummim, but now the Lord Jesus Christ has put in me these two stones, divine light and divine truth. According to Psalm 43:3 when I go into the house of God to find God's will, His light and His truth, as the indwelling Christ in my heart, will lead me.

Now you can prove for yourself, that not only will God recover your losses, but your sorrows will be changed to joy when you come back to the Lord. Do not depend on the Philistines, and your friends, but learn to put your trust in Christ alone. Learn to enquire of God in every situation, seek to know His will, to hear His voice and to obey Him, and though the situation may be impossible, still obey Him.

May 10

"Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore" (Psalm 105:4).

Now let us look at the second great loss that David incurred. With what zeal and labour David sought to bring again the ark of God to its place. But alas! instead of gathering the Israelites and the sons of Aaron and the sons of the Kohathites as commanded by God in Numbers 4 and 7, he used his own human wisdom and zeal to carry the ark in a new cart. This had been done by the philistines in 1 Sam. 6.

God had so clearly commanded in Numbers 4:15 and 7:9, that the ark of God was to be carried only by the sons of Kohath, the sons of Levites, upon their shoulders. It was never to be carried in a cart. The ark was placed on a new cart, and on the way the oxen stumbled, and when Uzza put forth his hand to steady the ark, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza so that He smote him. Thus they could not bring the ark to its place. Now when David began to obey and follow the divine order as revealed in the Word of God, with great joy he and all the people were able to bring the ark of God to its place (1 Chron. 15:28).

After this great event David wrote the wonderful song of thanksgiving which we have as Psa. 105, "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the people... talk ye of all His wondrous works" etc. (vs. 1-7,14,15). Unless we seek God's face constantly and try to find His order in all our activities, duties and plans, whether in the house or in the church, we are bound to suffer very heavy loss. We cannot be governed by our zeal, or wisdom, or judgment.

May 11

"Look ye out among you... men of honest report full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

Today there is very great loss among God's people, because of the failure to follow God's Word. Even those people who believe in finding elders by prayer become so careless and negligent in this very important task that without praying together as God's servants and coworkers concerning this matter, they are governed by a man's human qualifications, by his ability to speak, or by his worldly position or other resources. The result is barrenness and spiritual infancy, and people come and go away hungry from the services.

When David repented of his mistake God forgave him, for God is merciful, and gracious, and if we humble ourselves and confess our failure and mistake He forgives us, and helps us to recover every loss.

Now the ark of God speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Only those who are truly born again and those who are called by Him have the privilege of presenting His claims and showing to the people the way of salvation. Alas! Again we find in these days so many men who are never called by God to His Service, but are simply thrust out into the mission fields. The result is that more than sixty-five per cent of the missionaries who go out from the West never return to their respective mission fields after their first term of five years is over.

In the same way many persons have been given positions in Christian circles, because of their wealth or position, but they have never been called by God for that service, and are therefore unable to govern church affairs according to God's will.

May 12

"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

We must find God's will about marriage. As young people the couple like each other. May be they are positive at that time that God wants them to be joined together as life partners, but they never seek the face of the Lord. They refuse to pray with others who could help them by prayer to find God's will, and that is why there are so many unhappy homes. They begin their married lives with high hopes, but soon afterwards the couple find that they cannot get along together and there is constant strife in the family, and unhappiness in their own hearts.

Because we seek God's plan for our ministry, we have never had to ask for money. Sometimes the need has been very great, but we have prayed together, and because it is the Lord's work and He is responsible for our needs, He has always supplied it. We have never had to wait even a single day to pay any bill. Whatever the responsibility we have to bear in God's service we must always seek God's face and His plan. We must never try to change the Word of God, by saying that we are living in a new age, and in different days. God's Word can never change, so pray that the Lord will help you to recover every loss.

If in your married life you indeed both repent of the mistake you made, and ask God's forgiveness, then He will surely forgive you and you will not only recover every loss, but your lives will be used of Him to the blessing of others.

May 13

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).

The story of David's third loss in 2 Samuel 11 has a message for both believers and unbelievers. First of all, we are made to see the wickedness and deception of man's heart. Whoever we may be, however good and nice we may look outwardly, we are inwardly all equally defiled, filthy and dirty. There is no truth in our lives. We do not want to know our true condition. When we are told about it, our pride is hurt. That is why many people are offended and hurt when reading God's Word. Now let us look at the story of David in 2 Samuel 11.

From his youth he had been a God-fearing, wise, honest and good man. Also he was chosen of God. He was a good man, living a good life, for many years. He hated evil and kept away from it. But unknown to David there was a hidden evil nature somewhere, and unless God fully changed him, he could not be used in any great measure. The incident in 2 Sam. 11 happened in David's life so that David might see himself as God saw him.

David was a man of war, a mighty man, but, rather than go to war as he ought to have done, he sat at home in Jerusalem. Outwardly this was only a very small failure, but in the sight of God it was a very great failure. The second verse tells us it was eventide and though David was a mighty man he had been sleeping until the evening. There are so many people like this who are sleeping when they should be awake. In this subtle way the mighty man became a lazy man, and while walking leisurely on the roof of the palace, he was brought face to face with temptation.

May 14

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer.17:9).

Later, to cover this sin, David had to think of many ways and means and devices. He had to think of more ways and commit sin in order to cover the sin he had committed and so became a hypocrite. When he discovered his sin was going to be found out, he sent for Uriah, the husband of the woman. When Uriah came, David began to question him about the war. Then he said to him, 'Uriah, you are very tired. You must go home and have a hot bath and then go to bed.'

Uriah had hardly left the palace, when a man took to him many dishes of rich food the king's table. How kind king David was that day to Uriah! One sin leads to a second sin and then a third, and then to a fourth! A great and wise king became a first-class adulterer, then a deceiver, and then a hypocrite, and then a liar, all to cover one sin. Uriah, however, did not go home but slept at the door of the King's palace. Again David pressed him: 'Uriah, you are still very tired, you can take a few days' leave.' But still Uriah did not go to his house. While the army was on the battle-field he would not seek his own comfort. So David's trick did not work! Finally, he had to cause the death of Uriah through Joab. How sad! A wise king finally became a murderer. He never intended to murder Uriah. He had no thought of becoming an adulterer. He never knew that hidden part of his nature. It is only when temptation came that he knew how evil his heart was.

May 15

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

All of us are born with sinful natures, but that lesson was learned by David only after he had sinned, as he says in Psalm 51, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity'. Before God could see David as his chosen vessel, He had to change and transform him, and cleanse and purge and wash him. See what David says in Psalm 51, He had realized what he was and the true condition of his heart (verse 7, 9, and 19). The very same David is making this confession with a broken heart. 'O God, give me a clean heart. Give me a new heart. Give me a pure heart, and purge me and cleanse me, and wash me thoroughly, and blot out all my iniquity.'

Confess to God exactly what you are. Do not try to make any changes in your condition. Say, 'Yes, Lord, I am a sinner,' but do not say: 'I am much better than my neighbour.' Because God loves you, tell Him your true condition and say before Him: 'Lord, wash me. I am filthy and defiled. O God, create in me a clean heart. Take away my old nature.' In this way you will recover every loss. Your perishing life will become abundantly fruitful. Every word you speak and everything you do will bring forth abiding fruit and the very memory of your sinful life will be gone. When God forgives, He forgives forever.

Your sins will be gone forever. They will be blotted out, because the Lord Jesus Christ died in your stead and paid the full price of your debt of sin. Will you say, O Lord, create in me a pure and a clean heart. Wash me and purge me and cleanse me thoroughly.' He will hear and answer provided you are sincere and humble before Him.

May 16

"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm" (Joel 2:25).

Do you know that your life is nothing but wasted in the eyes of God unless your sins are forgiven? In Joel 1:4 we read of four kinds of insects which eat away the crops of the farmer, -- the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm and the caterpillar. Sometimes the farmers with great hope work very hard day and night to till the land and sow the seed. The seed comes up but when the time comes for reaping the harvest, they find that something has come in and destroyed the crops. May be one part of the crop is eaten away by the palmerworm, another part of the field by the locust, and the third part by the cankerworm, and forth part by the caterpillar. How much is left. Nothing! All is gone! what does God say? 'Oh! ye sinners, why do you waste your life?'. Your life is like that field which is being eaten away by the palmerworm, cankerworm, locust and caterpillar.

Indeed, this may be your condition today. You are conscious that your life has been wasted and is being wasted. There is hope even for you. You can recover every loss. However great your loss may be, and however humbling, still your loss can be recovered. Your life can be abundantly fruitful, and every minute you spend will yield everlasting fruit. It is by abiding in Lord Jesus Christ that we may bring forth abiding fruit. That is the wonderful miracle of salvation. Even though we have wasted our life in so many sinful and shameful ways, yet, by coming into the Lord Jesus Christ, and by being joined to Him, we may become abundantly fruitful.

May 17

*"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).
"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).*

Sometimes unexpected losses come to us. We read in 2 Kings 4:38, that suddenly there was a great famine. There was no grain anywhere, because there was no rain. There was great barrenness and no crops and the people had to go here and there to gather something for food. They had no rice, wheat or vegetables. They lived upon herbs.

The very same condition exist even now in the world. On the one hand, people are boasting of worldly education, wealth, and advancement. On the other hand, they are rotting in filth and defilement in sinful places. How much time they spend in cinemas and evil places. How much time they spend reading filthy magazines which they carry about with them.

When these men, in 2 Kings 4:39, went into the jungle to gather herbs, they saw some wild wines. 'We have found something wonderful. We are going to have a nice meal', they said as cooked it. But, when the food was being served and they began to eat, some wise men discovered something wrong with the food. So he cried, 'O man of God, there is death in the pot.' 'We are about to die because we have eaten poison. Please help us now. In a few minutes we are going to die.' At his command they brought some flour and he put it into the pot, and effect of the poison was taken away. The Lord Jesus Christ said, 'I am the Bread of Life, and by eating Me ye shall live forever'. This is the only Bread that can take away the poison in your life caused by sin.

May 18

"I am the living Bread... if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:51).

Now those people were hungry. They were wondering 'How can we get food to satisfy our hunger?'. Then there came a man who brought to the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread and the prophet said, 'You serve the people' (2 Kings 4:43). There were many men and only twelve loaves of bread. Twenty loaves to be divided among them. So naturally the servitor said, 'How can twelve loaves satisfy their hunger?' The man of God said, 'Give the people that they may eat, for thus said the Lord, They shall eat and leave there off.' So, they ate and ate till they could not eat anymore; they were full up to the throat, but still much was left over.

There is a poison that affects your stomach, nerves and brain. It works very slowly. So it is with sin! By living in sin you are eating and drinking poison every day and ruining your life. So we beseech you this day to eat the Bread of Life by faith. It will take away the effects of poison of sin in your nature that you may begin to recover every loss. It will make you eternally wise, eternally rich, eternally strong, and eternally satisfied, and every past loss will be fully recovered. Similarly, all the damage of the loss caused by folly, sin and defilement can be recovered. Only eat the Bread of Life from the hands of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is greater than Elisha, greater than all prophets and all other men. He offers to you this Bread of Life today.

May 19

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out...obeyed and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8).

God has recorded the story of David in the Bible to show us both the warfare and the weapons. David suffered from two kinds of losses, personal loss and national loss. Whatever we have seen of David's personal loss was because of his own failure, carelessness and negligence,

yet God wanted him to recover all. Also, God wanted everything to be recovered that had been lost nationally because of his failure and folly.

We have heard of a great and fertile land which the Lord God had given to His people Israel. The story begins in the book of Genesis, chapter 12. There was a man called Abraham of the city Ur of the Chaldees. Chaldea was a highly civilized country, which has been proven by the archaeologists. Abraham was a wealthy man, and had plenty of gold and silver, servants, property and lands. One day the Lord suddenly appeared to him and he heard the voice of God very clearly saying: 'Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house into the land that I shall show thee. Abraham believed that word. He knew he heard the voice of God, and that is why he had obeyed. God had given to Abraham a great promise in Genesis 12:2, 3: 'I will make of thee a great nation. I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curse thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.'

When a man obeys God, He blesses him.

May 20

"All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the lord thy God" (Deut. 28:2).

When the children of Abraham left Egypt to go to Canaan, God told them through Moses in Deut. 7:1, that there were seven nations living in the land. More than four hundred and fifty years before, God had promised to give that land to Abraham and to his seed. God had not forgotten. God never forgets. Whatever God says, He remembers, and will do. What promises He makes, He will keep. But He had to spend many, many centuries preparing His people for that inheritance.

In the same chapter of Deuteronomy, God told His people that all seven nations would be completely driven out from that land. Then God said also; 'Do not make any covenant with them or league. Do not take their daughters to be your wives nor give your daughters to them in marriage. Break down their groves and their images.' God spoke so clearly, and still they did not obey fully. That was their first failure.

How often, though we seek to obey God, we do not obey Him fully. It may be that just in a few things we do not obey Him. Joshua 9:23 shows this. They said: 'Now these men are our slaves. We shall use them to draw water for us.' Thus the devil gained ground. Later came mistakes in marriage, and then the people of God began to worship idols also. Even though they came into the land, they could not enjoy the land.

May 21

"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself ... if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways" (Deut. 28:9).

The men of Benjamin allowed a few Jebusites to remain in Jerusalem. They were first living there as slaves. Later they became a very strong nation. When David and his men came to Jerusalem, the Jebusites began to mock David. They began to say, 'Who is David? Even a blind man can go and fight with David.' They had gained so much ground in Jerusalem that they were mocking and ridiculing David, the man of God.

How sad it is to see that we as believers are also suffering many losses. I am talking now to those who say they are born again. No doubt for a short time they had abundant joy, great zeal, great peace, and a great hunger for God's Word; but now we find them in darkness, defeat, failure, jealousy, and barrenness, because not only one but many Jebusites have found their way into their hearts, into their homes, and into their families.

It was not an easy job for David to drive out those Jebusites. God had to prepare him in His own way. First of all God took David through eight long years of painful suffering through Saul and Absalom and others. Then He brought him to Hebron. There He kept him for seven years and six months, and from thence He brought him to Zion. Only then was he able to drive out the Jebusites. At last the Jebusites were driven out from Zion. Then came the heavenly plan, then came the temple and then came the glory.

May 22

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

These are two kinds of losses: personal loss and collective loss. The first loss is what we incur individually and the second is what is incurred by the whole assembly. Now the Word of God says that we as believers are members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every member of the body is very necessary and precious. Some are tiny members, but in the body they play a very important function. When one member suffers the whole body suffers. When we live a life of loss and barrenness as believers, then the whole body, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, suffers. Our loss is a loss to the whole Church. Likewise, our recovery will be joy and blessing to all.

Again, we know that in the Lord Jesus Christ we have a great spiritual inheritance; it is a heavenly inheritance, and undefiled, which will never fade away. No man can fully comprehend it. Yet we continue to live a life of defeat and failure, because we do not know how to enjoy our heavenly inheritance. God had appeared and said to Abraham so clearly, 'Leave your land, your property, and your kith and kin and go to a land which I will show you.' He obeyed God. But by one small mistake he brought heavy loss into his life. This was a loss through wrong partnership.

Because of Lot, God was not able to speak to Abraham clearly. God had been leading him from the very beginning, but at last he came to a stop. For, because of Lot, Abraham had lost the sense of God's Presence. If there was to be recovery it could be accomplished only through separation.

May 23

"And the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes" (Gen. 13:14).

God appeared to Abraham again, but only after Lot had appeared from him. Please mark this fragment in the Bible: '*After that Lot was separated from him*'. God was now able to show Abraham what a great inheritance He was offering to him and to his seed forever. Because of some Lot in your life you are not able to enjoy true fellowship with God. When Abraham separated himself from Lot, God became real to him, he could talk to God as man to man and

that is why he could leave his land and cattle and other precious things of God's sake. God was real to him.

When Lot was with him, God was silent. He might have thought sometimes: 'What shall I do?' But God would not answer him until Lot went away from him.

As for Hebron, the first thing it speaks of is fellowship, firstly of fellowship with fellow-believers. Friendship with Lot will not bring you into this fellowship; you have to break up your worldly friendships and relationships, and then God will give you His own friendship for eternity.

The second thing Hebron speaks of is faith. In Joshua 14:11-13 we read of a man called Caleb. He came to Joshua and said, 'You give me Hebron. Even though there are many giants there I can conquer them. I have proved God for many years.' So Hebron speaks of faith. Do not be scared of the giants, but be prepared to fight against them. Through your living faith you can conquer every giant, obstacle and hindrance.

May 24

"The Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47).

The story of the threshing-floor of Araunah is the story of David's fourth loss. God had to bring David on two occasions to a threshing-floor (1 Chron. 13 and 2 Sam. 24). A threshing-floor is the place where wheat is threshed, to separate the chaff from the grain. Then, by winnowing, the wind separates the chaff from the Wheat.

Now in 2 Samuel 24, we read how David commanded his general Joab: 'Go, number the fighting men in our kingdom.' David knew full well that he had never won any battle by his own strength, or by the power of his army. Yet now he wanted to make a show of the number of fighting men who were available in his kingdom. He had become proud, and was depending upon his armies for his victories. Joab said to him; 'your majesty! you have won no battle by yourself. It is God who has fought for you. Why do you want to number these men? The Lord thy God add unto the people, how many so ever they be, and hundredfold; yet they are not going to save you. It is only God who has helped you.' However, David was proud and insisted on numbering the people. So the King's word prevailed. It is true that David repented and cried unto the Lord: 'I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now, I beseech thee, take away thy iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly,' but as a result of David's sin God sent three days pestilence in the land and 70,000 men died. What a loss! What a terrible loss!

At last God stayed the hand of the destroying angel at the threshing-floor of Araunah.

May 25

"All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28:19).

In 2 Chron. 3:1 we read that it was the very same place which later became the site of the temple, and out of that terrible loss to David and the nation, God gave not only forgiveness and full recovery but much more beside. God gave to David a heavenly pattern of the temple to be built later on by Solomon, David's son, who carried out all the instructions given by

David, his father. He built the temple, and when the work was finished, and the temple was complete, Solomon offered sacrifices in the temple. That was the happiest day for the whole nation. All the loss of so many centuries had been recovered. They saw God's glory, and God came and lived among them. He could speak to them from between the cherubim in the temple, and all nations had to come and bow before Solomon. They had incurred great losses as a nation, terrible losses. But now the story was changed. Now they were God's people and God was with them in His full glory. Now there was real recovery, and they could truly be called God's people.

In Zion, the Lord brought David to the site of the temple. God brought David to the place where he was fully freed from human wisdom, where he was totally broken and emptied of all chaff; and then revealed to him the sight of the temple. When the work was complete, God's fire came down and His glory filled the place. God began to speak plainly. That is Zion, the real Zion where God reigns in every heart and in every church according to the heavenly plan. It is through Zion that He shows His wisdom and power, and there only can we see God's fullness and glory.

May 26

"Truly our fellowship is with the father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7).

Now there are two kinds of losses which we as human beings incur. The first kind of loss is caused when we do not have the experience of salvation, and then no matter what we do everything is failure and loss.

The second kind of loss is suffered even by those who are born again, perhaps because of lack of knowledge, of perhaps through their own folly or sin. Now let us study the weapons and the means by which we can recover every loss. There are two great means which God uses to recover our losses, that is, Hebron and Zion. Through these two instruments God recovered every loss which came upon His people. Hebron means fellowship: firstly, fellowship with God, that is with the Father and the Son, and secondly, fellowship among ourselves, as we see in 1 John 1:3, 4, 7. A sinner cannot talk with God nor be indwelt by Him. A sinner cannot find the will of God, nor can he understand God's plan, or purpose, or mysteries.

When our sins are forgiven and our hearts are cleansed, there is a longing in our hearts to be in the presence of God. That fellowship with God enables us to have real spiritual fellowship with His people. The more we walk with God and the nearer we live to God, so much the more we long to enjoy fellowship both with God and with His people; the two go together they cannot be separated.

May 27

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

According to Matt. 17:20 through faith even mountains can be removed. Hebron means this faith. Again, Hebron was a place of refuge (Joshua 21:13). What is the third meaning of Hebron? We have to bear the burden of those who are weak spiritually, when they fall or are in danger, travailing and persevering prayer, and lift them up by love and kindness.

Fourthly, Hebron stands for utter dependence on God. Many believers and servants of God suffer heavy losses because they do not know how to consult God for their plans. When David came to Hebron in 2 Samuel 2:1, he had become emptied, humble, and broken. In everything he enquired of God. 'Shall I go up? Shall I go up? Where shall I go? When shall I go up? That is the fourth way of recovering every loss. Empty yourself of every self-confidence and find time to go to God for everything. Ask Him even how you should spend your money!

Similarly, God must be consulted in every Church matter. At Hebron you learn that you must enquire from God, individually and collectively, concerning every action, every movement, saying: "What shall we do? Where shall we go? Again, as we have seen, many people do not know how to find God's will concerning marriage.

This is how many believers are ruined, and have unhappy ruined homes, because they have never learned that lesson of how to enquire from the Lord. Even with David, it was only after many years of sufferings that he learned that lesson: 'Lord, shall I go? Shall I go?'

May 28

"David went on, and grew great; and the Lord God of Hosts was with him" (2 Sam. 5:10).

We have seen how God brought David to Hebron and Zion to enable him to recover all personal and national losses by following certain divine principles. After David had stayed in Hebron for seven years and six months, he came to Zion. God had first to prepare David in Hebron, where he learned the full meaning of fellowship. After Hebron David was brought to Zion. According to Deut. 7, the Israelites had to drive out all the seven nations who were living in the land, and they had not to make any covenant with them, nor inter-marry with them.

Because of their human wisdom, however they failed God; all the seven nations stayed there, and brought great loss to the whole nation of Israel. In 2 Sam. 5 we read how David took Zion from the Jebusites and established his throne in the city. Alas! in his sinful pride he insisted on numbering the people, for which God had to punish him. Then at the command of the prophet, David went to the threshing-floor of Araunah, and build there an altar to the Lord and in so doing found the site for God's temple. That is the first divine principle about Zion: it is the site of God's temple.

We must first be brought into God's own way and secondly we must not depend upon our own knowledge, cleverness and qualifications for His service. After God had revealed to David the site for His temple, He gave him next the pattern of the temple in writing. This is the second divine principle of Zion: the heavenly plan for our personal life, family life and church life. (1 Chron. 28:11).

May 29

"As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation ... other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10,11).

'Out of the spoils won in battle, did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord'. The third divine principle is to gather material to fulfill the plan. God permits battles in our lives, that we may have the privilege of bringing the needed material into God's House.

After David had found the site for the temple and had received the plan and gathered the material, the next thing he wanted was a wise master builder. When God chose Solomon (1

Kings 2:12; 3:11) he asked God to give Him wisdom (1 Kings 3:5,9). This is how he became a wise master builder. If the work of God is to go on peaceably, there must be men of apostolic vision and experience. For the work of God, God needs all kinds of workmen. God needs skillful workers from every part of the world. Only then can the work go on smoothly.

Even though they were using heavy stones and large timbers for building, and huge beams, there was no sound in the temple of any instrument of any kind. It is very necessary to know God's plan, so that God's work will go on in perfect unity and harmony.

When Solomon made an end of praying, the fire of God consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. God's glory came down only when the work was finished, and it is only when the work of God is finished that we too shall see His glory. Unfinished work cannot be to glory of God. God in His purpose brought David to Zion that He might reveal Himself to all His people.

May 30

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Psalm 87:3).

We learn something more about Zion in Psalm 87:2, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Jacob had to go through many experiences before he could understand God's purposes for him. "All the dwellings of Jacob" in Psalm 87:2 speak of all that he had been doing for himself, his own efforts, his own struggles and his own battles and all his human efforts to obtain God's blessing. He was trying to get the portion of the first-born by human methods.

"The gates of Zion" (vs. 2). God's love is towards Zion. The Scripture says, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion." If we also would enjoy God's love in its fulness we must become a part of Zion. It is only in Zion we can recover every loss, so the Lord continually seeks to draw our attention towards Zion.

Genesis 14:18,19. This is the first reference to Zion in the Word of God. The name "Salem" means peace; and Salem or Jerusalem is the city of peace. Before Abraham could be deceived by King of Sodom God had sent him Melchizedek, the King of Salem, and priest of the most high God, who had blessed him (vs. 19). When, therefore, the king of Sodom offered all the wealth, Abraham refused to touch even a thread or a shoe latchet.

How did Abraham get such faith? From Zion had come Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, and from him Abraham received a true blessing, for Melchizedek blessed him in the name of the most high God who is the possessor of Heaven and earth.

May 31

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:4,12).

Not only did Melchizedek bless Abraham, but he also brought him food from Zion: he gave him the bread and wine (Genesis 14:18). Abraham believed that every blessing came from God and that is why he gave his tithe to God (Gen. 14:20).

The tithe speaks of his faith, and is also the experience of thanksgiving. According to 2 Chron. 3:1, Mt. Moriah is the place where Abraham passed his last test (Gen. 22). God appeared ten

times to Abraham, and the tenth time He appeared to him in Mt. Moriah. He had to pass these ten tests to become the friend of God. God brought him to Zion to pass his last test.

After this God was fully bound to Abraham. Abraham had obeyed God and whatever God commanded, he did. In the same way when you come to Zion without fear or doubt, God is bound to you. You can command God to do anything, and He will do it for you. Can any man give us so much? Do not keep away from God's house nor despise it. Do not despise the fellowship of God's saints, but take your full share in the house of God and then you will surely recover every loss.

These two lessons from the life of Abraham are very important to learn. Honour God by your substance and acknowledge that God alone can bless you; this is the first lesson. The second is to come into God's house with strong but simple faith and then you will be wholly and fully bound up in the purpose of God.

6. The Secrets of hearing God's voice

JUNE

June 1

"A voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

John the Baptist came into the world to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. He began preaching repentance in the wilderness, but the message was not an easy one for the people to accept. People came from far places to hear him, and it was not a message to please them that he preached, but a message with the authority of the living God. He made no distinction when he said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

Those who heard the message repented of their sins and confessed them and were baptised. Some may have thought that they would receive some sort of blessing by being baptised by such a great prophet. Some of those who came to be baptised were even of the leaders of the nation, and looking at them John exclaimed, "Oh generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruit, therefore, meet for repentance".

One day the Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to be baptised. The Scripture says in John's Gospel, that till that day, John the Baptist did not himself know who the Lord Jesus really was (John 1:31). Our Lord Jesus Christ came very quietly among the crowd and requested John the Baptist to baptise him. John ofcourse knew something about Jesus naturally, being his cousin, but he did not know that He was the Messiah. When John saw the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus Christ as a dove, then he knew for certain who He was. The next day, he declared: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world".

June 2

"This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21).

It was only when the Voice of God spoke that John knew who Jesus was. Unless you also hear the Voice of God you will never know who God is. You may have attended many meetings, you may know much of the Bible, and you may have made many sacrifices, but unless you hear the Voice of God, all these things are of no value to you spiritually.

The Lord did not begin His ministry by doing miracles. Till that day He had not performed a single miracle, nor had He preached a single sermon. It was only after the Voice of God declared His identity that John understood and declared who Jesus was.

If you want to enjoy the grace of God, and to understand His power in fullness, and to know the mind of God every day, then learn the secret of hearing His still small Voice every day and many times during the day. God does speak, the living and the mighty God and He wants us to hear His voice and listen to Him. May we all learn this secret. We must hear the Voice of God every day saying to us: 'This is the way, walk ye in it' (Isa. 30:21). How simple these words are? When you are about to take a wrong turning, either to the right or to the left, there comes that still small Voice saying: 'Don't go this way, don't go that way; there is some danger there'. In this way all of us can be guided daily in the right path.

June 3

"God answered him by a Voice" (Exodus 19:19).

As long as we are in the world all of us have to face temptation. It does not matter who you are, where you are, or what you are doing. As human beings we have to face many temptations and difficult situations and troubles of one kind or another. But when we can hear the Voice of God clearly we can meet these situations victoriously. God shows us in His Word, how from the very beginning of our spiritual life we must learn to hear His Voice.

In the beginning of 1 Kings 19, the wicked queen Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, so Elijah may have thought God would surely punish Jezebel. He went and sat under the juniper tree, for he was angry with God for failing to punish her. That is how we behave sometimes, that is how we misunderstand God and begin to doubt Him. But God's ways are not our ways; they are higher than our ways. He will not work in our way. Elijah perhaps thought God was not doing His duty because He did not punish Jezebel, so he told the Lord: "Lord, from today onwards, I am not going to be your prophet". Now, if you are in Government service you have to give three months notice if you wish to resign, but Elijah gave just one day's notice! "Take away Your prophethood from me today" he said in effect, "I am not going to speak in Your name from today. You have gone to sleep and are not doing Your job!"

June 4

"After the fire a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12).

Many a time we also think the same. We want to dictate to God. But God was not sleeping! He took Elijah to the mountain-top and there dealt with him in a wonderful way. First there was a very strong wind; but God was not in the wind. Then came the earthquake which shook the mountain, but scripture says God was not in the earthquake. Then there came fire, but God was not in the fire. After that, there came a still small Voice and God spoke to Elijah and told him clearly where and when and how He would judge Jezebel. At the same time He revealed to him many other things about coming events.

In the Bible we hear God speaking. God does speak, and if you believe in God, you must listen when He speaks. He is not something abstract. He is a person. We can know Him, hear Him, be led of Him, and know Him more intimately than we know anybody else. You may have been living with friends for many years and yet do not know them fully. You may live with your wife and children for many years and yet you dare not tell them everything. There are certain thoughts which we cannot share with others: but we can speak to God freely and tell Him every thought. We can go to Him at any time, anywhere, and hear His voice.

June 5

"The Voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh" (Ezekiel 10:5).

Once, only prophets or high priests were able to hear the Voice of God. If others wanted to hear what God had to say, they had first to go either to a prophet or the high priest. Whenever David was in trouble, he had to send for the high priest Zadok to help him to hear the Voice of God. To help man to hear God's Voice Jesus Christ came into the world, and for this reason, at the very beginning of His ministry, the Holy Spirit came upon Him and God spoke from Heaven.

In His baptism, our Lord was prophesying how He must die, be buried and rise again. This He proclaimed in this symbolic way at the very beginning of His ministry. In Mark 8:31; 9:31, He talks of this in a more clear and specific way, and even before His crucifixion, prophesied His death. In baptism He spoke symbolically that He must give His life for sinners and conquer death. Then the heavens opened, and God's Voice was heard. Those who know the Lord Jesus by experience see heaven open every day; they claim God's grace, mercy, love and power day by day; and they have the gift of Holy Spirit to lead them, help them, because mysteries and spiritual truths cannot be understood by ordinary wisdom.

You too can hear the Voice of God every day according to your need, and through the inward Voice can know exactly what God expects of you, and wants you to do.

June 6

"Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

The next question is, how can anyone of us hear God's Voice clearly and definitely every day? The answer is in the same chapter, Mathew 3:2 'Repent ye!' That was the first message declared boldly and with authority by John the Baptist. The same message was given by the Lord Jesus Christ on the day of His baptism (Matt. 4:17). In Greek the word 'repentance' means 'right about turn'. First I look straight ahead; then I turn my back and face the other way. That is called repentance.

As sinners we face the devil with our backs towards God because we get much more pleasure in obeying Satan than God. By hearing the Word of God and knowing the result of sin, we repent and turn our backs to the devil and our faces towards God. But in many cases it is only half repentance, or two-thirds repentance! Men want both masters! When they are in trouble they want God, otherwise they want to serve the devil. Repentance is not repentance unless it is full and complete. We require the grace and help of God to repent and turn our backs on the devil.

We are told in the same chapter (verses 13 and 14) how John was surprised to see Jesus coming to Him. Unless you humble yourself, you will not understand the meaning of God's kingdom. Even though Jesus had much more power and authority than John the Baptist, He humbled Himself for your sake and mine, and went to John to be baptised. The Lord was saying in a symbolic manner that humility is a secret of divine favour.

June 7

"We are buried with Him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4).

Our Lord prophesied three things by His baptism. In Rom. 6, baptism speaks of death, burial and resurrection; a three-fold inward change which is expressed out-worldly in baptism. In many cases it is only a ritual or ceremony. That is why there is so much barrenness in many who are called Christians. Baptism is a testimony and not a ceremony. Unless we are taught this we live very poor Christian lives. Unless our sins are buried and forgotten we cannot have real peace. Otherwise we are going to be haunted by the memory of sins committed. Today you can be freed from every memory of sin. He died to take away our condemnation. He died that we may die to our sinful nature.

Just as cancer has to be removed with all the surrounding tissues and muscles, so also by faith we have to take into us the power of death to die to our desires and thoughts. We do

not die by saying so. I may say in the morning, 'I will not do it; I will not do it.' But the brain starts working: it says, 'It does not matter; it does not matter!'. We go ahead and fall again. We cannot gain victory in our own power. As we receive into us the power of death so also we receive into us a new life called the power of His resurrection, which gives us a hunger and thirst for the things of eternity. In due course we are given ears to hear the Voice of God.

June 8

"Make thy way straight before my face." (Psalm 5:8)

After six days the Lord Jesus Christ took them to a high mountain and was transformed before them. Then there came a Voice from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". God tells us by this means that if we want divine life to come into us, we must die to our old nature. We can never die to ourselves without His help. When the Lord died He died to help us to die to ourselves. The proof is that the more we obey Him the more the divine light is seen upon our faces. It is a reflection of the Glory of God which shines more and more as we obey God.

The Lord Jesus Christ rose again to pour into us new life, and the power of His resurrection. It is only by that life that we can hear the still small Voice. It is, indeed, a still small Voice. It is not a human voice, and it is only by experience that we recognise it as we follow Him. Follow the simple divine way to have power, and then all your questions can be answered day by day. In order to follow this simple way you have first to repent sincerely. Confess every sin without reservation. Believe from the heart and say in simple faith: "The Lord Jesus Christ died in my stead, for my sins, to take away my condemnation". Thank Him for dying for you. Say to Him: "Show me from Thy Word Thy hidden mysteries, and Thy plan for me today, and for the future". Then you will find the Voice of God coming into your ears every day.

June 9

"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11).

We have a spirit, a soul and a body (Gen. 2:7). When God made man, He breathed His own spirit into him. Bones, blood and muscles make the body; intellectual reasoning, emotion and will-power make the soul; conscience, intuition and worship are faculties of the spirit. These are the three main parts of man: body and soul and spirit. Because of sin death enters our spirit as well as our body. Every thought, word and deed we do against our God, we do by killing our conscience. If I want to tell a lie, my conscience pricks me, so, to tell a lie, I must kill my conscience. Unknowingly we bring death into our spirits, by our thoughts, words and deeds. We are unable to hear the Voice of God, or feel His presence, or touch Him because of our dead spirit.

When we receive into us the life of Jesus Christ, again we undergo a three-fold change. The love of God can only be poured into the same spirit. It cannot be put into my bones, blood or muscles. God is a spirit and before that pure life can come into my spirit God must cleanse me, purge me and purify me completely. We claim by faith His precious blood for our cleansing because His blood alone contains everlasting life. Our blood contains physical life. We can go on living only as long as our hearts are beating. God declared a long time ago in Lev.17:11, 'The life of the flesh is in the blood'.

June 10

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ did not sin and He was perfectly holy, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and He could challenge His enemies; "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). No one dared to take up the challenge. That is why His blood has purchased for us everlasting life, and also saw no corruption (Psa. 16:10).

The body of our Lord saw no corruption, and in that same body He rose again. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." We receive that truth by faith, for by His blood we are cleansed and filled with His eternal life, and it is then and only then that we are able to feel the presence of God. In this new life we find a proportionate work going on in the body, the soul and the spirit, when we are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Then we can hear His Voice daily, saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it. My son, be careful, take heed. My child, come unto Me; let Me show you something: let Me teach you something."

Sometimes when we are fast asleep we wake up suddenly as if we heard a Voice calling to us. I have been fast asleep and have heard someone call me by my name clearly. I thought at first it was a dream or my imagination. When I went to sleep, again I heard the Voice and woke up. Sometimes this would happen for three times, and then would come the Voice saying: "My child get up, I want to speak to you." What a privilege, what an honor it is to receive God's Word day by day according to our need.

June 11

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

"Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:2).

Before the Lord Jesus came into my life I was an Atheist. I said: "There is no God!" I used to make fun of those who believed in God. I heard the Voice of God one day clearly, on the 16th of December 1929, saying: "My Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." That is how I began my walk with God. The life of God came into me, and when that happened I underwent a three-fold change of the spirit, soul and body. I was given a quickened spirit, and enlightened soul and a cleansed body. Soon after that I began to read the book of Genesis in the month of January 1930. I found these words again and again in the same chapter: 'God said.' I found these words repeated 500 times and this very fragment was a blessing to me: 'God speaks, God speaks.' So I said, "Oh God speak to me. I want to hear Thy Voice. I have no ambition for any other experience. The longing of my soul is that you should speak to me and show me Thy way day by day". I believed like a child. Even though it may take some time to learn the lesson that God must speak, the fact remains that when He becomes real He does speak. A day came when I began to hear His Voice every day. That is why I want you also to hear His voice and learn the lessons He wants to teach.

June 12

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

We are now going to see the second way of hearing His voice. First we saw how the heaven was opened at the time of Christ's baptism. Saul became Paul when he heard the Voice of God (Acts 9:3). He saw divine light and not sunlight. It suddenly began to shine round him

very brightly. When he saw the light he fell down. You may not see such a light as Saul saw. But the same light can move into all of us without being seen.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the world and He is the divine Light to show us our inward condition. And the sins which were hidden for so many years now come to light. It happened to me, though I did not see the light with these ordinary eyes. It was by reading that tiny fragment in John 3:3. 'Verily, Verily, I say unto you' that my eyes were opened. These words went on ringing in my ears, 'I say unto thee, I say unto thee, I say unto thee.' I replied "Lord in that case, I am, a sinner. I have uttered words of blasphemy against you. I tore the Bible in 1919. "Then I knelt down and I saw many things from my past life which I had forgotten entirely.

The same thing happened to Saul. He had been trying to follow God intellectually, but he had not seen his inward condition. Now he saw the whole light coming to him and cried as in Rom. 7:18. "To will is present in me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." But the Lord Jesus Christ said in a few words: "Unknowingly you have been doing damage to my work." Only the light coming into us can show us how much damage we are doing to God's work and to ourselves. Only the light of God can show us our true condition.

June 13

"And he said, who art thou, Lord? and the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 9:5).

Let the light of God come into you fully. Do not hinder it. In the beginning it will be a very humbling experience. Saul was extremely proud of his knowledge and cleverness, but the light of God brought him right down upon his face. That man was carrying many papers in both arms, with authority from the priests allowing him to put into prison any believer he came across. His brain was full of ideas and his hands full of warrants. He was racing to capture the believers at Damascus, but both his ideas and the papers flew away. There he was in the dust and the Lord was saying to him, "You are wasting your time, money and energy. You are kicking against the pricks. You yourself will be hurt. Saul, do you think you can stop My work? You do not know how much damage you are doing to yourself".

Saul was blind for three days that he might acknowledge his spiritual blindness before God. "Who art thou Lord?" he asked. The Lord answered: "I'm Jesus, whom thou persecutest. When you hate and persecute my people you are doing it to Me, but I am the saviour. Even though you hate My name and blaspheme it, yet I love you, Saul. Even for you I shed My blood and gave My life."

June 14

"And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:10).

Saul replied to the Voice: "Lord! what will thou have me to do?". The Lord asked him to go to Damascus where he would be told what he was to do. Even though he was well known, he had first of all to obey God and do exactly what God told him. The Lord did not tell him many

things personally (Acts 9:6). An unknown person was sent to him; Ananias, by name. He was an ordinary person and not an apostle. We do not know much about him.

If the Lord wanted He could have Himself explained to Paul all the way of Salvation, but He did not do that. He sent Ananias to explain to Him. That was the voice of God to him and Saul humbled himself and believed whatever Ananias told him. "Now I know this Wonderful Way, he thought My sins have gone. I have been persecuting Him who died for me". Then he was baptised through Ananias. From that time onward he heard the Voice of God a number of times.

Through all his life and ministry, by listening to the Voice of God, Saul went on to do His will (Acts 16). The Lord began to work mightily in Galatia and Mysia, and when Paul wanted to go into Bithynia, a Spirit suffered him not. Then he asked, "Lord, can we stay in Galatia?". Then the Lord said, "No". The same with Mysia. Then came the Voice of God: "Come over to Macedonia." Though it was on the other continent, he obeyed. That is how the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ entered into Europe. Saul and those with him heard and obeyed and trouble came in Acts 18:9, what a privilege it was to suffer for His name.

June 15

"There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:23-24).

In Acts 27, the ship was in great danger, and the 276 people in the ship had no hope that they were going to live. They were afraid because of the terrible storm. They had cast out the tackling to lighten the ship, and the sailors even attempted to flee, but Paul stopped them. That night God had spoken to Paul: "Fear not Paul. Thou must be brought before Caesar and lo! God had given thee all them that sail with thee." This voice of God brought faith. Outwardly it was impossible that they would be saved, and there was not the least hope left, but God had assured him that he and the 276 people were safe. Paul had eaten well and slept well. He was not afraid, and now he encouraged the others to eat also. It is the consciousness of God's presence which gives us assurance that it is God's voice and not man's voice. First of all, God's presence is realized by praising God and reading His Word, and then we hear His Voice. If I find my faith increasing, I know it is not man's voice, and by later experience we come to recognize the Voice more readily.

If you want to hear the Voice of God, let the Lord Jesus Christ come and rule in your heart. Receive His divine light and do not be afraid to confess your sin. Remember He died for your sins. Accept Him as your loving Saviour, then speak to Him as your Friend day by day, for you can talk to him anywhere on any matter, and He will surely talk with you. Remember only this, when you hear His Voice, obey at once.

June 16

"The Voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth" (Psalm 29:3).

One day, without my going to any meeting or anyone coming to speak to me, I heard the voice of God speaking to me in my own room and I know that it was God who was speaking to me. He changed my life forty years ago. Thank God that He has saved a sinner like me, and that I now have the privilege of hearing His Voice every day. I can testify to His glory

that He answers my questions and solves my problems day by day, however difficult they may be.

We can see as we study the different portions of the Scriptures, how God came into the lives of many men and women of old, and enabled them to hear His Voice. God uses many different ways and circumstances to teach us to know His ways. May He teach each one of us the secret of hearing the still small Voice of God. This secret is revealed to us from the passage in Matt. 17:5, in the words that came from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him". The disciples could not understand, at that time, what it meant. To them it was words and sounds only. They could not enjoy what God said.

On the other hand, something happened when Saul heard the Voice of God. When Saul and his companions were on the way to Damascus (Acts 9) these words came clearly to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Now Saul's companions heard the Voice but not the words. It sounded like thunder to them.

June 17

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

This was the condition of the people in Matt. 17. They heard many sermons which were quite simple, but they could not understand what their real meaning was.

On one occasion our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees", but it so happened that day they had forgotten to take bread with them. The disciples thought that they had forgotten to do so the Lord was warning them. Many a time, they could not understand what He meant. In the same way you may be hearing many sermons but the words do not become your daily experience. In many cases they enter by one ear and go out through the other. We appeal to you that not to give up till you learn to hear and understand when the Lord speaks to you. It is only when you learn this that your lives become transformed. You will find your burdens lifted, your eyes opened, your fears and doubts cleared, and all the enemy devices defeated. It is a wonderful thing to hear the Voice of the Lord.

Remember that you cannot hear the Voice of the God without divine light. This is the first step if you want to know clearly and definitely the Voice of God. The light of God will come into you and it will go on shining brighter day by day (Prov.4:18). The light may come into you like a tiny ray, but it will become brighter and brighter as you obey Him. Without divine light you cannot know, or see or hear God.

June 18

"And the Voice that came from Heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the Holy mount" (2 Peter 1:18).

In 2nd Peter 1:16-21 again Peter testifies how our Lord Jesus Christ had become so real to him. Peter testified in his letter that he was not following cunning fables. In the mountain top they saw the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and had heard God's Voice, and that Voice had changed them completely (2 Peter 1:18).

Peter says: "Don't think we were the only people who have had the privilege of hearing God's Voice. You may say in your heart: 'Peter, it was your privilege to be on the mountain top and see His glory and transfiguration. What about men like us? How can we hear His Voice and see His glory. It may have been true in that period, but men like us of this period cannot hear His Voice.'" The answer is in the verse following, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in the dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19). Peter says there that if you really receive by faith the Word of God in your heart, the Word coming into you will become the shining light to let you see for yourself that God is light. That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In God's Word first we see ourselves as we are, then we see God in His true glory and love.

June 19

"God is light and in Him no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

In the eyes of the Lord, any sin of any kind is equally bad. One defiling touch in a wound could bring death. One tiny germ could bring death to the whole family. Sin of any kind is equally destructive, horrible, and terrible. Only the light of God that comes into us delivers us from the damage caused by our thought, word, or deed, and very same light shows the glory, beauty and majesty of our living saviour. When men uncover our sins they do so to put us to shame, but the light of God uncovers our sins to help us to confess them and have them cleansed away. We have the assurance of prophecy that we do not have to go on the mountain-top to see His glory. Anywhere, wherever we are, there we can see His glory and beauty. This is possible only when divine light comes into us, and we receive in our spirit the Word of God.

If you want to receive the light of God, then first of all believe from your heart that Bible is the true Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. Even though we cannot understand what we read sometimes, it still remains the Word of God. It can never change. It is not of any private interpretation, holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Hear and read the Word of God with respect, reverence and faith and go on saying step by step: "Lord speak to me from Thy Word". That is how we can learn to hear the Voice of God.

June 20

"Lead me in thy truth and teach me" (Psalm 25:5).

I was convinced at the first reading of the Bible, that it was the Word of God. So I said, "Lord, I respect this book, this is Thy word. Kindly teach me and speak to me through its pages. Even though I may not understand everything in the beginning, Lord, I will never doubt Thy Word. Do take Your own time and teach me the meaning of Your Word, either now or even if it takes one or two years. I will not worry You. I want You to speak daily according to my need". Then I found the light of God coming in brighter and brighter day by day. On the one hand, I saw my inward corruption, but on the other hand I saw His abundant grace to forgive me and wash me, and how He has made every provision to help me daily in my need.

At first I thought that by having Bible knowledge I would become more righteous, but then I discovered that it is neither knowledge, nor signs nor miracles that can make me righteous. Righteousness comes only by hearing the Voice of God. Before going to bed I used to pray, "Lord, tell me please, did my life today please Thee? Tell me if I made any mistakes and have

grieved Thee by thought, word or deed. If I have done something wrong, Lord show it to me." He showed me, I confessed it and my Lord forgave me, and said to me; "I am well pleased with thee, go." Straight away I would go to bed, and have a nice sleep. But if I had done something wrong and had not confessed it, I would find it hard to sleep. I would toss tis way and that way, till at last I would go on my knees again, and say: "Yes, Lord, I am sorry. It was my fault. I have grieved Thee. Kindly forgive me. I believe in the efficacy of the precious blood. Lord, forgive me." Then He would say to me, "My child go to bed again. I am well pleased with thee." Now I am happy every day.

June 21

"Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths" (Psalm 25:4).

It will happen to you also in the same way, given the same conditions. I learned to say day by day: "Now Lord, will you kindly show the way for me today? I am helpless, show me clearly what Thou art expecting of me. Tell me where to go, and what to say." Having found the plan, I would obey at once. When night came I would ask the same question upon my knees again. "Lord, has my love given you full satisfaction. Art Thou satisfied? Speak to me, are you fully satisfied?"

Christ is the Bright and Morning Star. Have you ever lived in villages? You will find most farmers are not governed by clocks or watches. Whenever they go to the field early in the morning, or when they want to travel early in the morning, they are governed by the Morning star and say, "Now it is time. I must get up and go". They find their direction also by the same Morning star.

The Lord Jesus Christ comes to us as the Bright and Morning Star, and even though in the beginning we may know some darkness, remember nobody becomes perfect as soon as they are born again. We see darkness around us, but the Morning star tells me, "My child, do not look at the darkness. After one or two hours the sun will be getting up," and true enough, we find the sun shining upon us after a few hours. The Morning star enables us to overcome all our worries and doubts without any human help, and we shall be able to find the way. The more we obey, the more light we will receive.

June 22

"Daniel... kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before His God" (Daniel 6:10).

In the beginning there are so many things you cannot understand. I read the Bible more than one hundred times and then at last began to see some meaning, but now I know what these words mean: 'In the beginning', Gen. 1. I did not know at first what they meant, and often went to sleep while reading. After many years these same chapters or verses or passages have become new to me. That is the light of God shining upon the path more brightly, provided we receive the Word of God and make it a practice to stay upon our knees till God speaks to us.

The Lord told his disciples in Matt. 16:21 that He would suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and be killed and raised again the third day. All this He told them before taking them to the mountain and being transfigured before them. He explained to them in plain language that it was for the sake of their sins that He was to suffer, be killed and rise again. Peter even took Him aside and rebuked Him. Then after six days, the Lord took him on to a

high mountain, and these words came, "Hear ye Him!" Hear His voice daily, hear it fully, and then you will know the full meaning of His suffering, death, burial, resurrection and glory. So listen to His Voice as you begin the day. Wait patiently and quietly and say, "Lord speak to me morning, noon, and night. Speak to me from thine own Word". Wait till He says, "Yes, my son, I am well pleased; go".

June 23

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it..." (Isaiah 30:21).

This verse surely refers to the Voice of God. Our constant prayer should be that we may learn to hear that Voice plainly and clearly, for it is only by hearing His Voice that all our questions can be answered and all our problems solved day by day. It requires faith and patience to hear the Voice of God. God does speak, though very few believers enjoy the privileges of hearing His Voice daily and clearly. In Psalm 29 it is plain that God's power is fully manifested when His Voice comes to use (vs. 4-5). The Voice of God breaks the cedars (v.7). The Voice of God divides the flames of the fire (v.8). It shakes the wilderness. These words are repeated to show the great power of God that is available for your life and mine.

We have already seen how this lesson was taught to Elijah the prophet. In 1 Kings 19:12, he heard the still small Voice of God. In 1 Kings 18:38-46 he had seen God's great power. Yet here in v.4 he is almost saying that he does not want to live any more. All of us feel discouraged, depressed and downcast at some time or the other. All of us find our burdens too heavy for us at times and we all come to the juniper tree some time or the other. But when Elijah heard the still small voice in 1 Kings 19:12, his burden lifted. His desire to die left him and all his questions about God disappeared. He learned a new secret. He learned that God's ways are not man's ways. Once you learn that secret, then whatever may be your burden or problem, you will come out victorious. We must learn the secret of hearing God, and of knowing His ways.

June 24

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14:21).

How can these experiences of hearing God's voice become our experience also? Paul, the Apostle, learned this lesson at the very time of his conversion. The first step was that Saul became Paul. If he wanted to hear further from God he must obey. He was told to go into the city of Damascus where it would be told him what he should do. You must obey whatever God has shown you. I tell you again that unless you are born again you cannot hear the Voice of God. Those who have received the gift of eternal life must have heard His Voice sometime, somewhere. Have you obeyed that Voice, or did you argue with God?

God does not tell us too much at the beginning. He just says very small sentences. But as we obey Him step by step He will tell us many things. Do not wait for a long message when God speaks. Just obey as much as He tells you. When Saul obeyed the Voice and came to Damascus, unknown to him God had prepared another servant to go to him. Ananias came to Saul and began to talk to him, (Acts chapter 22 verse 12). It seemed to be the voice of Ananias that was talking to Saul, but in reality it was the Voice of God, and he believed it. "My sins are gone", he could say. "My Lord whom I persecuted has chosen me, received me and accepted me. Not only has He forgiven me but He has made me His witness. He wants me to see His glory and hear His voice daily."

June 25

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (John 5:24).

The Lord does speak to all of us, as He knows best. So if you feel restless in the meeting, even before the preacher points his finger at you, say in prayer, "Lord, is this Your voice or man's voice? If it is Thy voice I accept and humble myself. Have mercy on me". You will find that many a time the Lord will use somebody else to speak to you, so do not expect Him always to speak to you directly.

The Voice of God came to Paul when he was discouraged and the attack of the enemy was very strong, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace. I am with thee and no man shall hurt thee; I have much people in the city." It is only as we become His mouthpieces and witnesses that we hear His Voice at different times.

Even if your friends were to mock at you, you can truthfully say, "One thing I know, I was a sinner, but the Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven my sins. This happened for the first time in a certain place on a certain day. One thing I know, I have found peace." Even though they may not accept what you say, go on testifying peacefully and joyfully. Then one day when you are surrounded by the enemy and are feeling lonely, there may come to you the voice of God: "Be not afraid, I am with thee; fear not, for I am with thee. Go on speaking in My name." It is such a testimony that will qualify us to hear the Voice of God.

June 26

"We would see Jesus" (John 12:21).

It is only as you are in the will of God that you can hear the Voice of God speak to you again and again. The Voice of God comes as confirmation. Do you want to hear the Voice of God clearly? Then learn to find and do God's will everyday even in smallest matter. If anybody will ask me: "What is your highest privilege as a Christian?" I would reply that knowing and doing God's will is my highest privilege. Those who know God's will and are doing it, find it through God's word, His messengers or other circumstances.

The Greeks in John 12:21, came from far and desired to see our Lord Jesus Christ. These men came with all sincerity to see Jesus. Our Lord told them, "You want to see me for only a few minutes. But it is possible for you to see Me forever and hear Me always. If you can see your death in Mine and live your life in My resurrection life, then you will really see Me daily and hear My Voice."

Our Lord prayed in John 13:28, "Father, glorify Thy Son, then many shall see Me in Thy full glory and become like Me". Then came the Voice. It is only as we glorify His name through our deeds that we hear His Voice. Pray by faith. "Lord keep me where I can glorify Thy name. I do not seek or desire anything else". Then I assure you, you will hear the Voice of God. There will come a Voice from heaven to tell you what to do. God does speak, but you have to fulfill His conditions before you can hear His Voice.

June 27

"When Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him (God), then he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the Mercy seat" (Num. 7:89).

Do we believe with all our hearts that by learning that secret of hearing and discerning the Voice of God, we can have all our questions answered, and all our problems solved?

We read in Num. 7:89 that the Voice of God came only when the work of the tabernacle was finished by Moses and had been carried out according to the pattern shown to Moses by the Lord on the mount. In Exodus 40:34 we read that God's Glory filled the tabernacle, and His voice began to be heard from between the cherubim in the most Holy Place. When any man wanted to find the will of God, he had to come to the High priest, and the High priest had to hear the Voice of God speaking from the most Holy Place. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is our everlasting heavenly High Priest, and those who accept Him as their personal Saviour are indwelt by Him. Their bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit.

There is no need now for anyone to go to an earthly High Priest. Man can speak to God Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and get an answer and hear the Voice of God daily. But one thing is necessary. All those among us who desire to hear the Voice of God, must be sure that they are indwelt by the Spirit of God. God is Holy and before He can come into us, He has first of all to cleanse us by the precious Blood of Christ. It is only sin that will prevent us from feeling His presence, but sin can be forgiven again and again, and cleansed by His precious blood.

June 28

"Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

When our Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit came down as a dove and the Voice from heaven was heard. He came into this world that heaven might be opened for us and the Holy Spirit might rest upon us, to guide us in all things and to enable us to hear the Voice of God everyday. God is a Spirit, and His Voice is also spiritual. Our Spirit can register the Voice of God clearly day by day, but to hear that Voice we have to be sure our spirit is purified (Matt. 5:8; Acts 10:14).

We have seen how the Lord chose to speak through different witnesses. In Acts 8, God's witness was called Philip. The Lord used him mightily in a place called Samaria. Then suddenly came God's command: "Arise and go south". He obeyed God straightaway. He could have said in his heart: "The work I am doing is such a great work, and it is God's work. All these new believers have to be strengthened and built up in the Lord. How can I leave such an important work and go to a lonely desert?"

God never explained to him why he should leave Samaria and go into the desert. As we have seen already God never tells us too much at one time. He does not give big programme to begin with. God told Philip: "Arise and go to Gaza," without giving him the reasons for the need for him to go there. Yet as he obeyed he found the reason.

June 29

"The Holy Ghost will teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12:12).

Philip could have thought, 'It looks as if I am running like a thief after this chariot!' but he never questioned God. In Acts 8:30, Philip ran to the chariot and heard the man reading from the 53rd chapter of Isaiah.

It was a wonderful prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ. This prophecy was made in detail 750 years before the time of Christ. When he heard the Ethiopian reading the passage he knew why God had asked him to go on the road to Gaza. Straightway his spirit received the divine message and by the Holy Spirit, he put the question to the Ethiopian, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" In this silent way the Lord puts His thoughts and words into us, and often we find that when we begin to speak, words flow like a stream. To his question, the Ethiopian answered, "How can I, unless some man guide me?" (Acts 8:31). He allowed Philip to get into the chariot and sit with him.

Then Philip explained the passage so clearly that he convinced him of the meaning and of the death of Jesus Christ for the sake of sinners. You find that as you obey God's Word that He will put His words into your mouth, according to His promise in Mathew 10:20; Luke 12:12; 21:15. Not only will you hear the Voice of God leading you and guiding you step by step, but you will also find the Holy Spirit touching your lips, and putting His own words needed for the person you meet.

June 30

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isaiah 33:17).

Through these words the Lord told me to get ready to go to a far-off country. So straight away I applied for a passport. I believed that God had spoken to me to get ready even though I had no invitation from anybody. Normally it takes a month to get a passport. I saw God working and moving on my behalf and got it within a week.

In my quiet time I got the words, from Eze. 8:1 "In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month". These words came to me very forcibly in my quiet time. Again I prayed, "What is the meaning of these words to me?" The Lord told me, "I want you to be in London on 5th June 1946". So I went to Bombay and saw the ship's company. I asked them "Is there any ship which arrives in London on 5th June?" They replied, "Yes, there is, Sir, but there is no vacancy on it". I went twice and asked, "Has anyone cancelled their passage?" They answered, "No, Sir". But another ship will be leaving next week and we can give you a passage on it". God had told me definitely that I was to be London on the 5th of June, and it was not certain that the next ship would reach there on that date. Anyhow I booked my passage on the second ship and we arrived in London on the 5th of June but the first ship got in four days after we did, as their engine was out of order. The second ship was a fast ship, and as I obeyed, I got in at the right time.

7. The Secrets of a mountain-top Experience JULY

July 1

"I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth" (Isaiah 58:14).

As we study the Word of God we see how the Lord has used mountains throughout the Scriptures to reveal Himself to men. God brought Abraham to the top of Mount Moriah to test his faith. Moses was taken to the mountain top to give him the pattern of the tabernacle. Elijah was taken to the mountain top to help him to hear the still small voice of God. Our Lord Himself was transfigured on the mountain before His disciples, so that they might see His full glory.

The best honey like Kashmir honey, is obtained from high rocks. Oil from the flinty rocks is the best. The oil spoken of here is not petrol, but the oil needed for cooking, and the passage is a tribute to the fertility of even the mountains of the promised land. In the same way the best sheep are found on high mountains (v.14). The best calves are found on the high mountains of Switzerland, and the best milk and butter are from Switzerland.

Isaiah, the prophet gives us details of the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Isaiah is a description of salvation at different angles. We need to go from peak to peak as we read the Word of God. As we read chapters 24 to 66 of Isaiah, that is 40 chapters, we have a description of the great mountain peaks of salvation, and if we are made to jump from mountain peak to peak or from one chapter to another in these 40 chapters, then we are made to rise upon high places and see what a great and glorious salvation we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

July 2

"O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth" (Isaiah 24:1-3; 25:1).

FIRST PEAK

Judgment is surely coming upon the earth, and to save us from that wrath to come, and the coming judgment, the Lord Jesus Christ took the punishment upon Himself. He gave His own feet to be pierced, His face to be spat upon and His body to be broken. Even though we speak about the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ again and again, we can never fully realize *how much He suffered, and what a high price He had to pay*, to redeem us and to forgive us. That is the first great mountain peak.

SECOND PEAK

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 25:8).

Only a true believer can say: "Oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory?" With perfect peace He can face death. When our loved ones are taken away there comes the thought again and again, that we shall meet them again, never to part, in glorified immortal bodies.

The strongest man in the whole world cannot be delivered from the fear of death. But the believer knows by experience that this is only a temporary separation, and that we shall meet again. The Lord Jesus Christ has given us *complete victory over death*, and now we can say, "Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

July 3

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

THIRD PEAK

This is the mountain peak of inward peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." As long as you do God's will and try to do what He tells you, then nothing on this earth can keep you away from that peace, neither sickness, nor suffering, nor hardship. Even the enemy cannot take this peace away. It is perfect peace (Isa. 26:3). This peace is only the portion of those who know the Lord Jesus Christ by experience. It is peace like a river. As in a river water increases, so this peace increases day by day.

FOURTH PEAK

"I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27:3).

This mountain peak is *the inward assurance that my Lord will look after me*. God's promise is: "I will keep it." Let there be earthquake, famine, many persecutions or wars, the Lord will protect. The Lord Himself says, "I the Lord will keep it and water it every moment." i.e. He will keep us fresh and green and fruitful because of His grace and love.

FIFTH PEAK

"This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." (Isa. 28:29).

All of us are in need of advice sometimes. We have to make many decisions, regarding many plans and in many matters. At such a time we want the advice of some man of experience and go to him for advice; but for believers *the Lord Jesus Christ is their Counsellor*. The Lord Jesus is our Advisor. For all our personal problems, future problems, marriage problems, or any other problems, we have only to go and consult Him, and the advice He will give is the very best advice.

July 4

"They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine" (Isaiah 29:24).

SIXTH PEAK

Even though you may be extremely learned in worldly things, yet according to Matt. 13:17, you can be taught many deep heavenly mysteries. As you wait upon Him and call upon Him by faith saying: "Lord, teach me Thy ways", *He will lead you into all truth.*

SEVENTH PEAK

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21).

This is a great mountain peak which we need to climb day by day, and step by step listening to hear the voice of God behind us saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." We can easily take a wrong step, but by this means the Lord saves us from many dangers unknown to us. So long as we keep our ears attentive, and keep saying: "Lord teach me the right path", *He will direct us.* Thus we are made to ride on high places, and to go on jumping from peak to peak, in our enjoyment of this great salvation.

EIGHT PEAK

"As the birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it" (Isa. 31:5).

The Lord will protect us from unseen danger. I met a friend in Holland who told me he was driving his car after dark one night and he suddenly saw another car coming forward. To save that man from accident, he turned his car round, and doing so it hit against a tree. The whole car was smashed but he was thrown out without any injury. We are continually being protected from many seen and unseen distresses and dangers around.

July 5

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).

NINTH PEAK

The Lord says, 'After I have saved you, *I will be your hiding place.*' What a privilege! Many in danger will come to you and seek your help and will say: 'Please pray for me'. Many in calamity and sorrow will come to you, and it is your privilege to be a source of comfort and strength to all those who are in great need. When you are saved by His grace He becomes your shelter, and makes you a shelter to others.

TENTH PEAK

"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isaiah 33:17).

Our hope is that *we will see our Lord in His glory*, that our eyes shall see the King of glory. Our Lord Jesus Christ is called 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' in three places. When He comes the second time, with His mighty angels and with His saints, then we shall see His full glory.

ELEVENTH PEAK

"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isaiah 34:4).

We are reminded here *how the Lord has made us His possession*. The sun, moon and stars are His, but He has not made them His portion. Before God however we are very precious. By receiving the Lord Jesus Christ we can say truthfully, joyfully and boldly, we shall live forever with glorified, immortal bodies in heavenly kingdom which will not pass away. This is another peak of salvation. We are being prepared now for that new creation, for something which is eternal and which will not pass away.

July 6

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing" (Isaiah 35:1-2).

TWELFTH PEAK

God says "the wilderness and the desert... shall blossom as the rose". Before we came to the Lord Jesus Christ we were like a desert with not the least hope of bringing forth fruit. There are no flowers in a desert, not even ordinary flowers. The Lord is saying here that even though you have become so barren and worthless, yet I will make you to blossom one day like a rose garden. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our Gardener as we have seen in Isaiah 27:3, God says: "With my own hands I will water you and will look after you."

Roses require watering at least three times a day, but the Lord says of His own: "I will water it every moment." Not only three times a day, but every moment. The Lord knows our private life, and how much we have grieved Him, by thought and word and deed. But by the precious blood we can be cleansed as we go to Him again and again. In heaven none of these things will be remembered, but God's glory alone. Even now weak believers can be strengthened by being filled with the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 35:4 is our only hope as we keep ourselves ready for His coming. It is only the life of Lord Jesus Christ, the living Person who rose again, and whom we have received as our Saviour, that can make us holy. He is our holiness.

July 7

"But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not" (Isaiah 36:21).

THIRTEETH PEAK

The enemy comes up against us also like a threatening flood. We think there is no hope of any victory and we fall. But King Hezekiah said: "*Don't speak a word*" (ch. 36:21). Our king

says: "Answer him not". That is our weapon! We do not need worldly weapons to defeat the enemy. Many are deceived by trying to defeat the devil with worldly weapons (2 Cor. 10:4). Instead, very quietly wait upon the Lord and get the answer.

The Lord is telling us here: "Do not use worldly weapons to conquer the devil. It is only by hearing the voice of God, going upon your knees, that He will tell you what to do, and you will be able to defeat the enemy day by day." No matter how the enemy may rise up against you, pray with faith and say: "Lord! I am depending upon your Strength and victory. Now tell me; Lord, how to use my weapons." Somehow God will give you Scripture verses to encourage you and strengthen you, and it is a wonderful thing how the devil can be defeated by a few verses.

You will find when you go through serious temptation that either a small verse comes to your memory, or while you are reading the Bible, He speaks. Take heed, for the devil can deceive you into using worldly weapons. Maintain your peace, for it is peace only that can defeat the devil (Rom. 16:20). Inward peace is given by hearing the voice of God, and we will be able to defeat the devil when he comes upon us either like a flood, or as a roaring lion, or as an angel of light.

July 8

"And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord" (Isaiah 37:14).

FOURTEENTH PEAK

Here the King of Assyria is seen threatening and warning God's people. At the same time he sent a letter to Hezekiah. After reading it, Hezekiah went up into the temple (v. 17). He and his people were in extreme difficulty, *but they knew that God would answer*. Even though humanly speaking there was no hope of deliverance because the Assyrian king had come with a very strong army to threaten them with defeat as he had defeated other nations, Hezekiah was confident in the Lord, and went to the temple and the Lord answered and delivered him.

Hezekiah prayed, and though he did not know what was going to happen, God knew, see Isa. 37:36. In the morning the great Assyrian army were all dead bodies. From this we learn that when the enemy attacks us in different ways we have a weapon, and that is, *to go upon our knees*. If only we knew how to use our knees sufficiently, we would find heaven opened, and the storms that come up against us from the enemy would be confounded.

FIFTEENTH PEAK

"Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord" (Isaiah 38:2).

I know of many occasions when the Lord came with His healing touch. He has His own power, but we have to call upon Him with simple faith as Hezekiah called upon Him and the Lord hearkened to his voice. *When we call upon Him with child-like faith, He answers*. Every experience which we pass through gives us a stronger faith. God can teach us when we take hold of Him.

July 9

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11).

SIXTEENTH PEAK

The shepherd will stay with his flock night and day. At the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ at Bethlehem many shepherds were watching their flocks outside at night, when the angel appeared to them. The Lord Jesus Christ says: "I will be like a shepherd watching over you day and night." Every morning the shepherd takes his sheep out to different pastures. The sheep will not eat dirty or dry tough grass. It wants tender, green grass (Psa. 23).

Again the sheep requires clean water. They will not drink dirty water like pigs do. The Lord Jesus Christ knows exactly what kind of food we need to satisfy our hunger and thirst, His words are our pasture. Every morning He gives us His Word, at midday and in the evening. In the morning we are given the heavenly plan for the day. In the afternoon we are given strength for the remaining part of the day. In the evening we are searched by God before we go to bed. Thus we get refreshed every day and are protected from every danger seen and unseen. He is our loving and faithful Shepherd, and is with us all the time. Sheep have the gift of recognizing the voice of the shepherd. Even though they are so stupid in many ways, yet they can recognise the voice of their own master.

The Lord Jesus Christ says "they will not follow strangers," because their ears are sensitive to the voice of their own masters. It is the privilege of a believer to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ and follow Him. Wherever He goes we should follow without question. One of the high mountain peaks is to *hear the Voice of the shepherd every day and follow Him*; fully trusting Him.

July 10

"Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish" (Isaiah 41:11).

SEVENTEENTH PEAK

As human beings, we are full of fears and have to face many hard obstacles in our Christian path. Every fear or difficulty appears like a mountain, whether we receive it as a temptation, a trial or a suffering, but the promise is in v.16. "Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away." *Every obstacle, however hard, can be fully overcome by the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.* Weak believers become mighty, by claiming God's promises they go on conquering every obstacle in their life.

The disciples were threatened by the High Priest and high powers, but as they prayed, the place was shaken (Acts 4:31-33). They were few in number, but as they depended upon God to help them, and prayed, that prayer shook the whole world. All the beauty and the glory of Jesus can be seen in a believer who is prepared to be possessed by God.

Isa. 42:16. Now the blind cannot find their way, but here the Lord is saying, to those who are blind spiritually, "I will lead you by a way that you do not know. Let me lead you and you will find your way. It is wonderful experience to be able to hold God's hand and walk safely everywhere. In life there are many experiences in which God shows you the way in a wonderful way. In your life there may be many hard situations and you feel puzzled. You don't know what to decide. Call upon the Lord and say: "Lord, you promised to lead me and show

me the way”, and suddenly you will find light shining on your path. By simple faith take hold of Him.

July 11

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

EIGHTEENTH PEAK

When we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour He has a double claim upon us. First the Lord is our Creator, and secondly our Saviour. He *undertakes to protect us from every harm and danger*, though we may have to go through many hardships, sufferings, temptations and difficulties, for, without exception, everyone of us must go through some hardships, trials and sufferings of some kind. When Israel came out of Egypt they had to go through the Red Sea, Exodus 14:6 to 29, tell us how the Lord brought them safely through. One day you will see the enemy swallowed up by the power of God Himself.

Even though enemies come up against us to deceive us spiritually, they will not succeed in doing any harm. They may do some harm materially sometimes, but they cannot succeed in doing spiritual harm to believers. The Lord Jesus Christ paid a very high price to redeem us. In Matt. 13:44-46, to buy us as His treasure He sold all that He had. We are bound to make mistakes because of our poor wisdom, but the Lord is saying to us, "Unto me you are very precious", and He will make every possible provision to help us to overcome our follies.

It is wonderful how He sends us messengers from many parts of the World. In the same way, people are now praying for us in many parts of the world. We are being upheld by prayer by God's people everywhere, and thus protected from many dangers, because we are precious to Him.

July 12

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses" (Isaiah 44:3-4).

NINETEENTH PEAK

The Lord is saying in vs. 3 and 4, that like a flood He wants to give us Holy Spirit. This is God's desire to make our lives abundantly fruitful. We have seen how thieves and murderers after being born again become mighty men of God. Through simple faith, rivers of living waters can flow through us to others, and through our transformed lives many may be blessed. That is how the Lord is pouring out His Spirit even today, in many parts of the world. Through a simple man, He can do great things (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

In North India, in a small village there was a poor illiterate man, who heard the gospel, and was born again. The village people all hated him and took away his things and did not allow him to take water from their well. He had to go a neighboring village and drink dirty water. But he began to pray for them, and one by one, the villagers came to him, and asked him to pray for them in their troubles. They knew that he was a man of God and asked his

forgiveness, requesting him to come back to their village. God can change the foolish, illiterate and despised and fill them with His Spirit, that through their ministry many lives be changed.

July 13

"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel" (Isaiah 45:2-3).

TWENTIETH PEAK

God promises to go before us, when He commands us to go anywhere in His name, He says, "I will go before thee and make the crooked paths straight." In many cases, our Mighty God has broken many barriers before His servants. Today the Gospel is taken to people speaking 1,055 languages. As God's servants obey God's word the mountains before them roll away. When they obey Him, the mountains flow, the gates of brass are broken and the bars of iron are cut asunder. God has opened many other strong doors before His servants in many parts of the world. It is only by faith that we can see mountains melt away before us. See for example Gen. 22:17. Abraham's faith in God was tested. In obedience to God he offered his only son on Mount Moriah. He was about to slay his son, when God spoke to him, v.12. "Abraham turned around and he saw a ram caught in a thicket," and the Lord asked him to offer that ram instead of his son.

God was thou saying, "Now Abraham you have fully obeyed me. You have not withheld your son from me. Now I am bound to you; just as the ram, I am bound to you. *Now you command me and I will obey you. Ask me of thing to come.*" If you obey Him whole heartedly, without questioning or murmuring or doubting, you can command God and your prayer will be fully answered. In John 14:13,14, Jesus said: "If ye ask anything in my name I will do it." We can command Him for anything. That is a mystery! We have a right to command God, but we must first learn to offer what He wants wholeheartedly.

July 14

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4).

TWENTY-FIRST PEAK

Here is another mountain peak of salvation by which our Lord is assuring us very strongly, through the prophet Isaiah, that *throughout our life-time He will carry us through*. We as human beings are full of fears. Even though we have enjoyed God's goodness in abundance for many years, and have seen Him working on our behalf mightily on many occasions, and have seen answers to our prayers, yet we find we are full of fears and keep saying: "What about this, and what about that?" "What about tomorrow, or next month, or next year?" Our minds are full of fear and anxiety and we are always worrying about the future, about our health, about our old age, about our children or something even less important. But one verse is sufficient to take away worry and anxiety of every kind. They are not the words of man but the words of the living and loving God saying to us who have become His heavenly possession: "Even to old age I will carry you." In other words "I am responsible till you die."

He says He will deliver us from seven troubles (Job 5:19). The number 7 in scripture stands for completion, which means that whatever our troubles or trials or sufferings or afflictions may be, He will deliver us. When the Lord's people thank God for their food, they find that even the poorest kind of food becomes tasty. When the Lord Jesus Christ fed the multitude, He did not feed them with rich food but our Lord Jesus Christ used barley loaves. This is the poor man's food. The Lord Jesus Christ chose barley bread and multiplied it and when He blessed it, it became so tasty. We have found this truth by experience.

July 15

"Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10).

TWENTY-SECOND PEAK

This verse is not a very happy one to begin with, for nobody likes to go through affliction. *The Lord says: "I will refine thee" because He wants us to be holy, as He is holy.* The highest aim of God is to make us partakers of His own holiness. That is why we have to go through many refining fires. Gold can only be refined by fire. What is more, the fire must be beneath and above. In the same way, silk, pearls and diamonds, have all to go through much pressure and suffering to make them what they are. When God chooses us, He sets us a very high standards because He wants us to be holy and without spot, or blemish of any kind. He wants us to be far more glorious than even the angels, so He takes us through a furnace of affliction.

Such is God's way of preparing us for our high vocation. God uses different ways and different times to refine each of us, but all of us must be refined in God's way only, and only thus can attain to God's standard of holiness. It was through afflictions that Paul became a mighty vessel. I don't think God used anybody as He used this man of God. The Lord accomplished a very deep work in Paul and it was through all those refining fires, that the Lord refined him and taught him many deep truths. First the Lord took him to a desert, and then through refining fires, and through these things He was able to pour into him divine revelations and mysteries.

July 16

"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49:2-3).

TWENTY-THIRD PEAK

The Lord hath called you and me from our mother's womb and we are chosen by Him. Isaiah 49:1, Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15. It does not matter whether we are born into a rich or poor family. As children of God, we are chosen before we are born. *Any plan of His is a perfect plan; God wants us to be His servants,* and these words are not meant only for preachers but for every believer. Every man or woman should be God's servant, because we have been chosen to do something for Him.

Every one of us can be used in giving God's word, if we believe that God can use us as His mouth-piece to help someone in difficulty, to encourage them, or to save them. We may use the Word in prayer if we cannot say anything of ourselves. You can be used among your

friends by passing on a few words from the Bible which will benefit somebody in sorrow, tears and distress. Tell the Lord to give you a message for somebody and ask Him to use you as His mouth-piece. The words of a believer, in the hands of God, are like polish shafts, striking home to the mark. Our words must be like that, and let us not use idle words. When we go here and there, we must pass on God's words as a testimony. Whenever we go into His presence, let us say: "I am thy servant, Lord teach me, so that I may be used to pray or to witness for Thee, and to help others by encouraging and strengthening them."

July 17

"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" (Isaiah 50:4).

TWENTY-FOURTH PEAK

It is possible that, however foolish we are, we can have the tongue of the learned? When you pray say this, "Lord, give me the tongue of the learned" and He will do so. Say to Him "Lord, give me a message for somebody", Matt. 10:20; Luke 12:12; Acts 6:10. By faith claim these promises and He will give you the right word for your friends or enemies. Isaiah 50:4 "He awakens me morning after morning," -- without the alarm, the Lord wakes us up. Say to Him, "Lord, wake me up at 5 o'clock and give me a message for the day". You will be surprised how the Lord wakes us up and prepares us for the whole day. That is our privilege. You can tell Him: "Lord, I have no alarm to get up early in the morning, and thus find time to prepare me for the day". All of us can and should *speaking to Him early in the morning, and enjoy His presence and that will keep us fresh for the whole day*. Many people do not attend early morning prayer. They waste their time. Go upon your knees early in the morning, and get the Lord's message and say, "Lord, teach me and speak to me, and give Thy word for my enemies, friends, teachers and co-workers." That is how we enjoy our salvation and become more useful to God.

July 18

"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit, whence ye are digged. For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isaiah 51:1,3).

TWENTY-FIFTH PEAK

The Lord Jesus is that Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4). When we repent of our sins and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, *we become partakers of His very nature* (2 Peter 1:4). By nature we were sinners, and God could not see in us any goodness as Paul testifies in Romans 7:18. There is "no good thing" in our nature as human beings, and in the eyes of God there is also nothing good in us spiritually. There is nothing in our life which God can accept for His use.

But the moment we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and believe that He died in our Stead, and rose again for our justification, His very life is poured into us and we are made partakers of His nature. The prophet tells us: 'Let us not look at ourselves, but at the Rock

whence we have been hewn, because He himself has become our righteousness'. All the virtues of Lord Jesus Christ and His qualifications are poured into us day by day as we keep on looking unto Jesus. He is our example and our life.

If you want to be humble, say to Him, "Lord make me meek and lowly like yourself". If you want to love your enemies, say to Him, "Lord give me the same love with which you loved your enemies, when you said, Forgive them, they know not what they do." We can ask Him to give us His love, long-suffering, patience, and joy. Then one day, we shall be like Him. With that life, we will be given immortal, glorified bodies (1 John 3:2). "Oh Lord, give me a greater measure of Thy life to overcome my failures and shortcomings." In that way we shall become overcomers.

July 19

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7).

TWENTY-SIXTH PEAK

What a privilege it is to have beautiful feet! Of all the members of the body, our feet are the least beautiful. But we can get beautiful feet, as we convey the message of salvation to our friends and neighbours. *Every believer should be a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.* We need not be trained as a speaker or a teacher to give the Word. A few words to somebody by His help can bring salvation. It is indeed an honour to convey the good news to many people and in many places, and the Lord often uses foolish and weak vessels to convey His message and to save souls.

Do you have beautiful feet? Then ask the Lord to give them to you. We can give the message of the living and true God to all those who are round about us, who are going through trials, sufferings, and hardship. Nobody can wipe the tears of those who are going through suffering, but we can go to them and say, "Trust in the Lord Jesus. He wipe your tears. He will heal you if you are sick. He will give you all you want and protect you". Thus you find many have become the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can give the message of the living God, to all people with all power for all their need. It does not need much knowledge and wisdom to do that. What about you? Have you ugly or beautiful feet? Are you ashamed of your feet? God says, that ugly feet can become beautiful by giving the word of salvation to others.

July 20

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4,5).

TWENTY-SEVENTH PEAK

The prophet Isaiah prophesied in detail how the Lord Jesus Christ would bear our judgment and sin (v. 4). He bore the grief caused by our sinful thoughts, words and deeds. He had to pay the full price. Because of our sinful thoughts our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for our sakes.

He took it upon Himself to suffer for our thoughts, words and deeds, because we commit sin in the threefold area of thought, word and deed. The Lord Jesus Christ has borne the punishment for our three-fold sin.

For our sinful thoughts He was spat upon; for our sinful words, He was reviled; and for our sinful deeds, His hands and His feet were nailed, and His side pierced and His body scourged. He bore this for our sake, that we might be absolutely righteous and just before God. This gives us liberty and boldness in God's presence, and takes away the memory of our past sins. The devil tries to make us remember past sin, but we can say: "Lord, the devil is reminding me of my sin, but Lord, for my sake, you have been scourged, pierced and spat upon and have removed my condemnation, and made me righteous in your righteousness." *This gives us perfect liberty and boldness to go into His presence and encouragement to get up again and again when we fall* (Psa. 37:24; Mich. 7:8; 2 Cor. 4:9).

It does not matter how shameful and humbling our sin may be, we can claim the atoning Blood for washing and cleansing by simple faith, and enjoy full liberty in God's presence.

July 21

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17).

TWENTY-EIGHTH PEAK

What a precious promise we have in this passage of God's Word and what a wonderful peak of salvation. How many of us suffered and are unhappy because of somebody standing against us. Sometimes the weapons are from our own family, our own mother, brother, sister or neighbour. They try to bring many things against us.

Others will speak ill and do damage against those who want to grow spiritually and obey God's Word but we have a promise in Isa. 54:17. It does not matter what kind of weapon enemy uses, whether letters, false stories, scandals (which are a special ministry with some people, and a pleasure to them), God in His Word says: "No weapon that is formed against you, shall prosper". Yes, even the tongue weapon—it will be condemned. This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord, those who have become righteous in the sight of God. Keep on saying, "I believe in Isa. 54:17." Say it by faith, for this is God's treatment for you; He is the living God and whatsoever He says He will do, Num. 11:23; 23:19. *There is no need for us to defend ourselves, but only to believe in the promise of Isa. 54:17.*

We fully believe the wonderful promise in Isa. 54:17. As long as we are in Him, He will defend us. God will keep us. *He will not allow any weapon of any kind to prosper against us provided we go on praising and trusting Him and claiming His promises.*

July 22

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 55:11-13).

TWENTY-NINTH PEAK

"My word shall not return unto me void" (v.11). *Whatever God has spoken to any of us, will one day be fulfilled.* If you have received the word of God by faith, though it may take many years for its fulfillment, yet a day will come when it will bring forth fruit.

"For ye shall go out with joy" (v.12). When we receive the Word of God by faith we not only rejoice ourselves but we are able to share that joy with others. We go out with joy because of the word we have received. We take the same word to those who are rejected or discouraged and say to them. "When I was discouraged the Lord spoke to me through these few words and I have been strengthened and encouraged". Thus wherever we go we will be spreading the joy and happiness which God has given us, and more souls will be brought to the Lord.

According to the Lord's promise the Jews recently began to return to Palestine, from ninety different countries. In the second world war Hitler killed more than 6,000,000 Jews in Germany. In Palestine today thousands of trees are being planted in memory of the six million Jews that were killed. Thus the promises of God have been literally fulfilled, v.13. Palestine was barren and the land was full of thorn bushes and briars, but the Jews who returned to Palestine from the scattered countries have already planted 4,000,000 trees beside myrtle trees and fig trees. Spiritually we too are full of thorns and briars in our thoughts, words and deeds. But here God promises that all these can be taken away and replaced by the graces and virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ, that one day we may be like Him.

July 23

"Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from among His people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant: Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:3-5).

THIRTIETH PEAK

All classes of people with any handicaps are welcomed into the house of God. We read in (v.3) that even eunuchs can enter into God's house. In the olden days they were not even allowed into the Jewish temple. But God says in this passage that everybody *will be there* (vs.3, 5-7), all with no *exception, will be welcomed into the house of God.* They can have the same privilege of sins forgiven and can become members in the house of God.

We read about Onesimus who became so useful to Paul (Philemon vs. 10 and 13). Evidently, Onesimus robbed a large amount of money, or something very valuable, because he left their home with his loot, for Rome. When Onesimus had spent all the money he had robbed from his master he thought of Paul the apostle. Through many hardships and troubles, he was born again like many people, who, when they are in trouble and difficulties, go to the Lord. Paul wanted someone to take an epistle or letter to Philemon. Paul had a purpose in sending

Onesimus to Philemon first of all to apologise to Philemon for robbing him. Also he wanted Onesimus to be received as Philemon would receive Paul. In the house of God many can be changed like Onesimus from living a life of sin and shame, to a deep understanding of God's will and purpose. Throughout the world, God has chosen men, despised, murderers, and thieves who in the end become great men of God. God can pick up such human beings and transform them into saints of God.

July 24

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth the eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and the holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15).

THIRTY-FIRST PEAK

Men of all classes through many hardships and sufferings have tried to find God, but could not, for it not by knowledge, ritual or ceremony that one can find God. Many nuns and monks have spent all their lifetime in lonely places. They even slept on the floor, and ate ordinary food in order to find God, but were disappointed. One cannot see God that way. Only those who are humble and have a contrite heart can see God or receive Him. God *dwells in a high and holy place and also with him who has a contrite and humble spirit. That is the secret. It does not require much knowledge, but true inward humble spirit.*

It is inward humility that is required of God. Note, what Paul says about himself in Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." That is true humility. In every circumstance such can say: "Lord, not my will but thine; not my desire but thine; not my way but thy way". Even for small things, they will pray like this. Humility comes by dying daily. Then you can say truthfully and honestly: "Not my way but your way; not my will but your will." For this we need to appropriate the power of Christ, for nobody of himself can die to himself. Paul was able to say "I am crucified with Christ," for he had learned to die daily (1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10, 12). This is how we can enjoy our salvation, as God has promised, "I will cause you to ride upon high places of the earth". Do not live a life of barrenness and defeat.

July 25

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

THIRTY-SECOND PEAK

This is very precious promise of our loving and living God. Though we fail and make many mistakes, when we look into His face for guidance for our problems and activities, He helps and guides us. When we seek to do things of our own we fail, but here is God's promise: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually" (Isa. 58:11). *He undertakes to guide us at every step* and even in the smallest thing, God's promise is to guide us continually, and to satisfy our soul in the drought. Even though there may be lack of food due to famine, God's people have no need to starve. He will bless every kind of food He gives you. Learn to be thankful for whatever is given to you. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden." A garden has to be watered everyday the whole year round, if it is to be always beautiful.

Believers can be gardens in the barren desert. You can give the Word to those who come to you and yourself remain fresh and healthy spiritually. God Himself waters us by His living Word, and through prayer and meditation thereon we learn how to comfort those around us. The same verse mentions "springs of water whose water fail not." Our spiritual life can become like a spring whose water never dries up. The secret is that we have to delight ourselves in the Lord. Thus the waste place can be built up and we can show other people what the living Church is.

July 26

"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever" (Isaiah 59:21).

THIRTY-THIRD PEAK

Whatever *the Lord hath given* to us is for eternity, and He will never take it away from us. He may rebuke us, chastise us and punish us when we fail Him, but He is not going to take away that which He gave us and He says: "I have given you my Spirit which is upon you."

How many times are you spoken to by the Spirit? Those who are truly born again, often begin to backslide due to worldly friendship, and attractions, and yet constantly, hear a voice saying "Come My daughter, and My son, come back to Me, come back to Me". That is how the Spirit strives with us. Remember this is God's promise. "My spirit will not depart from you". What you learn in your meeting or quiet time, that becomes your everlasting possession.

When we are given glorified bodies we shall be given perfect knowledge and when we see our Lord face to face then shall we know, even also we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). Because of that perfect knowledge we shall be able to understand what is going on in the whole heaven, but while upon the earth our knowledge remains imperfect.

In heaven we shall have perfect knowledge and shall know everybody by name. We shall know every part of heaven and wherever we want to walk in heaven we shall walk. There is no question of how to find the way. You will know the way and your knowledge will be perfect. What you are now learning on the earth through suffering and trial is a preparation for the ministry in heaven. Then our knowledge will be perfect.

July 27

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time" (Isaiah 60:22).

THIRTY-FOURTH PEAK

It does not matter how weak and poor we are physically or intellectually, we can become spiritually strong in heaven. God can use even foolish people. The Lord may chastise or rebuke us, but He can use us, however foolish we may be. *He does not always use great men, educated men, but often through even the foolish and the weak He does great things* (1 Cor. 1:31). It is through *the despised vessel that He turns the world up-side down.*

We had a meeting in certain place in North India many years ago. There was a boarding school for girls nearby and the girls were attending the meetings. But I told the lady in-charge that little girls cannot sit too long in meetings that go on for five hours, so the children were sent out. After the meeting Mrs. Lal said: "Give me a few minutes, I want to say a few words. I am the Head Mistress of the school, and I went around to the hostel for a few minutes to see whether things were all going on well. But to my surprise I saw all the small children from the age of 13 to 14 on their knees and praying with tears one by one: "Lord, forgive me; I am a great sinner". I asked them why they were weeping and they said: Because of sin. Sister Lal testified how she came to the meeting and said to the Lord: "Lord, I am a Head Mistress, and a graduate, and yet not born again. These small children are far better than I. I also want to be born again." And she was born again and testified in the meeting, and one by one her whole staff were also born again.

It began with the simple faith of children. That is God's promise. It is a wonderful mountain peak.

July 28

"But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isaiah 61:6).

THIRTY-FIFTH PEAK

Ye shall be named the Priests of God. Now a priest has a double privilege. The liberty to call upon God in any need; and then to convey God's message to the people. The priest could come into God's presence to find God's message for other people according to their need. *Now believers are the priests of God. Every believer has the right and privilege to enter into the presence of God at any time for any need.* We do not require another mediator for the Lord Jesus Christ is our Mediator. The liberty is given to us as God's priests. We can enter into the presence of God at all times (Heb. 10:10). We as priests of God have liberty and boldness to enter into His Holy Presence at any time, for any matter, and for any problem. Spiritually we, as priests of God, *have the privilege on behalf of those who are in sin.* First, we saved by God's grace and then we can pray for unconverted friends, whether father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife or children, and God will wonderfully change their lives.

Remember, somewhere, your mother or somebody is praying for you. I went to a meeting in Canada. I went on praying for a long time for I had no message. When I turned to my Bible I came across these words: "I am poor and needy". After the meeting I appealed. One man came to me and said, "I want to be born again this evening." After I had prayed for him, his sister came and said: "You don't know, but I have been praying for him for many years." Many ruined lives are changed by persistent prayer.

July 29

"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isaiah 62:5).

THIRTY-SIXTH PEAK

What a wonderful mountain peak of salvation. In our sinful condition we brought reproach and shame, and yet God says: "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord" (3.v).

A diadem shows authority. Our authority will be manifested thru us in heaven when we judge the angels.

Our Lord wants us to be like a bride and bridegroom. If they are joined together by the Lord, they must be entirely cast on the Lord and must learn to love each other under all circumstances and as they do so they develop a mutual likeness to each other. God is saying to us, "I will make you a crown in my hand". He wants us to be His crown, and fit into His heavenly plan.

The royal diadem is like a crown which is for beauty. Here the thought is that *the glory and beauty of Jesus which has not been seen by angels will be seen in that day. We are being fully prepared by the Lord Jesus for that glory.* We are also called the signet of the Lord Jesus (Hagg. 2:23). Just as a crown is worn by the King to show the greatness of the king, and the kingdom, so also do great princes have signet rings on their hand. God's authority is to be finally revealed to those who are now being saved by Him, and not by angels. We shall become His crown, His diadem and His signet; a crown to show His glory, a diadem His beauty, and a signet is His authority.

July 30

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9).

THIRTY-SEVENTH PEAK

"In all their afflictions He was afflicted". This is another high peak of salvation. *Whatever our afflictions, hardships, sorrow and sufferings are, our Lord suffers with us.* As believers if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him and He also shares and bears our burden. That is why He said: "You bear my yoke upon you", as in Matt. 11:29. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." Generally two bullocks are used to drag a cart, and the bull on the right hand side has to carry the weight, and bear the burden, which is a great strain. When a field is to be ploughed the bull that has to bear the weight and strain is put on the right side. Likewise with our Lord Jesus Christ, the weight of our burden is borne by Him, so we are yoked together to bear the yoke. Whenever we suffer the Lord suffers. Whenever you are sorrowful, He bears your sorrow. When you are weeping, He weeps. Whenever you are hungry, He is hungry. What a ministry! Our Lord says *"In all their affliction, He was afflicted"*. For the very same reason our Lord Jesus refused to take part in the heavenly feast unless we were with Him. (Matt. 26:29). Here the Lord says: "I will wait for you and I will suffer with you: do not think you are suffering alone". Because of this, while upon the earth we can bear any *suffering or trouble joyfully. His unseen angels protect us from many unseen attacks of the enemy.* This is wonderful peak of salvation.

July 31

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isaiah 64:4).

THIRTY-EIGHTH PEAK

Here is another peak of salvation. These "things prepared" include all those *heavenly mysteries which you can imagine are going to be revealed to you in due course, some upon earth and some in heaven*. Upon the earth the Lord is giving us some knowledge, but when we go to heaven we will be given perfect knowledge, to know many heavenly mysteries, when the work of God in us on earth is complete.

THIRTY-NINTH PEAK

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 65:25).

This speaks of the Millennium reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, when thorns and thistles, and poison will be removed. There will be no sickness and no sorrow. There will be no sign of the curse anywhere. We are being prepared now for that kingdom.

FORTIETH PEAK

"For thus saith the Lord, behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: ...and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies" (Isaiah 66:12-14).

Finally with the last mountain peak, our peace and joy will be completed. All our sufferings will be forgotten and we shall be given abundant reward for all past sufferings and hardship. Our peace shall be like a river and the glory of God will be flowing as a stream. Surely then, even upon the earth, we may ride upon heavenly places, for we are formed to be His everlasting possession, and all these glorious purposes will be fully accomplished as we accept and obey Him.

8. The Secrets of Victory

AUGUST

August 1

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be His God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7).

God is raising up a company of people called overcomers. They have to bear great trials, and painful burdens, but God is planning to bring them finally into great favor in His Kingdom and to give them much more than any man can expect or imagine. He wants us all to be overcomers. It is very clear that the promise in Rev. 21:7, to inherit all things is meant for those who overcome. God wants to give them not merely all things of the old creation, but all of the new creation.

Many people do not know what salvation really is, and they have no idea what God has planned for those who will get to heaven. What a great eternal, spiritual and glorious inheritance is being prepared in heaven for those who overcome. Besides this, even upon the earth, they will be the instruments God will use to defeat the devil and put him to shame. It is a great privilege and honor to be such instruments in the Lord's hand.

God has planned that we should be His partners and co-workers in fulfilling His eternal purposes. Some people ask why God did not punish Satan in the very day of his rebellion. If He had done so, there would have been no sin in this world. The answer is, God's love towards man is so great that He has planned from eternity to make man His partner and co-worker.

August 2

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

Now suppose you tell you baby son, that you want him to be the heir of all your property, would he be able to understand? No, he would not understand. A baby can receive and enjoy only a few things at a time, and how can he comprehend if you say you want to give him everything? He cannot grasp such a great thought. He does not know the value of even a naya paisa, how then can he understand the value of the whole inheritance? The child has to grow to maturity. In the same way unless you are spiritually mature you also will not be able to understand the God desires you to be His partner and co-worker in fulfilling His great, eternal purposes.

We see in the Book of Daniel How God chose a few young men, and through them put high authorities to shame, and at the same time upheld the law and justice which He had ordained. The people of Israel were continually rebelling against God's word. Finally God had to punish them by sending them away as captives into Babylon. At the same time His great purpose for His people remained unchanged. Although they were captives, they yet remained God's people. God still loved them. Nevertheless God could use only those who responded to His love. Very few there were who had a longing to follow God's word and keep His commandments. These were the remnant.

August 3

"In the light of the King's countenance is life" (Proverbs 16:15).

The king gave a command that all the intelligent and promising young men should be brought together (Dan. 1:3, 4). He knew that among these captives there were men of far greater intelligence than any of his own people. It is a well-known fact that God has given the Jews extraordinary intelligence and ability. The Jews have always been an outstandingly clever race. The king of Babylon wanted to train these Jewish young men to hold high positions in his kingdom, and to use them to bring greater prosperity to Babylon.

These very same young men were used to defeat the purposes of the people of Babylon and instead bring deliverance to the captive Jews. That is how God works. He defeats the devil by using his own devices. I will give you an illustration. The Pharisees and the Saducees were always finding fault with the Lord Jesus and His words. The very same traps which they laid for the Lord became their pitfall. Once these men brought before the Lord a woman caught in the very act of sin (John 8:4). According to the Law, she should be stoned. The Lord replied, "He that is without any sin among you let him first cast a stone at her". This is how the Lord confounded them again and again.

August 4

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Revelation 2:17).

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself (verse 8). This is the secret of leading a victorious life. We should refuse to allow any defilement in our life. Defilement will break our communion with God. We cannot overcome defilement by our own efforts. It can be done only by simple faith in the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Even though the enemy may try to defile us a thousand times a day, we can be constantly cleansed by the blood and saved from defilement. By faith we must say: "I refuse to be defiled. I want to be cleansed. O Lord, I want your blood to cover me and cleanse me." In this way we shall be able to conquer any temptation.

Daniel could not foresee all that was to happen in his own life, but he knew that God was preparing him for a great purpose. Remember that you too are being prepared by God for a great purpose, and determine in your heart not to be defiled. As people see our determination and notice the way God is blessing us, they also will take courage and stand for the Lord. We see also that Daniel was prepared to eat only pulse (v.12). He and his three friends knew, by faith, that they would be healthier, brighter and stronger than the other young men. We must ask with faith, just as Daniel and his friends asked and believed that they would receive from God more strength, intelligence and wisdom than all other young men.

August 5

"The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days" (Revelation 12:6).

In the end days it will happen that only those who have the mark of the beast or the number of his name on their foreheads or upon their right hands will be allowed to buy or sell. In those days God will feed His people in a jungle, even as He fed Elijah (Rev. 12:6). Elijah was

kept strong because he ate food given by God. So whatever food God gives His people in the end days, whether it be roots or leaves from the trees, will be quite sufficient to give them help and strength. They will refuse to bow down before the devil, to tell lies, and to give wrong statements in spite of all constraints brought upon them. If you also want to be an overcomer, then you must refuse to receive any benefit from the devil. All your benefits must come only from heaven (Daniel 1:13, 14, 15).

These young men asked the officers to test them for ten days. In the Bible the number ten represents testing. After ten days the faces of Daniel and his friends were found to be fairer and fatter and shining with God's glory. If you claim, with faith, God's blessing on all that you eat or drink, you will have more joy, energy and strength than other people. Believe that God is able to give you much more blessing through ordinary food, and your face will begin to shine.

August 6

"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7).

The king of Babylon planned that these young Jews should become clever engineers, scientists and doctors who could bring greater prosperity to his kingdom, but God's purpose was something different. He gave them divine wisdom, which helped them to understand heavenly things. Worldly wise men will never understand the great honour which rests upon the service of God. God's servants are His partners and co-workers in a very precious way. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his secrets unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Many people do not realize the value of heavenly wisdom, but they attach great value to earthly wisdom. Only God can give us wisdom. These young men did not even pray for it. They only determined that they would not defile themselves, and were quite satisfied with simple food consisting of pulse and water. So God gave them wisdom (Dan. 1:17).

These four young men, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego all came from the tribe of Judah. Judah' means praise. Consistent with that name these four young men kept praising and thanking God for the simple food given to them. Like these four young men, we also should learn to be content and thankful. We should thank God for our trials and troubles. If we do this, God will give us divine wisdom.

August 7

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (Proverbs 4:7).

After the appointed time was over the four young men were found so well-trained that they were able to answer every question. God gave them skill and wisdom. Daniel received understanding concerning dreams and visions as well. All of us are now being trained by God according to our future ministry. If we obey Him we shall afterwards know what our calling will be in the difficult days of the end time.

Ask God to make you an overcomer like Daniel. Refuse to be defiled by any temptation which the devil may bring upon you. In every circumstance in which the Lord places you, believe that the situation is allowed by God to prepare you for your future ministry.

This will help you to be ready and watchful, and will prepare you for the future.

This work of preparing has several stages designed to prepare us for all the responsibilities we will have to bear in the future. In chapter 2 we see how God proved to magicians, astrologers and sorcerers of Babylon, that divine wisdom is superior to earthly wisdom. All worldly people are tested by God in the same way. When death or some other terrible situation faces them, they are filled with fear and are tormented day and night. It is only when you have true salvation that you will be free from fear; there is no other way.

August 8

"The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it" (Proverbs 16:14).

The mighty and holy God can and does live among His people. By the coming of Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as the Son of man, this truth has become very simple and easy to understand. One day when you are faced with a need, suddenly the light of God will shine into your heart and you will understand a hidden thought and use it to answer the question before you. God will the answer just at the time we need it. The King gave the decree that if the wise men of Babylon did not tell the dream and its meaning, they would be killed (Daniel 2:12,23).

The executioners were looking for Daniel and his friends to be brought forth and slain, and yet these four young men showed no sign of fear. That is one mark of the overcomers, they will have no fear. With faith in their hearts they began to pray (verses 16-18). Daniel was the instrument chosen by God through whom the dream should be revealed, but all the four young men had to pray. They all had a share in it. Daniel had a special gift to understand visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17). But when all four prayed with one mind, God gave the revelation to Daniel. To be an overcomer you have to learn to be together with the fellow believers, and not live aloof and standalone.

August 9

"Many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12).

In spiritual matters our burdens must be borne together. We should share our burdens and lay hold upon the Lord together. Many workers have lost their ministry and blessing by becoming, independent minded. That is why see Daniel seeking the help of his friends. He knew that God had given him the gift of understanding visions and dreams and their interpretation (Daniel 1:17). In this case Daniel felt he should seek the prayer fellowship of his three friends. They all prayed together and were partners in this ministry. Their gifts were different, but they remained equal partners in the work of God.

If you desire to be an overcomer, do not hesitate to seek the prayer fellowship of fellow-believers. Tell them your difficulties and ask them to pray for you and pray with you. You will discover how very helpful it is. We have already noted the strong faith these young men had. The whole kingdom was mourning and weeping, but they had faith in the living God that He would not allow them to perish. We also should have such faith that even though many calamities may take place in our lives, the Lord knows to watch over us and take care of us.

August 10

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory" (Psalm 115:1).

God honored the faith of the young men and the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision (Daniel 2:19). Now Daniel was ready to go before the king and tell him the dream and its interpretation, but he was in no excited hurry to do so. He was full of praise and thanksgiving to God, as we can see from his prayer in verse 20 to 23. We often err in this matter. We fail to thank God sufficiently when He reveals anything to us.

Notice how Daniel, in his prayer, utters these words, "What we desired of thee" (verse 23). Thus he recognizes that because of their joint prayer, God had revealed to him the dream and its meaning. He refuses to take any honor to himself. Again before the King, Daniel refused to take any honor to himself. He said: "This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living" (verse 30). "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets" (verse 26,28). If you want to be an overcomer you should never rob God's glory.

The apostle Paul said, 'By the grace of God I am what I am' (1 Corinthians 15:10). He received much revelation from God, but he never took any honor to himself. Again and again he testified that it was only by His grace he was able to do all things. You should always hide yourself and say: 'It is not I, but God.'

August 11

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her" (Psalm 46:5).

God wants people who will seek those things which can never be shaken or moved. If we want to be in that kingdom we must so live that whatsoever we do or say will bring everlasting fruit, and by living and serving in this way we will be acceptable in that kingdom. This is God's test to us, if we wish to be over-comers.

In his dream the king saw a huge image. The head was of gold, the arms of silver, the belly of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet, part of clay and part of iron. Comparatively it was only a small stone, which came and fell upon the feet of the strong image. The small stone which smote the image, now became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Daniel chapter 2 verse 35). In this simple way God was saying that all man-made things will suddenly come to an end.

Whatsoever is of God alone will not be shaken or moved. The work of God, may begin in a simple way, but it will abide for ever. God is not using angels to preach the Gospel. If He had wished He could have done so. He is using humble men and women, like vessels weak and small, to preach the Gospel. In this way He breaks the strongholds of Satan, and establishes His kingdom.

August 12

"Being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself" (Philippians 2:8).

The Lord Jesus Himself came to earth like a small stone. He did not come with the pomp of an earthly king. He came as a man, yet without sin. Even today His disciples are few in number, but He is establishing His kingdom through them. Those who have received God's word, even though they may be very simple people, we have no fear, but their hearts will be

filled with perfect peace and joy. By faith they can see God's kingdom established. Their eyes are upon that kingdom, and that is the secret of their peace and joy.

Gold speaks of worldly glory; silver speaks of earthly wealth; brass speaks of worldly wisdom and iron of human power. We can find these four things in every human heart. Love for earthly glory, wealth, wisdom and power. But none of these things can last forever. One day they will all be completely destroyed. If you want to be an overcomer in God's kingdom, all love for earthly glory, wealth, wisdom and power, must be completely cleansed from your life. Then all will see Christ, the stone cut without hands, spreading and increasing in you. You will be willing for Christ's life to fill you, and your eyes will be constantly upon the things of eternity. You will want your labours to bring everlasting results.

August 13

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King" (Daniel 3:17).

King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel's God is a God of gods and Lord of kings (Daniel 2:47). He did not wish to accept the living God as his God. God had shown to him wonderful things, but the king had not turned to God with his whole heart.

So the king in his blindness, made a tall and great image representing himself and asked the people to worship it. Three young men refused to do so. They were determined not to bow down to an image at any cost. God has always prepared some men throughout the ages to be overcomers and to be His co-workers. Such men are always few but when they have been fully prepared, God uses them to defeat the enemy and confound all His devices.

Now notice the arrogant words of King Nebuchadnezzar: "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" How foolish and blind he was! The three young men were quietly calm, though they had been threatened that they would be cast into the fiery furnace. See what a wise answer they gave. They said "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful (or, we have no need) to answer thee in this matter."

August 14

"But if not but it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (Daniel 3:18).

The king's threats could not shake the young men's faith. They knew that their God was the living God and He had all power, far greater than all the power of the Devil, or of the king before them. Without any doubt or question in their hearts, these three young men said! "O king, though we are to be cast into the fiery furnace we refuse to bow down to your image. Even if God allows us to be burnt in the fire we will never question Him."

If you want to be an overcomer you should never doubt God. Even if He takes you through fiery trials you have no right to question Him. Believe that His way is perfect and is the best for you, and that whatever He is doing in your life, it is all for your good. That is true faith.

We are inspired by the noble example of these three young men. Even though they were threatened with death they refused to bow down before the idols. They said, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace" (v. 17). We also must believe

that the Lord will never forsake us, for He says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth... Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18,20). The Lord will use that power to take care of us, so we should never fear to take a bold stand.

August 15

"Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25).

The answer given by the three young men made king Nebuchadnezzar very angry and he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more. To make sure that they were burnt completely he caused them to be bound in their coats, their hosen, their hats and other garments (v. 21). Then they were cast into the midst of the burning, fiery furnace. But the fire burned only their bands and loosened them. They walked in the fire as if they were walking in a garden. When we learn to be overcomers, God will protect us from even the slightest harm. The king was filled with wonder. His wonder was greater because he saw not three men but four walking in the fire.

The Lord knows how to protect His own. He will see to it that no harm comes to us when we stand for the Word of God and the testimony of our Lord. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon (v. 30). All the persecution which came against these faithful young men only proved to be the means of their promotion, and also of confounding the king and the princes of Babylon. These young men knew their God, and that is why they came out triumphant. May the Lord make us also true overcomers like them.

August 16

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).

It seems to be God's plan to call a few, prepare them and make them overcomers, and then use them to frustrate and defeat all the enemy's devices. God is not depending upon the multitudes to fulfill His great purposes. It is true that eternal life is a free gift offered by God to all men, of whatever class they might be. If they are willing to repent of their sins and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Savior, they will be forgiven and justified in His sight. But if you want to be an overcomer, you must be willing to be brought fully into His possession, and kept under His Lordship and Kingship in every small detail of your life and ministry.

In our hearts we rebel again and again against God and we do not allow Him to take full possession of our lives. As a result we often commit mistakes and suffer much loss. Yet we remain stubborn and rebellious and continue to resist the work of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps God is using us in His service for the preaching of the Gospel and for the winning of souls. We know that we cannot do anything of ourselves, yet, rather than give glory to God, we become proud and begin to glory in ourselves. Self-glorification sometimes comes unknowingly and we begin to glory in the things we have done, and wish that people would praise us and honour us.

August 17

"Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

On the second occasion, when the three young men merged unharmed from the fiery furnace, the king had said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him...because there is no other God who can deliver after this sort" (Dan. 3:28,29). Only for the time being he glorified God.

In many cases, prosperity becomes the cause of pride. More prosperity brings more pride. Men become slaves to prosperity, and with a desire to continue in it, they are ready to please and honour men rather than God. Even believers fall into this snare of pleasing men, and then they are not willing to obey the full counsel of God.

When we fail to honour God, we also become spiritually blind. Times of worship are helpful in preventing this condition. When we cut short this time of worship and fail to thank Him sufficiently for all that He has done for us, we will not any more be able to enjoy His fellowship fully. Some people who realise the spiritual dryness in their lives, blame the preachers. It may be you have failed in sufficiently giving thanks and worship to God, and that is why you are unable to enjoy His presence.

August 18

"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar in plain language that if he did not repent he would be cut off. In spite of all this Nebuchadnezzar did not repent. He had said proudly, "See my kingdom, my buildings and my works", but he had not realized that before God he was like an animal, and had no wisdom. Strength or education is nothing before God and men are only like beasts before Him. As long as you have the old sinful nature, you too are like a beast.

Even after we have been born again the Devil will try to carry us away from the position in which God has placed us. The Lord wants all who are born again to be co-workers and partners with Him. If we are overcomers this will be fulfilled in us, and we will become God's instruments to execute His judgments. We will be given authority to judge even angels (1 Cor. 6:3). When God begins to judge kings and other powers, He will make us partners in that judgment also.

We think, naturally, that by exalting ourselves we will get more glory. But the simple divine law is this, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12). Although we know this and have read it in the Bible many times, yet we love to exalt ourselves. Wherever we go, when we are not given honour and praise we feel hurt. The divine law is that only by humbling ourselves will we be exalted.

August 19

"All whose works are truth and his ways judgment; and those who walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37).

If we are overcomers, we will know that we must humble ourselves. Nebuchadnezzar had to become like a beast before he could learn that lesson of humbling himself. So many years it

took for him to learn to exalt the true God. Do not be like Nebuchadnezzar. Do not wait till you become like a beast. It is better to give all the glory to the Lord and extol Him at every opportunity. This is the secret of an overcoming life. You must be able to extol God by your words, by the testimony of your life, and by your ministry.

Now let us note these words spoken by Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel: "No secret troubleth thee" (Dan. 4:8,9). Daniel is a type of the overcomer. They will not be anxious, or troubled, or worried about any new thing, even if it is something they cannot understand at the moment. We may perhaps find some things around us during these days which are beyond our understanding. In the end days especially, we will see many signs and wonders happening, which are not of the Lord and which we are not able to explain adequately. But if we are overcomers we will not be afraid, because we will have full confidence that in His own way, in His own time, God will tell us the meaning and the interpretation of it all (Amos 3:7).

God never forgets what we do for Him. All our labor will be amply rewarded. It is only when a man refuses to humble himself, even after every chance which the Lord gives him, that he will be cast away.

August 20

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his Lords. While they were drinking wine, he commanded his servants to bring in the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem, and brought to Babylon. Then they began to drink wine out of these vessels, and praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone.

Throughout the ages, men who are prosperous and at the height of their glory have blasphemed God. It is a surprising thing that sinful men take such pride and pleasure in blaspheming against the living God, in speaking against His Word, and against His people. I will give you an instance. Although the Bible and Koran have a number of things in common we do not find the Hindus speaking against Muslims and Koran, but they will blaspheme Christ and the Bible.

While they were all drinking, suddenly the king saw a part of a hand moving before him and writing words on the wall, words that he could not read, for they were in a language unknown to him. At this, the king was filled with fear, and his knees smote one against the other. We have seen many times how men of wealth, knowledge, position and power start trembling when they see mysterious things happen, which they are not able to explain. Only perfect love coming into our hearts can deliver us from every fear. There is no fear in love (1 John 4:18).

August 21

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

Only God's love is perfect and unchanging. His love is everlasting (Jer. 31:3). Even though God may rebuke and chasten us because of our folly, His love will never change. God does not love us a little, He loves us in all His fullness. That is why He gives us all He has. He left all His glory for us. He gave to the very last ounce of His blood for our sakes. Only such a love is perfect love, and only such a love can take away our fears. Sometimes we go through

peculiar trials and sufferings, and at such times, no mother, however sincere and loving she might be, is able to share it with us. But the love of Christ is perfect, and He is able to share all our burdens, difficulties, sorrows and sufferings.

Those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their saviour will be subject to many fears. In spite of all their knowledge, wealth and power, you can frequently see the marks of fear upon the faces of great men. The Lord Jesus said that in the last days there will be many fearful signs, such as stars falling from heaven, earthquakes, and pestilences and wars. Then men's hearts will fail because of fear (Luke 21:26). At that time even God's people will have to go through testing. But the Lord will keep them above fear.

August 22

"Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

All the lords were able to see the handwriting on the wall, but only the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. The chief guilt was upon him, and he was the first to be judged. In the same manner, before God judges the sinner, first of all He will judge the Devil, who is responsible for man's downfall, sin and defilement. He will be the first to be cast into the lake of fire.

God is speaking to you now. If you are still a sinner, God is saying to you, "O sinner, if you do not want to repent of your sins, be prepared for your day of judgment". God in His great love and mercy, gives you warning again and again in many ways. Through sickness and calamities He calls you, that you may receive His salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ will become your wisdom, if you accept Him as your Saviour. The whole world may be weeping and crying, full of fear. Even at such times God's children will go down upon their knees and pray. Then they will understand everything and they will be able to tell the meaning of it all.

August 23

"He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

There was a man in France called Voltaire. He was a great scholar, but he was an atheist and a blasphemer. Just before his death, he fell sick, and he was full of fear. Every night he would scream so much that no nurse would stay near or nurse him for more than one night. His face was so full of fear that it was horrible to look at.

I have seen people who did not know their God, dying full of fear. But those who know their God can go into the valley of the shadow of death without fear. I knew a young man who was a believer. He died suddenly while on duty, due to heart failure. The office manager went to his home to tell his wife, and with great difficulty broke the news to her. To his great surprise she replied, "I shall meet him in heaven", and she told him of the wonderful hope we have in Christ. The manager had expected her to break down in grief and despair. He went away surprised. The Lord never fails His people.

Have you still not come to Him today? He will free you from all condemnation. He will give you the answer to every question. He will reveal His mysteries, to you as He revealed them to Daniel, and make you an over-comer in every situation. God has desired us, His people, to be partners with Him in His great victory. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and He has chosen us in Him for a very high and lofty purpose which was in His mind before all creation was made. This is shown to us in Ephesians 1:4-23.

August 24

"Three presidents; of whom Daniel was first...because an excellent spirit was in him" (Daniel 6:2,3).

In the first six chapters of Daniel we see how God was taking His servants through a long time of preparation which lasted about forty-three years. Though He was using them in mighty ways right from chapter one, He was all the time really preparing them for a greater ministry. Then from chapter seven onwards we see how God began to reveal through Daniel events which were to take place in the future. The plans for the coming centuries were made known right up to the coming of Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, and return to earth.

It is the same in our own lives. The early days of our Bible reading, studying books about the Bible, and listening to many good sermons, are really training us for the deeper mysteries which we shall find hidden in God's Word when He has fully trained us. After years of study, we shall be saying to ourselves during our devotions, "I never knew of that verse before! that fragment seems quite new to me!" The Lord was also training Daniel in the life of prayer. In Daniel 6, we read how king Darius ruled over a kingdom so vast that it needed one hundred and twenty princes. Over these were three presidents, but Daniel was preferred above them all. Daniel did not seek for preference as so many seek honors in politics today. He did not try to use the influence of friends and relatives, neither did he use flatteries and bribes, yet one day he received orders that he had been appointed the chief Governor over all the other Governors.

August 25

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23).

At one time when in America, I had a long period of un-employment. After I had searched much for a job, a man said to me, "Can you cook Indian food? It is so hard to find a good cook here. There is to be an Indian Medical Conference and many doctors will be hear for seven days. If you can cook Indian meals for them I will pay you."

I said, "I can cook for a few, but have never attempted doing it for such a large number." "Well," replied he, "you try, and if you cannot manage we will remove you." I prayed a whole night and the next day I started the cooking. I continued prayed all the time I was cooking, and the Lord showed me what quantities of various ingredients I was to use each time.

After the meal a lady came to the kitchen and saw me in my long white coat and white cap. "Mr. Cook, she said, I have been to India, and eaten in many hotels there, but I have never tasted food like this! Who taught you?" "My Lord taught me," I replied. My job as cook continued for ten months, and every day I provided a new taste. They called me a good cook, never realising that I was cooking only through the wisdom God gave me in answer to prayer. My point is that God gives wisdom for the daily tasks. It is the same divine principle; by learning to pray for everything by faith, we can have the same experience as did Daniel and His three friends.

August 26

"They could find none occasion nor fault; for as much as he was faithful" (Daniel 6:4).

Daniel was hated by those men over whom he was promoted. They became jealous. "Why should he be over us?" they sneered, and began to scheme against him. We too shall find that others will become jealous of us if, through prayer and faithfulness, we obtain success or promotion.

Though king Darius was a good king, like most other rulers he was too fond of flattery, and this gave Daniel's enemies their opportunity. But how were they to find some fault with which to accuse Daniel? Though they placed spies all around him, and searched into every action and association, they at last had to declare, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (v.4). They had seen the faithfulness of his prayer life. He was a very busy man with many important matters to attend to, but he never cut short his time of prayer. When the time for prayer came, he never missed his time of communion with God, three times every day.

If you want to be an overcomer you must be faithful in all your duties at home and outside. Do not work to please men, but God. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ is watching you all the time.

August 27

"The way of the Lord is strength to the upright" (Proverbs 10:29).

Then Daniel's enemies came before the king and said: "We have never seen such a wonderful king as you; so we want people to pray to you only and not to any other God for thirty days. Please sign this decree to that effect".

The king was much flattered. "I am such a good king," he thought "these people love me so much, they want to pray to me," and without really thinking the matter out, he signed the decree. He had no intension of doing any evil against Daniel, but he loved flattery, and these cunning, crafty counsellors had blinded him. It is the same in our own time. Many rulers blinded by flattery, sign documents and frame rules that are not for their country's good. Daniel might have said, "I should not pray openly now," and might have commanded the servants to close all the doors and windows. Instead, without fear or complaint, he opened wide his windows, and kneeling down gave thanks to God as he had done before. What a faith!

After forty-three years of divine training, Daniel was now facing his final test. The decree was signed; to pray to anyone but king Darius for the next thirty days meant being cast into a den of lions. Here we find the whole kingdom against Daniel. He stood as one man alone without a single person to help him. He did not seek help from man, but trusted in God only.

August 28

"He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

Daniel prayed three times a day before his opened windows, and gave thanks to God. Here is the simple way of overcoming. Learn to praise and thank God. Do not allow any fear or doubt to come into your mind, even though you know the enemy is working against you.

Many of us find prayer very difficult in the beginning. That was my problem. After my conversion, I could read the Bible for a whole day without tiring, and usually read many chapters at a stretch. But I could not pray for more than ten minutes. I would go down on my knees and then go to sleep. I wanted to pray, but could not pray long enough. It was really a struggle and a battle to get through sometimes.

But now I find that though I spend many hours in prayer, still it is not enough. When I finish my quite time I feel sad I cannot spend one or two hours longer. That will be your experience too, when you learn how to pray as God trained Daniel to pray. Daniel learned how to pray, and that was the only fault they could find with him. Daniel gave thanks to God. There was no murmuring or complaining. Thanking, praising and worshipping God is the secret.

August 29

"The wicked worketh a deceitful work" (Proverbs 11:18).

When the princes brought their charge against Daniel, the king suddenly realised how he had been fooled and deceived. He had signed the decree without thinking. That is how many officials get into trouble. They don't look into the papers sufficiently before they sign them. We should never sign any paper before we have properly read and understood it. Though Darius was a good king he was foolish. Sometimes we can be both good and foolish, and that is why human goodness is often no real goodness at all. If we trust God, He will give us true wisdom, and thus save us from all evil schemes.

The king found he was helpless. He longed to deliver Daniel from the lions' den, but every effort failed. Though he tried all day, he found he could not succeed because when he had signed that paper, it became "a law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not." Now he wanted to change what he had signed but princes said, "No, No, You cannot alter the laws of the Medes and Persians." Then the king realised that he could not alter the law, and those crooked, cunning men had deceived him. He was now bound by his own word, and was forced to issue the command himself that Daniel was to be cast into the den of lions (Daniel 6:16).

August 30

"But to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward" (Proverbs 11:18).

The king said to Daniel: "The God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee". Even though the king had no experience of God himself, he knew one thing. Daniel was a man of God, who faithfully served God and God must deliver him.

The king spent the whole night fasting and very early in the morning he came to the den of lions to see what had happened. He called out with a sorrowful voice, "O Daniel, servant of the Living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" (Daniel 6:20). His voice was sorrowful because he had no experience of God. "Who knows?" he thought, "the lions may have eaten Daniel up". It is only when we have the living God with us that we have real faith. Otherwise our hearts are filled with doubts and fears.

Daniel replied; "O king, my God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." (v. 22, 23). Then the king was very glad that his friend Daniel was safe, but he ordered the wicked deceivers who had tried to fool him to be cast into the den of lions instead of Daniel. God often allows our enemies to prosper for a while, and they

themselves think they are prospering. But they do not realise that they are going to be punished.

August 31

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works until the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Revelation 2:26).

Daniel had suffered because of his testimony, but God delivered him because of his faithfulness. It is only when we are found faithful like Daniel that we shall find God delivering us. We must be faithful in our duty, true in testimony, honouring God night and day, using our knees three times daily without fear or shame, constantly praising God and thanking Him for all things; then we shall find He will send His angels to work on our behalf, and the enemy's schemes and plans against us will be confounded.

Through all this God was preparing Daniel for a higher ministry, and this was the method of His training. Now God was able to give him those wonderful revelations, that were not possible before. Perhaps God is putting us through a time of preparation, and we must be prepared for it. We may be taken through extreme sorrow, trials and sufferings and disappointment. Through these we shall receive a strong and divine faith, divine vision, and God's excellent spirit, then we shall be given the revelation of heavenly mysteries which at the moment are hidden from us.

In the beginning, our worldly minds are so confused and puzzled, that we cannot see spiritual things clearly. But when we have gone through our period of divine training, God will make all things clear to us and work on our behalf. May the Lord help us to be true overcomers. May He take all murmurings and complainings out of our hearts and give us true strong faith.

9. The Secrets of God's choice

SEPTEMBER

September 1

"I have chosen You" (John 15:16).

The daily prayer of each one of us should be: 'O Lord, I want these words to become real in my life, not only for today, but also for every day.'

If indeed we have been chosen of God then, whatever our difficulty or problem, God will surely provide a solution. All of us have problems, whether we are saved or unsaved, young or old in the faith, growing spiritually or not, spiritually mature or not, all of us will continue to have some problem or other until our last day on earth. We have no promise that if we trust in the Lord we shall be freed from all our problems and difficulties. Rather we may have increasing difficulties and greater problems. However, I do believe that these words have God's answer for each one of us. 'I have chosen you.' What comfort and assurance are ours when we realize that we have been chosen by our Lord. Even though He knows more about us than our neighbours do; knows all our inward corruption, rottenness, failures and shortcomings, how we have failed and grieved Him, yet He is saying these words to us who have been bought, purchased and cleansed by His blood.

September 2

"I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

These words are addressed to those who have been definitely chosen by the Lord. In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul uses seven names to describe God's people. They are called the Church, His body, the New Man, God's family or the household of God, God's workmanship, an holy temple, and the bride of Christ. Why does he call God's people by the name 'church'? Eph 1:22. The word 'church' in the Greek is ecclesia, which has a special meaning. When the Lord said those words in John 15:16,19 : "I have chosen you out of the world". The word used is a very strong one. It does not mean simple: 'I have chosen you as I would choose a friend'. The word the Lord uses here means: "I have drawn or pulled you out by much power". In other words our Lord has had to exercise His mighty strength in order to pull us out of the world. That is the meaning of the word ecclesia.

The Lord Jesus Christ alone has the power to pull men out of the miry clay of sin, and He came to this earth in order to do so. In that sense He uses the word 'church' to describe those who are drawn out, pulled or chosen. Before there can be the evidence of His choice in our lives, these must be the exercise of His choice in our lives, there must be the exercise of His drawing power. Has the Lord chosen you? Have you got that inward assurance which enables you to say: 'The Lord Jesus has chosen me'? Can you say that evidence is in your life?

September 3

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Before you can understand what it is to be chosen by Him you must know the meaning of the word 'world'. Whatever you see now upon this earth will soon pass away. *'Heaven and shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away'.* (Matthew 24:35). Things which cannot be shaken shall remain. That which will pass away is called the 'world' in the Bible. Even the sun, moon, and stars may pass away, but there are things which will not pass away. Our Lord has chosen us in order to bring us into 'a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). If you have been chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ, how much do you possess of that which will not pass away, and how much of that which will pass away? We do not want to know how much money you have in the bank, or how much property you have, and so on, or even how much of the Bible you know. Bible knowledge, however good it may be, will soon be forgotten. Our good deeds will not last forever, nor can we remain good forever, for our nature changes as life goes on, and all of us are full of weaknesses, wasting our time and energies on the things which will pass away.

When we realize that the Lord has chosen us, we realize also how transient is the world in which we live and that nothing in it can give true happiness. The things of the world will appear to us as miry clay in which we can only sink deeper in deeper. The Lord Jesus Christ says: 'I have chosen you out of the world'. He has come to rescue us from the attraction of earthly things, to pull us out of those things which would drag us down, and to give us everlasting riches. Do not refuse Him, nor cling to the things that will pass away.

September 4

"Henceforth I call you not servants... but I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

The Lord says further: 'I have chosen you out of the world, that I may make you my friend.' These words are not meant only for the apostles to whom He was speaking. They are meant also for you and me. He says 'I have chosen you, to make you my friend.' Only those who have divine life can understand these words, for how can a sinner living in sin and darkness be God's friend? 'All things which I have heard from the Father I have made known to you,' He said, and we can prove to the whole world that we are the friends of the Lord Jesus Christ, because day by day those truths and mysteries, which have been hidden even from the heavenly angels are being revealed to us.

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us those things, as we begin to walk with God and learn the secret of talking with Him, and receiving daily something fresh from Him. In Matthew 11:25-27, and 16:17, we read of a man who had been with the Lord Jesus Christ for three years, who had seen many miracles done by Him, and had also heard Him preaching, and who could therefore honestly say to the Lord Jesus Christ: 'I know everything about you, because I have been with you, talked with you, ate with you, slept with you'. But the Lord Jesus Christ told him: 'Simon, you do not know me by flesh and blood, but my heavenly Father has revealed this to you.'

September 5

"Thou art my servant, O Israel in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49:3).

When the very life of God comes into you, you will be able to say: 'Now I know the Lord, because His very life is flowing into me, constantly and abundantly, and that life brings to me the revelation of His will and purpose. Now He may punish me and chastise me, yet I know

He has chosen me. Nor has He chosen me for only a few days, as the world chooses its favoured ones.'

God has chosen us. He has chosen us for a purpose, and He knows how to make us fit for that purpose (Isaiah 49:3). God had to rebuke Jacob many times, yet He had chosen him, and His choice never changed. It took many years and much patience for God to shape Jacob as a chosen vessel. God could have said: 'Now Jacob, you are no good. I have made a mistake, and there is no hope for you. You are so weak and hopeless.' But God never said anything like that. He went on rebuking Jacob and chastising him, till he became Israel. God had chosen him before he was born, and His choice would never change. Whoever you may be, and though you may bear a hopeless testimony before your neighbors; yes, even though your father and mother may have cause to say before your friends that there is no hope for you, and that they think you are worthless and entirely useless, yet God will never cast you off. If you are a true believer He still says to you: 'My child, I have chosen you; even though you are grieving me and failing me, yet I have chosen you'. The Lord is still saying to you: 'You may leave me, but I will never leave you. I have chosen you for eternity.' Oh, what love! What grace! What a Salvation!

September 6

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance" (Psalm 106:4,5).

I believe the Lord has something to say to us from these words. Read them for yourself on your knees. Read them with faith. Read them again and again, and you will find a change coming into your heart. God uses many situations and circumstances to awaken in us spiritual desire. Very few of us have naturally a real longing and hunger for God. Many of us think of Him only when we want something, or when we are in trouble, in distress, in sickness or in poverty. Very few of us go to God for His own sake. We go to Him only because we want something earthly or perishing, and alas! With many of us, the desires which we have in our hearts are for perishing things which have no real value.

In the beginning, perhaps, we do not know what we are doing, because we have been so carried away by our own childish ideas. We find that those who do not know how to discern the things of God, are carried away by outward appearances, and alas! they do not know it. They are wasting their time, money and energy upon worldly things.

What about you? Have you really a true appreciation of the things of God? Can you truthfully say that your hunger and thirst is far greater for the things of God than for perishing things? Alas! in every heart is some desire, some longing and yielding which drags the heart away from God.

September 7

"O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me" (Jeremiah 15:15).

We need to pray continually that our loving God may give us that spiritual desire which the Psalmist breathes in these words: 'Remember me, O Lord'. It does not require a very long prayer to express our desire to know God. It requires only simple faith.

Once a small child was learning English in school. He was learning the letters: a b c. Then one day he began to pray. He said: 'Lord, a b c d.' After a moment's silence he prayed again: 'e f g h i j k l m n o p q....'. 'My child, what are you doing?' interrupted his mother. 'I am praying,' said the child. 'what are you praying?'. 'Mother, I don't know how to spell, but God can spell. You say b a t is bat, c a t is cat, f a t is fat. I do not know how to spell even simple words, so I am giving the letters to God and He can do the spelling.' That child had the right attitude. He was praying with faith. Whether or not you know how to use proper words in prayer, does not matter. The question is, do you pray in faith? Can you truthfully say: 'Yes, Lord, I believe you, you will remember me. Remember me, O Lord, remember!' These are only simple words, but let them come from the heart. Do not look at yourself, or your condition, or even at your sins and failures. Look away to Him, your loving and living Saviour who loves you more than anybody else, whether father, mother, wife, brother, sister, child or friend.

September 8

"According to thy mercy, remember thou me for thy goodness sake, O Lord" (Psalm 25:7).

The psalmist says in Psalm 27:10: 'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' It is quite possible for the day to come in your life, when your father, mother, brother, sister or loved ones may turn against you. Many fathers and mothers have turned against their wayward children, but God says that though your parents leave you, He will never do so. Do not look at yourself. It does not matter who you are, or how shameful and great your sins may be, or how much you have failed the Lord after new birth; are you willing to say these words before God: 'Lord, remember me, even me, to whom shall I go? All my hope is only in thee. O Lord, remember me.' You will find that simple prayer will bring you nearer to God and God to you.

Look again at the same verse from Psalm 106:4. The Psalmist began: 'O Lord, remember me'. Then he adds: 'Remember me with the favour which thou didst shew to thy people'. In John 8:40, 41 and 44, the people were saying: 'We belong to God; we have Abraham as our father,' but the Lord Jesus reminded them: 'No, you are not God's people; ye are of your father the devil.' These are very strong words, and such words may offend, but we must remember that they are not the words of man. They were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ.

To which group do you belong? I do not want to know your nationality, or profession, or wealth or Bible knowledge or name or fame. Are you one of God's people or do you belong to the second group? It is only by receiving the divine life of God that you can become one of the family of God.

September 9

"The redemption of their soul is precious" (Psalm 49:8).

Are you one of God's people? Be honest with yourself. Let your first prayer be: 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people.' What a privilege, what an honor to be as one of God's people. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world that the sons of the devil might become the sons of God. How I thank God that He can call me, 'My Son!'; but it is only by receiving the life of God, eternal spiritual life, new and divine life, that you can become a child of God. Then even without your asking, you will also have His divine favor. The psalmist says next: 'O Visit me with thy salvation.' His real thought is 'Lord, show me fully thy salvation.'

There are many so-called Christians who think that by learning some bible verses, they will receive salvation. But this salvation is great and eternal. It cannot be understood within a few days or even years. It will take eternity itself to know Christ fully. The psalmist says: 'O visit me with thy salvation.' He is not saying : 'Lord, teach me more about the Bible'. He is saying with hunger: 'Lord, teach me more fully about thy salvation.' You must seek to understand the full purpose and thought of God in everything He does. Why is He seeking you? Why should He take so much time and trouble in searching for you and calling you?

God knows your value better than even your father or mother does. In the eyes of God, the value of one soul is far greater than all the wealth of the world.

September 10

"Things which are despised, hath God chosen... that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Corinthians 1:28-29).

God is after you, because He knows what He can make of you. He wants to make you His partner and a co-worker for eternity. The psalmist's desire for God's salvation is a prayer: 'O God, make me thy chosen vessel', and in Psalm 106:5 he gives the reason: 'that I may see the good of thy chosen.'

I went once, to a house and saw there on the mantel-piece many beautifully painted articles. I asked the master of the house: 'What are these things?'. He answered that they were only ordinary egg-shells. He had made a tiny hole and removed the contents, and had been collecting shells in this way for many years. Being a good artist, he had painted a beautiful design on each egg-shell. That shell is of no use to you, but an artist can make something beautiful out of it.

God also had a purpose in choosing and calling you, even though you have been ruined and marred by sin, and men can see the marks of sin upon your face. In God's word we are compared to filthy rags, dry grass, faded flowers, and withered leaves. That is what we are in God's sight, yet He has chosen us. He wants you and me, to make of us chosen heavenly vessels for His honor and glory. Only God can do such a thing. Man cannot do it. Are you willing to be one of God's chosen vessels? He is willing even if you are utterly worthless. God can make you something useful to Himself for Eternity, provided you come and surrender yourself wholly and solely to Him.

September 11

"O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob His chosen" (Psalm 105:6).

Here Jacob is called a chosen vessel, and God chose him knowing all about him. Now how do we choose? Because we are buying for ourselves we choose carefully. We say this is good; that is no good; this is too big and that is too small; this is too old and that is too crushed. That is how we choose. But God says it does not matter if you are ugly and defiled and ruined by sin. Man may say you are useless, but when you go to God He will ask only: 'Are you willing to be my vessel? Are you willing to surrender yourself to me?' That is all. He knows how to wash you, cleanse you and transform you, if you leave yourself in His hands.

Christ knows how to cleanse any filthy sinner and transform him into something glorious. For your part you must only be prepared and willing to become His chosen vessel. God chose

Jacob and transformed him into a prince with God even though it took Him twenty years to do so. What would you think if you to take your clothes to the laundry, and get them back only after twenty years? Alas! we are much more dirty than our clothes, and our Lord goes on cleansing us till we become like Him. God will not be satisfied till we are 'conformed to the image of His Son'. Do you want to be His chosen vessel? Are you willing to be washed and purified till He is satisfied?

September 12

And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 6:5).

I want you to note those words in Acts 6:5, 'and they chose Stephen'. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the man called Stephen was chosen by the whole multitude. They did not elect him by voting, but chose him with one accord or unanimously. The word 'chosen' in the Greek includes the meaning that the choice is 'without opposition of any kind, unitedly '. There was no strife, no discouragement, no quarrel. All knew that he had been chosen. The word 'Stephen' means 'crown', and how triumphant was that man's life, even though he lived for so short a time. This one man of God accomplished much more in his brief life than we who have been many years in the Lord, and he was indeed worthy to receive a crown, a crown of glory.

We are not told much about Stephen. We do not know anything about his parents or family or qualifications. Suddenly he appears on the scene like a bright shining star, and becomes the very first martyr, calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the moment of death. The meaning of divine choice is revealed to us by the life and ministry of Stephen. Do we, like him, also want to be chosen, or called of God with a heavenly calling? Is there a longing in your soul as had the psalmist in Psa 106:1, where he begins the psalm with the words: 'Praise ye the Lord'? Praise is a heavenly thing. We praise God for the blessings of eternity, for heavenly, eternal and glorious things, and not merely for earthly things. If we want to live a triumphant life, we must first of all understand what it means to be one of God's people. 'Remember me, O God, with the favor that thou barest into thy people, and visit me with thy salvation'.

September 13

"If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people" (Exodus 19:5).

Have you that spiritual conviction that you are one of heavenly people, God's chosen people, a people that have been pulled out by God's mighty hand, who have become a heavenly peculiar treasure. Mark that word 'peculiar treasure'. Man's standard of choice is based on rank or position or wealth or fame. But God has different standard. Even though we are as filthy rags, ruined by sin and absolutely worthless and useless, yet He says: 'Oh my son, my daughter, I want you to be my peculiar treasure'. He knows what He can make of you and me for eternity, if only we place ourselves in His hands. So do not resist God's hand, when it is His desire to choose you. In Psalm 106:4, 5, the Psalmist prays: 'That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance'. All these things are exemplified in the life of Stephen, who, in becoming God's chosen vessel brought to many heavenly joy, and, as a believer, gloried with all the saints in the great heavenly inheritance.

In the sight of God one soul is more value than all the wealth of the whole world. In this way God teaches the spiritual meaning of heavenly truths brought out in the life of Stephen, an unknown person, about whose family, native village, country or qualifications we know nothing, but who in the eyes of God was most precious.

September 14

"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people... and they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:8, 10).

This passage in Acts, however, shows how you and I can be chosen for heavenly fame and an eternal name. For example there may be some believers living in a village and you go there and ask: 'Do you know Subbarao?' and they will reply: 'No!' Though it is only a small village there are few who know his name. How different things are when such a man is chosen of God. Then you could go to heaven and ask any angel: 'Do you know Subbarao?' and he would say: 'Yes, I know him very well.' 'How do you happen to know him?' 'He has been chosen by our heavenly king, and our king Himself has told us of His choice.' Upon earth a man may be nothing, but when he is chosen by God he will be acknowledged with joy and gladness by the heavenly host. The pity is that there are so few believers who are willing to be His chosen vessels.

You may indeed be a fine Christian. Your standards may be high. But God wants more than that. He loves you; He bought you by His blood, so as to make you His chosen vessel, His peculiar treasure, His vineyard. His co-worker, and His eternal partner. The first essential thing is to be like Stephen, not working for the sake of position. There are some people who, if you give them some position, will work day and night; but, if you do not give them a position, will hang back and do nothing. They are only working for a name. But we are told that Stephen did not work for honor or position. He worked quietly and lovingly.

September 15

"When the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring... Brethren, look ye out among you, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:1,3,4).

When the number of the disciples was multiplied, and the Lord was working mightily, the devil brought in murmurings and grumbings among the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, thus subtly bringing strife and quarrelling amongst God's people. Throughout the centuries the devil has been using two weapons to hinder the work of God and to prevent His servants from true service. Firstly, when God begins a work and His power is being manifested in lives, there come murmurings, complaints, and quarrelling among God's people, and through this the work is upset and hindered. A few of that type of murmuring believers can quench the Spirit of God and the work suffers.

Secondly, the devil tries to hinder God's servants from ministering the Word, and compels them instead to serve tables. He wanted the apostles to leave their important ministry and do this. First things must be kept first; and by His grace we can do so. He will give us wisdom, even as He gave divine wisdom to His servants in Acts 6:5. 'And the saying pleased the whole

multitude', and they chose men like Stephen, who went from house to house helping the people, and caring for the widows and poor. They were known to nobody; their birth and history were a secret: they sought simply to serve wherever they saw the need; and when the time came, the whole multitude with one accord chose them because they had been watching their lives and had noted how they served without any show, and were yet at the same time full of the Holy Spirit and of divine wisdom for every service.

September 16

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men... for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24).

We too need the anointing of the Holy Spirit whatever the service may be, howsoever small or howsoever great. It may be only to serve the widows and the poor, or to look after the building, or to serve food or to lay mats or any similar job in the house of God. Whatever it is we must have the anointing, and be filled with wisdom and the Holy Ghost, not seeking glory of men. We require Holy Ghost wisdom and divine anointing to find out what should be done in God's house and God's service, and we must do everything as unto Him and not as unto men.

Do you also want to be a divinely chosen vessel? Then be willing and ready to do simple things joyfully, not for man's sake, but for God's; and God himself will fill you with His Holy Spirit and wisdom. That is how Stephen came to be chosen as God's vessel. Acts 6:8; 'And Stephen full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people.' He was appointed only to look after the widows and business details, but it was soon manifest that he was a man of faith.

If you are willing to do His will, He will choose and make you a man of faith. You will be made to see the wonders of God's working. He is the Living God. In Acts 6:10, we read: 'And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the power and the spirit by which he spake.' Stephen went about doing his job, and at the same time he gave the Word to all he met. He was a humble ordinary man, but a man also full of the Spirit of God, and a divine wisdom that could shut the mouths of the learned. It is only as you obey God that He will give you the divine wisdom to meet any situation and make of you a chosen vessel.

September 17

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent... but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue, and the Lord said unto him; Who hath made man's mouth?... have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:10-12).

I would like to tell you my own experience, for I count it a great and wonderful thing that my Lord has chosen me. I want others also to realize how simple are the means by which He calls and speaks to us, lest they fail to hear when they are called by Him.

Soon after my conversion in the year 1930 in Winnipeg, Canada, I went to a service one Sunday morning. After the meeting I was standing outside, when a man came up and shook my hand. I can still feel his strong grip as he said to me: 'Brother, why don't you go and preach in India?' I replied: 'Brother, I am an engineer. I have spent so many years studying engineering; and to make things worse I stutter and stammer and am so nervous that I

cannot stand before even a small group of people. When I see them, my knees begin to shake. How can a stammering and stuttering man ever be a preacher?' He said nothing more, but for two full years those words were brought before me again and again. I could feel the same hand-grip, with the same words ringing in my heart: 'why don't you? Why don't you?'

I told the Lord: 'Lord, I promise that I will give all my money. By this means I can employ so many preachers; but please, please do not make me a preacher!' But God said to me: 'I do not want your money. I want you!' But for two full years these words came to me again and again. It is a mystery indeed why our God should ever choose us. It is because He has a right over us. He is my Creator and the mighty God, and He knows that when we yield ourselves to Him, and obey and follow Him, we shall know more fully and completely the power by which He works in and through us.

September 18

"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15).

Stephen was just an ordinary man, concerning whose family or parents or circumstances we know nothing; but suddenly he comes on the scene, and we find this chosen vessel being occupied with simple jobs, doing ordinary service for poor people and widows without any reward. All men began to see, however, that he was indeed no ordinary person. His longing was to please God, and his life was full of victory. Because he chose to obey God, he was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, full of faith and power. This is the privilege of those who are chosen by Him. When you have a longing in your heart to do God's will, wait on God, and you will see that, in His own way, He will give you the desire of your heart. You do not have to shout and fight for the fulfillment of your hopes. Just begin to obey Him and His Word, and receive the Word into your heart, and you will find the virtues you have longed for manifested in your life. You will become God's chosen vessel according to His purpose.

In Acts 6:13-15, we see how the leading men of the nation set up false witnesses against Stephen. Then elders and the scribes were stirred up and came upon Stephen and caught him and brought him to the council, and began to bring accusation against him, and while they were saying false things, all in the council looked upon his face, and were surprised to see it shining like an angel's. There were so many people against one person. The whole Sanhedrin was against him; one by one they brought false accusations, and yet his face was shining like an angel's. It shone even more brightly in that time of persecution. What a salvation! What a vessel! What a privilege to have such a shining face!

September 19

"The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia" (Acts 7:2).

When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, His light will first of all come into the heart, then on the face, then on the path. A threefold divine light. Have you become in this sense God's chosen vessel? What has happened? The Lord, not preachers nor sermons, but the living God, has given you a shining face, and if this is so, your face will shine more and more day by day, in spite of trials, troubles, tribulations and difficulties. It is by such a shining face that we defeat the enemy. There was no need for an advocate to defend Stephen. His shining face was an advocate for him. It should be the same with you. Even though others may hate you,

persecute you or ill-treat you, you should still have the light upon your face as a witness and testimony to them (2 Cor. 4:6). As you are found waiting upon the Lord, there will be even more light upon your face. Unknown to you, others will see the light of God upon your face, and in that day you will thank God even for suffering.

Note how Stephen defends himself in Acts 7:2. He is not saying: 'O enemy, hearken!' He says: 'My brethren, hearken!' The whole crowd is against him, yet he is calling them 'brethren', and his face is shining so brightly. Somehow he knew what they were thinking in their hearts, and his message gave the answer: 'The God of glory appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran'. He speaks of God as 'the God of glory'. For what purpose? That as a nation the seed of Abraham might have that very same glory. But Israel had forgotten all about it.

September 20

"Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16).

From the very beginning it was God's plan for Israel that His glory might fill them. For this reason, when the work on the tabernacle, and later on the temple, was finished, we read that 'the glory of the Lord filled the place (Exod. 40:34; 2 Chron. 7:1). Solomon's temple and the tabernacle were both filled with the glory of God. God had not asked for gold or silver from them, but a place to be filled with His glory. They were taught how they themselves could be filled with God's glory. But they had entirely forgotten about it. Their eyes were only on themselves, and on the temple and its magnificence. They were so proud of the temple which was made with hands; but the God of glory had appeared that they might see His glory, and might themselves be indwelt by His glory. God does not live in buildings made by hands. He wants to live in a living temple. God wants a temple that His people may learn the divine law by which they can be indwelt by Him. This does not mean that they shall see God's glory for a moment only, but shall be filled and indwelt by that glory for eternity.

What is God's purpose in choosing you? He does not want your money, your gold or your silver, but He wants you. He wants you that His glory may fill you, that His presence may be with you, that you may live anew and walk anew. God wants your body to be His temple, so that His glory may come into you. That is the reason why He has chosen you. When you have allowed the God of glory to enter into your heart as His temple, you will know the truth of the indwelling of the God of glory.

May God help us to see His glory and to reflect it in our faces.

September 21

"And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house!" (2 Chron. 7:2).

The first necessity is to be God's chosen vessel and to come into the hand of the Lord. This demands a willingness on our part. After this step it will be made clear how the Lord will bring us into the other two experiences, which lead the one into the other.

Now we come to the second part: 'that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation.' In verses 1 to 50 Stephen narrated the whole history of the nation of Israel to show God's purpose in choosing that nation. We can divide the story into seven types. The first three are represented

by Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. From these we pass to Egypt, the wilderness, Canaan, and the divine temple built by King Solomon, Stephen began his account with Abraham and ended with Solomon. He could go no further, for his accusers were very angry with him, but he had said all that was necessary. Stephen had revealed the secret that God had been preparing His nation that they might receive from Him a great heavenly joy. (2 Chron 7:1-3). That was the happiest day for them as God's people, the zenith of the whole history of the nation. When the work of the temple had been completed according to the heavenly plan given by God, the fire came down and consumed the sacrifice, and then God's glory filled the whole temple. All the children of Israel bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, and worshipped and praised the Lord. They were filled with heavenly joy, for they had never seen such a thing before.

September 22

"Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

First, God chose Abraham and through him Isaac and Jacob. In the lifetime of Jacob they went to Egypt, from whence they came to the wilderness, and after wandering there for forty years, came into the promised land of Canaan. Even in the land they had many years of waiting and suffering but at last in the temple, they saw the fulfillment of God's plan when He filled His house with His glory.

There is a deep significance in the way God chooses His men for His purpose. Is there not something in the fact that Abraham's wife was barren, Isaac's wife was barren, and Jacob's wife, Rachel also was barren? Surely God is showing how, of ourselves, we are barren. Sin came into the world, and brought the whole world into a state of barrenness, and that barrenness cannot be removed by human effort. Israel was barren for many years that men might know that because of sin we remain barren. The first lesson God wants us to learn as human beings is that we are by nature barren and unfruitful.

Do you want heavenly joy; the joy of fruitfulness? Then the first thing is to learn the power of His resurrection, and to know that the same power is available to you to conquer death and barrenness in your life. He died and was buried and rose again, that He might make available to us the power of His resurrection.

September 23

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me, ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Isaac is another type. Genesis 26:12: 'The Lord blessed him', and 'he became very great' (verse 13). He being God's chosen vessel, prospered wherever he went. Then all the men of the land became jealous and said: 'Go away from us!' but God told him to go to a new place. There again, 'Isaac became prosperous and very great, and again the men became jealous of him. But he kept on moving under the guidance of God till he came to a place called Beersheba, a far better place. God was with him, because he refused to be led into strife,

hatred and enmity; and finally when he came to Beersheba, the place of covenant, God said to him: 'Fear not, for I am with thee; and will bless thee' (verse 24).

When a man is blessed by God, he is bound to be opposed and hated. The devil will try many means to bring God's people into strife and hatred, and seek somehow to take away their joy, peace and faith. Is it thus with you? Then keep on moving in the direction God indicates and refuse to be involved in hatred, strife and jealousy, and God will bring you at last to Beersheba. He will give you much more than you ever had before. Our Lord said in John 16:20, 22: 'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you'. Refuse to be dragged into strife, hatred and jealousy. That is the message of Isaac.

September 24

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against... the rulers of the darkness of this world... wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:12-13).

Even before the birth of Jacob God purposed to make him a prince, but Jacob was deceived by his own mother. She loved him so much, and he did what she commanded, and tried to realize the promise of God in a wrong way. It was only after many years of struggle that he became a prince with God and men. From the life of Jacob God wants to teach us how to become princes and partners with God. Then came Egypt. The children of Israel remained there for four hundred years. Their numbers multiplied and Pharaoh became bitter against them. God allowed them to remain in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt for so long that they might learn how cruel and unkind and wicked was the enemy.

They had to work from early morning till night, carrying heavy stones, and bearing heavy burdens, without proper wages, till at last, in their misery, they prayed: 'O God, deliver us ; see our affliction and our tears,' and God heard their crying and sent them a saviour. But before they could be delivered God sent ten plagues upon Egypt. Why? That the people might realize the deceptiveness of the enemy. Every servant of God must learn how wicked and cunning is the enemy who is trying to drag God's children into darkness. When he forgets the power of the dominion of Satan and darkness, the servant of God will surely come into bondage.

September 25

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

When the children of Israel came into the wilderness they were made to wander there for forty years, doing no work, having no field and owning no building. As for their food the Lord said: 'I will send manna every day.' They had to do one thing, however, and that was to remain in the place where they had pitched their tents till God's cloud over the tabernacle moved forward (Num 9:18-22).

Immediately the cloud moved they had to go forward, whatever the time of day or night, and whatever the direction it might take. They could not go as and where they liked while they were in the wilderness. They were God's people, and they must be led, governed and controlled by God in everything. It was a simple lesson, but one which was very hard for them to learn. God wants you and me to learn the same lesson; to learn to be led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14). God's people are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is Saviour and also Guide.

The child of God must be controlled and governed by Him alone. This is only possible when we die to our own will, and it takes many years to learn that lesson.

From the wilderness God's people came to Canaan, the land of promise, the land flowing with milk and honey, in itself a symbol of God's provision for His people. God commanded them never to make any covenant or league with the inhabitants of the land, nor to intermarry with them, yet by disobedience they failed God. When the men of Gideon came to Joshua, without seeking God's counsel, Joshua made a league and the same men became a snare to them. Gradually mixed marriages were entered into, idol worship and other forbidden things became the rule of the day, and the people became blind spiritually.

September 26

"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17).

If a child of God wants to enjoy the heavenly Canaan there has to be a life of utter separation from the world and worldly ways and pleasures. Why is there barrenness among God's people everywhere? They have good teaching and yet they are blind and barren. One cause is the league and covenant so many make with the world, some in the matter of clothing and fashions, some by marriage, and others by business. How can such know the provision in the Lord Jesus Christ? He is our heavenly meat and drink, and gives abundant satisfaction; but you must be true to Him. Perhaps it will mean that some will have to remain unmarried for many years, because of the difficulty of finding a truly spiritual husband or wife; but it is better so than to live a life of pleasure and to remain spiritually barren.

Latter came the building of the temple. God chose David, and after many years of suffering, he was given the heavenly plan (I Chron. 28:19). God also showed David the site for the temple. David gave the plan and material to Solomon and later he built the temple. Solomon was a man of peace, and the work was done, not only in times of peace, but the very labour also was performed in conditions of peace and quietness till every small detail given in God's plan was complete. Then the king and the people brought sacrifices and offerings, and suddenly fire fell from heaven, and the whole temple was filled with God's glory.

Note the steps by which God led His nation. He led Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob as individuals, then He led His people to Egypt, then through the wilderness, then into Canaan, then to the building of the temple, and to the glory of God dwelling in the midst of His people with heavenly splendour and power.

September 27

"If children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).

Note the deep longing of the psalmist in the verses from Psalm 106:4, 5, and, with him, make the last part of verse 5 your own 'that I may glory with thine inheritance.' When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, we become partakers of the great inheritance. For us as believers sometimes it takes many years to learn the value of our heavenly

inheritance. Let us learn it now. The Word of God is so clear and plain that, when we receive our Lord as our personal Saviour, we are given the right and authority to become the sons of God. We are God's sons for eternity, because of His everlasting love, which we have received by faith. We have a share in the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The enjoyment of the inheritance depends upon your faith. Rom 8:17: 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' These things go together. If you can say: 'I am a child of God', then automatically you can say also: 'I am an heir of God and fellow-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ.'

You must believe that you are called and chosen for a great and everlasting inheritance. By receiving Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord we enter into a full spiritual partnership. First of all we become partakers of the divine nature: 2 Peter 1:4. Secondly, we are partakers of the Holy Spirit; Heb. 6:4. Thirdly, we are partakers of the heavenly calling: Heb. 3:1. Fourthly we are partakers of the God's holiness: Heb 12:10. Fifthly, we are partakers of the glory to be revealed: 1 Peter 5:1. Sixthly, we are partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Col. 1:12. Seventhly, we are partakers of the Lord Himself: Heb. 3:14.

September 28

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in Light" (Colossians 1:12).

How wonderful to be partakers of God's heavenly inheritance. Our loving God has chosen us to bring us into that spiritual, incorruptible and glorious inheritance which He wants us to enjoy. You must believe that you have a share in that inheritance. There are so many believers who think only of Salvation in terms of going to heaven. They think that God is merciful and forgives sins so that they can go to heaven, and it does not matter whether they are given even only a small corner, so long as they are there.

That is how the enemy deceives you and deprives you of your share in the heavenly inheritance. You have to claim your share and enjoy it by living an overcoming life. The Lord Himself says in Revelation 21:7: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.' Even if you inherit all the things of the new creation, you will have no greater claim than that over your Lord. You will be able to say: 'He is my Lord, my own God; I can go to Him at any time, and anywhere.' In this way we are giving a foretaste of heaven upon this earth.

In the early days of your life, as you kneel to pray, you may think of prayer in terms of earthly things. We ask God only for earthly things. If God answers our prayer, we say: 'He is a very good God!' But when troubles, trials and sorrows come, or someone dies in the family, then we ask: 'where is God? Where is He? I have done so many good deeds yet the Lord has laid upon me so many trials. He has forsaken me and forgotten me.' Is that true? You are His child. His ways are higher than your ways. He has called you to a glorious heavenly inheritance, and the enjoyment of the inheritance depends upon your ability to overcome.

September 29

"Walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

In Romans 8:18, we read that it does not matter how great and painful our sufferings are, for they are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in and through us. We must believe from our hearts that God has called us to His glorious kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12). I believe God has called me to His glorious kingdom; and if we believe that truth, we shall walk worthy of His calling. You are a child of God, His partner and vessel, and a king, a prince and a priest. Walk worthy of Him. We have to be prepared for that glorious heavenly calling through manifold trials and temptations, hardships and difficulties, and we have no right to tell Him how to train us. God only knows what is best for us, God only knows how to train us, and His chastening, rebuke and trial are for some purpose.

There is an inheritance bound up with the nationality which we receive from our parents. In the same way, as God's children, the character of our Heavenly Father, and the traits of our heavenly nationality must be manifested in us. As sinners we are full of sins, shame and defilement, but after conversion we find some divine virtues in evidence. These are not from family or generation, nor from earthly nationality, but from our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord's qualities and virtues are being transferred to us; kindness, gentleness, love, longsuffering, patience and forbearance. This is our heavenly inheritance, which we have not received from our parents or teachers or preachers or professors, but from the life of God in us. However, there must be a willingness on our part for these virtues to be manifested in our lives.

September 30

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7).

As children of God we have become Kings and priests. That is our privilege (Revelation 1:6). Do not think these words are meant only for apostles, martyrs, and prophets. They are for everyone. All those who are washed, cleansed and purged by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ are born into the heavenly family, and are made princes and priests unto God.

By inheritance you have also a future. If you are born into God's Royal family, you know that one day, you will have to reign in His kingdom for ever and ever, and you are being prepared for that. Finally, we are chosen to be the inheritance of God Himself. Our heavenly father loves us with an everlasting love. That is our heavenly inheritance. Let us enjoy His love in its fullness, the love of the Heavenly Father, Friend and Bridegroom. But He also longs to be satisfied in us. How much do we love Him? Alas! How often we are ashamed for our heavenly inheritance and our Heavenly Father.

Alas! There are many believers who are ashamed to own the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. When they go among friends and neighbors, they are ashamed of Him, and yet when they are in trouble they cry: 'Oh Lord, help me; help me; I want your help!' The Lord readily helps, but that does not satisfy His heart. He wants us to be perfectly one with Him, to be fully possessed by Him, to be to Him as the Bride to the bridegroom. That is our eternal heavenly inheritance and His. May the Lord give us a deeper longing for that glorious inheritance, and the true understanding of all it means.

10. The Secrets of a godly walk

OCTOBER

October 1

"it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 13:11).

Abraham is called the friend of God in three different places in God's Word (Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chron.20:7; James 2:23). The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 15:15 that He wants His disciples to be His friends. He wants us to know all His heart's secrets, for friendship always becomes stronger as friends share the secrets of their hearts. In Genesis 18:17 God said before He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah: "How can I hide this secret from My friend Abraham?" God wants us to be such friends of His as to whom, when we come under His heavenly plan, He can reveal hidden mysteries. Because we enjoy such fellowship with God. God intends that the things that are hidden from the wise and the prudent should be revealed to us (Matt. 13:17). In 1 Peter.1:12, "the things which the angels desire to look into", refer to the mysteries which are hidden from the angels and God's prophets and great men. Yet which are revealed to those who become the friends of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord appeared ten times to Abraham from Genesis 10 onwards. In chapter 12 He appeared twice. At each appearance He revealed a secret of divine friendship. It is a step by step revelation (cf. Gen 12:1).

October 2

"Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

To be true friends of the Lord Jesus Christ we must be delivered from all our old friendships and brought into new friendships. In John 15:19, we realize that we have been pulled out by God's mighty hand from the world, and worldly relations and friends, who cannot enjoy this friendship with God.

On many occasions the Lord said one word, or by one touch healed the sick. In the case in Mark 8:23, however, He led out the blind man by the hand, showing us by this example how to be a true disciple or friend. Till that day the blind man had been led by his relations or friends. But the day the Lord led him out, He was saying in effect: 'You must now let Me help you and lead you day by day.' So He took him out from old associations, not because He was afraid to perform the miracle, but for a purpose, the very same purpose for which Abraham had been compelled to leave his kith and kin, and all his friends, and had been given new relations. This is the first thing we have to learn if we want to enjoy God's divine friendship.

The Lord promised Abraham a sevenfold blessing in chapter 12:2-3, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This sevenfold blessing is intended for any person who desires to be a friend of God.

October 3

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).

"I will make of thee a great nation." Once you are saved then through you, many more may be saved; and through them one by one, many more again may be saved. We shall all become part of His family, and through our prayers, testimony, love, service and other means, others may be saved.

"I will bless thee." We begin to receive from God all kinds of eternal and special blessings day by day. Because of the new life and because of His love we have everlasting peace and everlasting joy, love and friendship.

"I will make thy name great." When a man dies he is forgotten completely. No matter how great he may be in this world, but a man who is born again, and all those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, will, at death be welcomed in heaven as kings and priests.

"Thou shalt be a blessing." Others on earth will be comforted, strengthened and encouraged through us.

"I will bless them that bless thee" means exactly what the promise says, and *"curse them that curseth thee,"* is a promise that He will not allow any weapon of the enemy to prosper against us.

"In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That promise indicates that we have a message to all the nations. Wherever the Lord may take us, we can give the same gospel and the same message. This sevenfold blessing is intended for everyone who is prepared to draw out from the world and worldly associations.

October 4

"And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

In verse seven, God again appeared to Abraham. Abraham was learning how to worship God. When he first obeyed God and left everything behind, the Lord appeared to him and taught him how to worship. Now by the altar he was learning the simple lesson that somebody had to die in his stead to make him righteous. The altar shows the death and the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He came to the world, to die in our stead, and for our sins, in order to make us righteous. The more we learn to worship God the more we will realize how high a price He had to pay in dying for us in order to make us righteous.

We do not become supernatural when we are born again. We have to face human problems. Our bodies remain as bodies of clay and we have to face trials, sorrow, sufferings, sickness and all kinds of disappointments, yet we find God continues to protect us all the time (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 2:9; Psa. 24:7). We need to remember, whenever we find ourselves in great danger, temptations and trials due to human weakness that the Lord knows how to protect us.

We often find in the beginning of any new path that we are full of fears, but the Lord in His grace and mercy protects and saves us from these fears. We have to be faithful to Him and trust Him and obey Him, and then we discover a step by step growth in spiritual life and faith.

October 5

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37,38).

The Lord Jesus Christ said in John 15 of those who believe in Him, 'I have not called you servants but I have called you friends' because He wants to give us all the things which He received from His Father. As we begin to grow spiritually we will enjoy our friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ and will talk to Him very freely, and tell Him all our secrets, and He will also talk to us lovingly and show us many new things day by day. We are reminded in Matt. 11:25 that the things that are hid from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes.

Within a period of forty years God appeared to Abraham ten times. At every appearance He revealed a new secret of divine friendship, in fact, these appearances can be regarded as ten steps of divine friendship. We have already seen in chapter 12, how God appeared twice to Abraham. The third time God commanded Abraham to leave the country and go to a new country, but God did not tell Lot to go with Abraham. Only because of human sympathy Abraham agreed to take Lot with him. But after awhile there came a strife between Lot's servants and Abraham's (Gen. 13:7). Human affections always lead to strife, and we must remember that every affection must be sanctified by the Lord Jesus, whether it be affection for husband, wife, children, parents, brothers, sisters or relations. Unless it is sanctified, it will one day bring trouble.

October 6

"Whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven the same is my brother and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

How often we find people who prefer to love their relations than to do the will of God. They think: 'How can we leave so and so? How can we hurt so and so? How can we wound so and so? At the same time they grieve the holy Spirit by going against the will of God.

It is quite clear that Lot had no desire for heavenly things because when Abraham asked him to choose the land which lay before him, Lot chose a good land not far from Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.13:10) Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent towards Sodom. Lot knew the condition of Sodom and Gomorrah at that time. It was not a secret. The cities were well known everywhere for their wickedness and shame. Abraham said to Lot: "If you go to the right, I will go to the left and if you go to the left, I will go to the right."

Lot chose a place not very far from Sodom and Gomorrah. He was attracted by the fertility of the land. He might have thought "I am not inside Sodom and Gomorrah. I am going to live outside." But in chapter 19:1 he was inside Sodom. In those days the elders of that city came to the gate for judgment, and soon he was made an elder of that city. He probably intended to live outside the city, and possibly thought that he could do some good when the men of Sodom and Gomorrah requested him to be an elder.

October 7

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jeremiah 45:5).

We can see clearly what was in the heart of Lot. He desired popularity and when he became more wealthy he also became more ambitious for name and fame. Many believers in the same way become ambitious for name, power and authority. They are also anxious to become leading men in the assembly, not because they have spiritual concern but because they want a name. Please take warning, and do not let worldly prosperity deceive you. What God gives in His own time is far better than earthly riches.

We see in Gen. 12:1 that even though Abraham had to make a very big sacrifice in leaving Ur of the Chaldeans, yet God had some other way to compensate him. He did not have to go to Sodom and Gomorrah to get more cattle and money. God in His own way began to supply his need. So we believers should not adopt worldly ways or methods to get more money or income, for God has His own way to give us what we need.

We are told in Gen. 13:14 that after Lot was separated from him, God appeared to Abraham. After he had obeyed God and separated from Lot, the Lord gave Abraham further instructions. He said to him, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever" (v.14-15). God was showing to Abraham more and more what kind of an inheritance He had for him and for his seed.

October 8

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm 16:11).

It is only as our attention is enlarged that we can understand spiritual things. God told Abraham to look northward, southward, eastward and westward, and to walk through the length and breadth of the land to claim His inheritance by faith. God said in effect: 'I am going to give you an inheritance which cannot be measured by any human measurement.'

For us also, it is only by our spiritual enlargement that we can know and measure the inheritance God has given us. God was showing Abraham that it was only through fellowship with God, that is, with the living God, that he could understand God's ways. It is difficult to spend time with the living God, because your feelings and thoughts trouble you, or they are wandering here and there. Yet it means refreshing and blessing to have time with the living God (Isaiah 40:31), and by true fellowship with the living and loving God you become stronger and stronger.

The Lord met Abraham at Hebron. There he was building an altar by which he began to thank God for making him righteous. The more we worship God the more we enjoy true fellowship. Say to Him: 'Oh Lord I have no request other than I want to be with Thee and Thy presence. I want to stay in Thy presence just to feel that Thou art with me. Such a fellowship will inspire you and God will be able to show you what He wants you to do, according to His own will.'

October 9

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends". (John 15:15).

The Lord wants us to enjoy His friendship and to share His secrets just as two friends who are very close to each other are able to share each other's secrets. To be able to do this we must learn to speak to Him freely and hear His voice clearly every day. We must be led by Him in every detail of our life. If day by day we spend our quite time prayerfully we will find the Lord Jesus Christ speaking to us from His Word, and showing us many secret things, which are hidden from the wise and prudent. But to gain friendship our response to Him must be a true one.

Now in chapter 14 God revealed Himself to Abraham for the fourth time, this time in Melchizedek as a type. At that time Abraham was returning from fighting and defeating the enemies of the King of Sodom. Abraham rescued Lot and his family and his goods and the people with him (V 16). At the same time he rescued the King of Sodom and his men.

The king of Sodom was extremely thankful to Abraham for rescuing his men and all his property. He came to Abraham and said generously: "Give me the persons and take the goods to yourself." This could have been a very big temptation to Abraham but God had prepared him for it, when he spoke to him through Melchizedek.

October 10

"Jesus Said unto them: I am the bread of Life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst". (John 6:35).

As we see from Hebrews 7:1-3 Melchizedek was a high priest of the most high God, " Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning nor end of life but made like unto the Son of God. He abideth a priest continually". Melchizedek brought bread and wine with him and blessed Abraham. This was a spiritual food which Abraham needed to overcome temptation. In this way Melchizedek becomes a type of our Lord Jesus Christ who has become both our bread of Life, and our great high priest.

The thought that our Lord Jesus Christ is our bread of Life is repeated seven times from John 6:48 onwards. Just as we drink water when we are thirsty and eat food when we are hungry so also we eat and drink our Lord Jesus Christ when we are spiritually hungry and thirsty. In this way we can conquer any temptation. All of us are subjected to many temptations every day and God has made for us a loving provision of victory by making our Lord Jesus Christ our daily bread and drink.

Abraham was tired and weary after his long march finally to overtake the enemy and fight with them. Abraham did not refuse the goods because he was rich and did not need them, but because he wanted to show that he was wholly and solely dependent on God for all his needs. This is the first thought.

October 11

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus". (Phil. 4:19).

Abraham refused to defile himself with the defiled things of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. This is the second thought. That is why he refused to take thread or shoe-laces or even a piece of bread. It is when we are very hungry and thirsty that we have many temptations. We get doubts about trusting God for all our needs.

Some servants of God say that they serve God but, by means of letters and photos. They beg for money. For this reason they send reports of their work. They want more and more money. They are not satisfied. So they remain in want and remain barren spiritually. But if you just trust God he will provide you with all your wants even to your shoelaces. Don't go to the King of Sodom for help, for this is how many believers lose their faith. To get a job or promotion they go to worldly people and use worldly methods, or trust their aunts and uncles for money for their marriages.

It was to enable Abraham to withstand the temptation of accepting the offer of the King of Sodom that he received spiritual food, and, being strengthened he was able to conquer temptation when it came. In these days of food shortage in India there is the temptation to send reports to America or other countries. What hypocrisy! Such deceive themselves and others, and lose faith in God. But if we honor God as did Abraham, God will honor us, and supply all our needs.

October 12

"The Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying: Fear not, Abram: I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great reward". (Gen 15:1).

In Genesis 15 we have the fifth appearance of our Lord to Abraham, when the Lord appeared to Abraham in order to test his faith. In "the whole armor of God" we are given a shield of faith (Eph 6:16); for it is only by a strong living faith that we can defeat the enemy. In Mark 11:12 the Lord Himself calls it the faith of God, as we can see in the margin. In Galatians 2:20 it is described as the faith of the Son of God. It is only as we are indwelt by God Himself that we can have strong faith. God said to Abraham in this vision in Genesis 15; 'Abraham, believe Me and My Word'.

God said further: "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward". In Psalm 84:11 God is described as a "Sun and Shield". The reward depends on faith. Without real active faith, we cannot receive a reward. The Lord uses suffering and trials to give us faith (I Peter 1:7). God had spoken so clearly to Abraham, yet it was hard for him to believe. (Genesis 15: 2,3). Abraham had waited for many years and finding that he was childless, he went about to make his will leaving his property to his chief steward. God appeared to him to save him from making a mistake. Because of our limitations we often have many doubts. Sometimes we may have strong faith, but doubts return to trouble us, and God in His love and mercy intervenes again and again.

October 13

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom 4:3).

God Himself appeared to Abraham at the right time. He called him outside and said to him: "Look heavenward, Abraham. Don't look at yourself, or your wife, or your limitations, or your wife's limitations. Don't look at circumstances but look upward, and then your faith will become strong. Look heavenward and count the number of stars. So shall your seed be".

Till today nobody knows the number of stars. They are so many and so far away. God knew he could not count the stars, but He purposed to strengthen his faith, and it is only by looking upward that we can have faith. The enemy will make us look downward, upon our limitations,

our shortcomings, or our failures. Our eyes should be constantly on Him, and we must take hold of His promises by faith (Gen. 15:5-8).

Jeremiah 34:18 throws some light on this passage. In those days when two parties had to make an agreement, they would take an animal and slay it and divide it into two parts. Both the parties would pass between the parts of the animal, thus making a promise that could not be broken. In the same way God was making a covenant with Abraham; He told him to take three animals and two birds (v. 10, 15,17) and slay them, and cut them into two parts. Then the Lord caused a burning lamp to pass between those pieces, thus making an unbreakable covenant with Abraham (vs. 13-17).

October 14

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom 4:20).

Abraham was listening to God, and God was able to tell him beforehand how his seed as a nation would be in Egypt for four hundred years and would return to the land in the fourth generation. God was thus giving the Amorites and Hittites, the people of the land, four centuries in which to repent of their sins. If they would not repent of their sins, they would be judged. Leviticus 18:23-25 is a description of the defilement of the land, when the children of Israel returned to it out of the land of Egypt. God had waited for four centuries for the nations living there to repent, but because they did not repent they had to be judged. God told the children of Israel to destroy all the cities utterly, and their inhabitants.

The Lord Jesus Christ today has made a covenant with us through His own blood, and by that covenant we possess His inheritance. At the same time we will be used by Him to judge other powers (I Cor 6:2,3). For such a privilege we must be given a strong active faith, a faith that overcomes doubts, and listens and obeys when He speaks to us.

October 15

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb... being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom 4:19,21).

At each appearance God revealed to Abraham something of the tenfold secret of divine friendship a step by step revelation. If you have steps in your home you will not jump over them, but climb them step by step. So it was with Abraham. God appeared twice to him in Genesis 12, then in chapters 13,14 and 15. Chapter 17 records the sixth time He appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years old and past the age when a man could expect a son. Both he and his wife had become like dry trees. At that time he had to believe that through he was old and his wife equally old, God was able to fulfill his promise (Romans 4:19-24).

It was only at this time Abraham got real faith, and for this kind of faith in him God had been waiting for 25 years. When God first appeared to him he had faith, but it was not a strong faith, (Heb. 11:8). He obeyed God and straightaway left his country, kith and kin, and went away to a strange and new country. Even though it required much sacrifice and faith to obey like this, God was not satisfied. Step by step He was preparing Abraham for a stronger faith till he and his wife had become too old for child-bearing. Until God put new life into their bodies they could not have a child. That was the great secret of faith through which they

understood something of the power of resurrection; and by that same power we can also conquer our temptations.

October 16

"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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ". (I Peter 1:7).

We find the apostle Paul in Philippi saying with desire, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection". Even though he had seen many miracles performed through his ministry during the past years, and though God had worked through him mightily, yet he was saying here in his old age "I count all things but loss... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection," which is the highest power available to believers. Many believers go on scheming and planning for many years, seeking to have power in their lives. They think that by seeing dreams, or by having certain experiences and visions they will obtain power. But they still remain weak. They do not realise that the power of resurrection is at their disposal. If we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ died in our stead for our sins, and also believe that He rose again for our justification and to live in us by his Holy Spirit, then by faith we can receive into us day by day the power of resurrection for every situation, every temptation and every need.

To give us such a faith the Lord will take us through many painful situations and trials. We see that thought in I Peter 1:7,11. Gold has to be refined by fire. It cannot be cleansed by soap and water. The gold is brought to the refining fire again and again till every little impurity is burnt away. In the same way to deliver us from doubts and unbelief we have to go through refining fires.

October 17

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death". (Phil 3:10).

Unless we have faith to appropriate the power of His resurrection day by day, the Lord is not satisfied. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "Christ liveth in me", because He is the living Christ who conquered death for you and me. It is the living Christ that lives in us to conquer our temptations every day, by faith in the power of His resurrection. Even though the Ephesians were taught by Paul and Apollos and Timothy, yet Paul prayed for them (Eph 1:16-20) that they might know the exceeding greatness of God's power, even the same power that God wrought in Christ when He was raised from the dead. In Ephesians 1:3 he says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." For such a blessing we must know how to receive into us the power of His resurrection, and to gain that knowledge and faith, the Lord will take us through trials, and sufferings, hardships and difficulties.

Just as God appeared ten times to Abraham, so the Lord appeared ten times to His disciples after the resurrection. He first appeared to Mary at the sepulchre, then to the men, and then to Peter, then to the disciples on the way to Emmaus and in the evening to all the disciples in

the upper room. Then He appeared to five hundred, then to James, then to Thomas, then at the sea of Galilee, then at Bethany when He went to heaven.

October 18

"Is anything too hard for the Lord" (Gen 18:14).

We find it very helpful if we study these appearances together, that is the appearances of God to Abraham and the appearances of the Lord to His disciples. In Genesis 17:1 the Lord said: "I am the Almighty God". This He said to enable Abraham to enjoy God's mighty power. "I am the Almighty God; there is nothing too hard for Me." Nothing is impossible with God; He can do all things. The God of love and mercy wants us to have the faith that can experience and enjoy the power of Christ's resurrection.

God was saying as it were: "I am the Almighty God and I am going to pour power into you" (Vs 2 and 6). Abraham was asking for one son at the most. But the Lord said to him "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." Apart from this experience Abraham would never have known what was in the heart of God for him. Even so in our sufferings we will never know what God has in His heart for us, how much God wants to give us. It is only by faith we can realize our blessings. The devil tries to weaken our faith again and again. Rather than trust God we look to man for everything, and that is why we find servants of God suffering everywhere.

October 19

"Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power" (Col 1:11).

We have got to prove that our God is an Almighty God. The one whom we believe and preach is a living Christ, and one who is willing to give us everything. Because God wanted to reveal the power of resurrection in Abraham, He came to make a covenant with him (Gen. 17:11). Colossians 1:11 says: "strengthened with all might;" Abraham did not get a child by human strength, for he and his wife were very old. God had to put new life into both their bodies. That is the power of resurrection, the death-conquering power of divine life. It is by that power they were able to get a child. By faith we receive that power by appropriating it for every trial and temptation and test. The same Lord who died for us and who comes to live in us, can give us that power.

All of us have the same problems. The enemy creates in our minds doubts in many circumstances, but God lovingly keeps on rebuking and helping us, God knows our human limitations (Gen. 17:17), so He sends messengers again and again to give us strong faith and to take away our fears and doubts (Psalm 103:4).

October 20

"And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (Gen 18:2).

In Genesis 18:1 the Lord appeared to Abraham for the seventh time, this time in the plains of Mamre. According to Genesis 13:18 Mamre is Hebron, and Hebron means fellowship. Now Abraham had learned the privilege of enjoying that fellowship with God. In chapter 18:1 we

see Abraham sitting in his tent door with great expectation. He is not happy exactly, but expectant. He is looking forward to something. As you grow spiritually you may be given admonition of coming events. There is something in the heart that will warn you to be on the lookout. In this way we are prepared beforehand.

When God began to talk to Abraham alone, Abraham recognised that he was talking to God, though He had disguised Himself as an angel. Though they came as ordinary men Abraham welcomed them with great joy. In Genesis 18:7, with what great joy Abraham ran to the herd and brought in a young calf. He told his wife to take three measures of fine flour. Now one measure of flour is enough for ten people, but they prepared food for nearly thirty people. Though he had but three guests, his joy was so great that he wanted his whole family to have fellowship together. Whatever he could prepare, he prepared in abundance, and they came to him with great joy.

October 21

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

Though the two men appeared to Lot as angels, yet what a half-hearted welcome he gave them. Lot knew that these men were angels, but he stood where he was to welcome them. He gives them no mention of food, though he gives them water to wash their feet. He told the angels. "You stay here and go away in the morning" (Gen. 19:2).

However, the angels said: "We will abide in the street" (Gen. 19:2). They were quite willing to stay in the street all night because of the half-hearted welcome given by Lot. They knew that the wife and children of Lot were not of one mind with him, and therefore the angels were not willing to go inside, so Lot had to press them to do so.

We read that Lot himself "baked unleavened bread, and they did eat." Lot had chosen to stay very near Sodom. The result was that his own people became full of worldly pleasures. Many believers lose their joy and happiness because they are attracted by worldly honour and wealth and glamour. Abraham received those guests because he thought they were God's messengers. He received them as strangers at first. That should be our attitude also; to receive even strangers in His name with great joy.

October 22

"And the Lord said: shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17).

The Lord appeared to Abraham to strengthen his faith. The Lord said: "Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son". Sarah laughed within herself saying: "After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" The Lord asked: "Why did Sarah laugh?" God knew beforehand that doubt would come into their minds, so He came lovingly to take away their doubts.

In Genesis 18:16 Abraham walked with the men. Then the two men went on to Sodom and the Lord stayed behind to talk with Abraham personally. He said: "Abraham is my friend. I know him and I cannot hide any secret from him. I have watched him and I know how he looks after his family. Now I am going to tell him My heart's secret. My time has come to judge the men of Sodom and Gomorrah". Abraham stood before the Lord while the angels went on to Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord Jehovah talked to Abraham alone. As the friend of Abraham He talked freely with him. He did not send His angels to speak to Abraham

but came in person to do so. Here God is saying, "I will talk to Abraham myself. I have an important matter to talk with him."

October 23

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

What a privilege we have, what a great honor to be His friends. Just imagine, the Lord Himself coming to talk with us. But first we have to be tested and approved to be worthy of this privilege. In Genesis 18:19 the Lord said: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him". So the Lord had been watching Abraham and his household all this time; how he had been giving God's message to the whole family faithfully. Every family should have family prayer regularly. If we will teach our children God's Word regularly and faithfully we too can become God's friends and that which is hidden from the angels will be revealed to us. When God told Abraham about the coming events, Abraham interceded for the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. He gained boldness as God's friend. We can also have boldness and liberty to intercede for others, and to claim grace and mercy for those who are in darkness. Thus we can become God's co-workers. (v. 33).

The Lord had no desire to share His secret with Lot, because Lot had grieved Him by preferring to stay near Sodom and Gomorrah. If any one of us, like Lot, prefers worldly pleasure and honor, the Lord will not come to us nor reveal to us His secrets. Let us take warning, lest the things of this world are more to us than the promises of God.

October 24

"Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Gal. 4:30).

When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac she told Abraham (Gen 21:10) "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." This was grievous to Abraham. Because of his natural affection for Ishmael, Abraham felt hurt and wounded when he heard these words. Then God appeared to him again, for the eighth time.

In chapter 21:10 we see Abraham being governed by human affection. Having learnt her own bitter lesson Sarah says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son". Not all who are called Christians have part in the inheritance of the saints in light. Nominal Christians no matter how good they may be outwardly, have absolutely no share in it. They depend upon their own righteousness for salvation.

Even though Abraham had a great love for Ishmael, Ishmael had no share in God's kingdom. He was born of the flesh but Isaac was born of the Spirit. The Lord had put new life into the body of Abraham before Isaac was born. So Isaac is a type of the power of resurrection in the Bible. Unless we receive by experience the power of resurrection, we have no share whatsoever in God's kingdom. Make sure to which group you belong: whether to that of Ishmael or to that of Isaac.

October 25

Jesus...said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10:21,22).

A man of God was staying in a certain place for a Gospel Campaign. He was staying with a very nice Christian family. When he was going away from that place he prayed, "Lord, give me a message for my host and hostess. They have been so good to me, so please give me a very nice message." God gave him the message and it was, "One thing thou lackest". The man of God said, "Lord, they have been so good to me. How can I give them such a message?" The more he prayed the more the same message was given to him again and again: "One thing thou lackest" (Luke 18:22). He did not have the courage to say this directly to his host and hostess. So he wrote it on a piece of paper and pinned it on to the window curtain. Then he came downstairs, and thanked his host and hostess, and went away; after he had left the lady of the house went upstairs, and found the piece of paper that was pinned to the window curtain. She read the words, "One thing thou lackest" and called her husband. "These are the final words of the man of God to us," she exclaimed. So they both knelt down by the window and prayed, "O God; show us the meaning of these words left for us by the man of God".

When they prayed like this God showed them the meaning, how till that day they were not born again, but were depending on their own good works for their righteousness. They had not yet received by experience the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

October 26

"Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?. Job 2:9,10.

Now Abraham was in great spiritual danger at that time because he was being governed by human affection for Ishmael. So God appeared to him and told him to hearken to his wife for whatever she said was very important. Many parents, wives, husbands and children disobey God because of love for someone else. This human affection must be brought under subjection to God's affection. Though this subjection is very painful it is very safe. Abraham had to send his son away from him and God would not have appeared to him if he had not obeyed him. Though it was very grievous to Abraham, yet he obeyed God. It is very painful at times to obey God's word and God's command, but Abraham was open to God's rebuke. The purpose for which God appeared to Abraham in chapter 21 was to show us how to be governed by the Spirit at all times and never by the flesh.

It you want to be God's friend never allow anyone to come in the way of obeying God, not father, mother, brother, sister, children, friend or wife. In a subtle way the enemy will bring before you these objects of affection, and sometimes cause a wife or child to start weeping to hinder you from doing God's will.

October 27

"And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac... and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning... and went unto the place of which God had told him" (Gen. 22:2-3).

Tell me honestly and truthfully, have you not disobeyed God on occasions when your loved ones began to weep as they heard that you wanted to obey God? This is why many have not obeyed God's call for service. Similarly many have refused to go when God wanted them to go somewhere else. Some have refused to take baptism. Others have not given God what He demanded from them. Tears of loved ones have been the cause of disobedience, and the Lord has had to speak to you and rebuke you. However loving and lovable that person may be, you cannot love anyone more than God. God's Word says, "Whosoever loveth father and mother, husband and wife more than me is not worthy of me".

Having passed the test, Abraham was able to go through another test. He had been on the point of making a mistake in connection with Hagar and Ishmael, but God spoke to him and he obeyed. Then came a very severe test in chapter 22. So God appeared to him the ninth time, in the same year as the happening in Genesis 22. There was also a temptation for Sarah in the case of Isaac. So Abraham did not tell Sarah anything about God's demand of Isaac.

Abraham knew by experience the danger of telling his wife Sarah certain things. He knew that if he told Sarah that God had asked him to sacrifice Isaac she would immediately start weeping and say: "O my son Isaac, my only son, surely God won't ask such a thing from us". So, guided by the Holy spirit, Abraham took Isaac away without saying anything about the whole matter to Sarah."

October 28

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18).

The ram in chapter 22 was brought there by God Himself. There was no fear that the ram would run away. God had brought it there, and Abraham found it caught in a thicket by its horns. Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice the ram? For a purpose that ram was caught in the thicket. God was telling Abraham as it were: "Now Abraham, you have obeyed My voice fully. Without any question or hesitation you offered your son on the altar. So like the ram caught in the bush I am caught to you and bound to you. You will now command Me and I will obey you". What a mystery! God bound to Abraham! You don't realise what a privilege it is to obey God; that it is your right to do so. As we obey God whole-heartedly we can command God. He says in Isaiah 45:11, "Command ye Me." Then He will listen to you.

This is the tenth and last time that God appeared to Abraham. See the blessing God gave to Abraham this time. "Since you have heard My voice and obeyed Me I am bound to you and you can command me. I am at your service". It is a heavenly mystery. As we obey God fully we become worthy of God's whole kingdom "And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen 22:17 last part). It is God's purpose to give us the whole kingdom, victory over our enemies, and dominion over His works. "Fear not little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

October 29

"Thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Gen. 24:4).

Abraham gave a solemn warning to his servant, when he put him in charge of finding a wife for his son. "I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of the heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell" (Gen. 24:3).

This is the first warning to believers. You cannot be joined with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14), and this is the first thing you must keep in mind. Abraham gave his servant a very solemn warning against the daughters of the Canaanites. He was to be guided step by step by divine wisdom. We see from the scriptures that Abraham's servant depended upon God for every detail. He did not set about this business by going to this person and that person in this matter (v. 12). He applied a big test to make sure of God's will. If he had depended on human wisdom he would have first made sure that the girl belonged to a suitable family.

But he did not have any such considerations in his mind. He thought only of God's will in this matter, and prayed with great faith, which goes to prove that he was a man of prayer and very spiritual. He knew how to make sure of God's will. He was not governed by his own judgment or feelings.

October 30

"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Gen 24:58).

Eliezer put a very big test to the Lord "Behold I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac" (vs. 13, 14). The servant had ten camels with him. Camels drink five large pots of water each; and the girl had to undertake to draw water for ten camels. What a big task! Only God could make such a test a success.

Now we can see the divine wisdom given to Eliezer. A girl who could draw water for ten camels would have to be a girl with a large, willing and tender heart. Eliezer was in search of a girl who was both humble and willing. Being a spiritual man, he was looking for a spiritual girl. Rebekah was such a girl. When her parents wanted her to stay for a longer time with them before going to Abraham's house, she refused and was willing to go with the servant immediately (v.58). When she knew from him how the Lord had led him step by step, she knew that she was God's choice for Isaac, so she went with Eliezer without questioning.

October 31

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... for what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14).

Rebekah was a spiritual woman. She knew how to find God's will. These things show that God gave divine wisdom to Eliezer to make the proper choice. If you want to find a partner for your daughter, your son, or yourself, please ask for divine wisdom, grace and help. Apply every test to know God's will, and don't be governed by your feelings or wisdom or judgment.

In Genesis 24:63 we read that Isaac went out to meditate or pray, in the field. While Eliezer was looking for a bride for him, Isaac was praying about the matter in the field. He must have been praying. 'O Lord, guide Eliezer so that he is able to make the right choice for me.' Abraham prayed. Eliezer prayed and Isaac prayed, and this is how they found God's will. Let this be your example. Do not make any mistakes in this matter, for the question of choosing the right partner is a very important and big matter. Many believing parents, as well as the young people themselves make mistakes in this, and, when it is too late, they suffer. Look around at the many unhappy homes and take warning.

11. The secrets message of salt

NOVEMBER

November 1

"Ye are the salt of the earth". (Matthew 5:13).

I believe there is a precious message for us in this fragment from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. The Lord sums up the whole Sermon of three chapters in these few words, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'.

What is the meaning of salt? Firstly, it adds to the taste. Human beings in every country like to have salt in their food. Any dish may be very well cooked, but if it has no salt nobody will like the taste. The Lord's intension is to gather to Himself a people who, like salt, can bring health and enjoyment to the whole world.

Salt also represents faithfulness. There is a saying in Hindi which says, 'Be not ungrateful to him whose salt you have eaten'. Thus, salt is usually spoken of as representing loyalty and faithfulness. Salt is also used to reserve things. Generally butter gets spoiled if kept too long, but if you add a little salt to it, it keeps for a long time. In the same manner, if you put rock-salt in ghee it will be in good condition for many months; otherwise it will smell bad after some days. Salt is also used to preserve pickles. Fish, beef and mutton are also preserved with salt. Thus salt represents something that preserves things for a long time.

Salt also represents an abiding friendship. In 2 Chronicles 13:5, we read of a 'covenant of salt'. In the margin it is rendered 'a perpetual covenant of friendship.' Every meat offering in the Old testament was offered with salt (Leviticus 2:13; Mark 9:49,50). So salt represents eternal life, and faithfulness in friendship and love. All this helps us to understand why the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'.

November 2

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you". (John 20:21).

Without Christ this life is like food without salt. If you are given saltless food morning, noon and night, day after day, you will say that without salt the food is no good. In the same way life without Christ is of no use.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry He was baptized in the river Jordan and was tempted in the wilderness. After this He straightaway went to Galilee. He said to some men: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men, and straightaway followed... Him' (Matt 4:18-22). The Lord Jesus did not begin His ministry with a multitude.

After forty days of temptation in the wilderness He came to the land of Galilee. He had to travel more than a hundred miles to do so. Why so? It was because the few men, whom He wanted to make His disciples, were living in Capernaum. This was a well-known town by the Sea of Galilee, and Simon, Andrew, James and John lived there. Imagine, for the sake of four

or five men, the Lord Jesus traveled such a long distance. Why? Because He was going to make these few men to be salt for the whole world. After He has chosen these few men the Lord went about teaching in the synagogues in that area. Then the multitudes came after Him. He never called them, but they just came. As they saw the power and authority manifested through Him, they flocked around Him. They came to Him to receive healing and deliverance. They came to Him from all classes of society. They came from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond Jordan.

November 3

"At that time ye were without Christ... having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

The people living in Galilee had everything in plenty. It was a fertile country. It was regarded at that time as a land of plenty. They had very good water, plenty of fruits, and corn and fish. As far as their earthly needs were concerned they had no lack. In spite of all this there were people among them suffering from all kinds of diseases.

Decapolis means 'a group of ten cities'. It was about 80 miles from the river Jordan. These ten cities lay in a large valley. They had very grand buildings, for this was a district of beauty and luxury, with many activities intended to bring comfort and pleasure to the people. In spite of all this, these people were unhappy, and they also came to the Lord Jesus.

Jerusalem was the center of religion. The temple was there. There were to be found the High Priest and many Levites who served in the Temple. There were prophets to give messages from God to the people. The people of Jerusalem could boast of their Temple, their prophets and their forefathers, but they were blind *spiritually*. Our Lord drew people from all directions. That is why we find that, as the people heard of the fame of our Lord, they came to Him from different places right from Decapolis to Jordan. What was their state? They were all like food without salt. They had no real joy in their hearts or in their lives. They were absolutely useless.

November 4

"If the salt have lost his savour wherewith, shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt 5:13).

In Matthew we read that our Lord looked at the multitudes and began to deliver His message. He told them that they had come there for healing, but healing would not make them happy. He healed them, yet they were not happy. They had no true joy. They needed salt. Our Lord was saying, 'When you become my salt, even though you are few, through you I will give true peace, joy and happiness to the whole world'. That is why He chose only a few men in the beginning. He never asked the multitude to follow Him, but He said to a few chosen men, 'Follow me, and I will make you the salt of the earth.'

Salt has to be purified before it can be used. Salt was manufactured in Palestine from the waters of the dead Sea. It had to be purified before it was used for cooking. There are several stages mentioned in Matthew 5:3-12. Those who follow the Lord have to go through these stages and then only can they become true salt.

Today we find sorrow, suffering and unhappiness everywhere. Men's lives are like salt without savour. When the salt is refined, it is separated into two parts; one has taste and the other is tasteless. The latter will be thrown out. Sometimes it is used to fill up the basements of

buildings under construction. The salt which has lost its savour is quite useless. It is not useful either for trees or for human beings or for birds. Our Lord wants us to be good salt that we may bring new taste and new joy into many lives.

November 5

"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 14:34,35).

The Lord is speaking here of salt which has lost its savour. As He saw the multitudes coming to Him. He was comparing the life of a sinner to salt that has lost its savour. He could see two kinds of people: one, a very small group, which could be called salt; the other, a large group, perhaps more than 5,000, who could be called salt that had lost its savour. The good salt was very small in quantity, answering to the handful of disciples that followed Him. The others were those who loved just to see miracles and eat loaves and fishes; and the Lord compared them with salt that had lost its savour.

The dunghill provides food for ants, worms, and other small insects. Our Lord says the salt that has lost its savour is not fit even for the dunghill; it is useless, so much so, that if you bring ants, worms and insects and put them in it, they will not stay there long; for even they cannot thrive in it. The salt that has lost its savour is useless and must be thrown away somewhere. Such is the condition of the person who has not been saved.

If you cannot say truthfully, joyfully and clearly, that the Lord has forgiven you your sins, washed away your defilement, and given you a new divine nature, you are like the salt that has lost its savour. No matter who you are, you are useless. Your stay upon this earth is only a burden. Whenever you go and wherever you live, you will bring nothing but misery and sorrow. Those who are not truly born again can never say truthfully that they are of any help or use to others. Their life is being wasted.

November 6

"To Israel He saith: All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:21).

The people of Palestine were scattered because of their disobedience to God and were living in all countries of the world. Now we see them coming back, and being forced by many circumstances, to settle in Palestine. They have brought with them wealth and knowledge from the other countries, and in twenty five years have changed the land now occupied by them, from a desert into a fertile country. Had you gone to Palestine twenty five years ago you would have seen nothing but a desert. Now you find a beautiful country with very prosperous cities everywhere. They are still building new roads, schools, and universities. Thus they can show from the Scripture how, long before Christ came into the world, the prophets had said that the land which had become a desert, would again become fertile. They have carefully preserved the Scriptures. I spent a few days in Palestine with believers who are Jewish converts, and they told me how they cannot but feel sorry for their countrymen. With so many advantages, they are still in darkness and blindness. They can really be called salt that has lost its savour. They are in total spiritual blindness. They are bitterly opposed to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will not allow anyone to preach the Gospel openly

these days. They do not mind evil coming into the country; in fact they have already brought with them many evils from Europe and other countries. But they do not want the Gospel. They are like salt that has lost its savour.

November 7

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27).

The Lord told the people who went after Him, that they were following Him only because they had eaten of the loaves. They were offended at these words and went away (Cf. John 6:5,26,27 and 66). They thought it was wonderful to be fed miraculously without labour and even without the trouble of cooking food. So the Lord tells them in verses 26,27: 'Ye are seeking for the loaves to satisfy you. It does not matter what kind of a loaf you eat, it will never give you true satisfaction. I am the bread of life; you must eat Me. I will teach you how to eat Me. Then you can live for ever'. When they heard these words they became angry and were offended and walked no more with Him. They had come so near but failed. They could have received God's kingdom, but they went away empty. They were salt that had lost its savour.

Can you be compared with good salt, or are you only like salt that has lost its savour? How many enemies, friends, strangers and relations have been spiritually benefited by your life? We preachers love salt. Every time our throats get hoarse and rough we use salt. There is nothing better than that. How thankful we all are for salt. Just a small quantity brings relief. That is how your life should be. By nature, we are like red pepper. Rather than bringing relief and comfort, we hurt the feelings of others and bring pain. There are others who bring blessing and you feel sad when they are gone. Like a small quantity of salt they brought you joy, comfort and encouragement and refreshed you.

November 8

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corin. 5:17).

It is only by the Lord Jesus Himself coming into our life, that we are able to live like salt. When you are changed by Him, wherever you go, you will be called by a new name, and people will receive you and welcome you like good salt. Some people find joy and pleasure in serving others. This is because they have become good salt. Whether young or old, if you have the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in you, you will look for an opportunity to help others. You will bring comfort, joy and relief to others, and then you will find your own life also become full of joy.

We cannot have any fellowship with sin. By nature all men are sinful, so they cannot be our true brothers and sisters. Those who belong to the Lord and do His will become our brothers and sisters for eternity. Our Lord is saying that if you want true brothers and sisters who will love you for all eternity, then you must first learn to be free the partiality of human love.

How much comfort, inspiration, peace and joy do others receive through you daily? Or are you like the salt that has lost its savour? The Lord is powerful to change you. Come to Jesus and say to Him, "O Lord, till today I have been like salt that has lost its savour. Will you

change my life today so that I can bring comfort, and be fruitful to my fellowmen, in my college, in my business or wherever I am?”.

November 9

"Ye are the salt of the earth:... Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:13,14).

Our Lord had one great objective before Him and that was to call a few disciples for the work to be done on the earth. He had come to seek and to save sinners that He might provide salt and light for the whole world. Whatever the Lord did, He did with that thought in mind: to provide salt, which could bring everlasting joy to mankind; and light, which could give everlasting life.

Some of you may have seen how salt is made by the seaside. Sea-water which is full of salt, is evaporated and the salt remains behind. This salt has to be purified before it can be used. God wants good, pure salt. Each one of us can become that good, pure salt. Even though we may be a very small number, wherever we are we can be sufficient to bring joy to the whole country. While we require many bags of rice to provide food for thousands, we do not need so much salt. A small quantity of salt can give taste to the food needed for many people. There are cities, towns and villages where believers are just a few in number, perhaps only two, three, four or five. Yet those few believers can be sufficient to bring joy, gladness, happiness and light to all the people of that place. That is why the Lord compares believers to a city on a hill. The city on a hill can be seen from many miles away. Even one believer is sufficient to tell people that there is life and light in the Lord Jesus Christ.

November 10

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

In some parts of North India, when a visitor arrives, they will first of all give him something very salty to eat, and a glass of water. In doing this they say to the visitor, 'we receive and welcome you, and we give this to show our love to you". Thus salt stands for true and fervent love.

True love can only be shown by believers. When the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Ye are the salt of the earth", He means that through you He wants His eternal life to be shown, declared and preached wherever you go. People of many races, speaking more than 1,155 languages, have received that same love through those who are born again. People of all conditions, like cannibals, murderers and thieves, who had been absolutely rejected by society, are now testifying to others of God's love.

Earthly love is dependent on earthly conditions; but divine love goes deeper under every circumstance. The Lord said, 'Love your enemies! What wonderful salt! The persons who hate us and curse us can be loved by us. We can love them not only to give them temporary relief from their suffering, but to make them partakers of the same love for eternity. We can offer people something for eternity, wherever they may be. As we come in contact with them, we will be able to give them the real taste of divine salt. We see in verse 3 of Matthew 5, how we can be made such true salt. We must have a humble, broken and contrite spirit. That is the first stage in the purification of salt.

November 11

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

God does not live in buildings which men have made. He lives in a broken and contrite heart. What an honor and a privilege! Only when God Himself comes to live in us, can we become the salt of the earth. Only then can we show true love to all men and even to our enemies. Otherwise our hearts will remain full of jealousy, enmity and corruption. The whole world, these days, is full of hatred and bitterness; nation against nation, brother against brother, friend against friend, and children against parents. Why? Because there is no salt in them.

Sometimes God uses many painful means to make us truly humble. Read what David says in Psalm 51:17. He learnt his lesson through a very bitter experience. Although he was a wise man and a noble king he was deceived by the devil. After that downfall, David learnt a lesson. He had begun to realise the filthy condition of the human heart.

Now David cried, "Oh God, forgive me my sins; against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow". He was conscious of his inward defilement. We do not realize how much corruption, evil and defilement we all have in our hearts. It is only the light of God coming inside that can enable us to see it. When you know what you are, you will cry like David, "Lord, purge me and wash me thoroughly. Cleanse me inwardly and outwardly. Cleanse me from all evil". The heart from which such a cry comes is called a broken and contrite heart. If you want to become good salt like David, then cry unto the Lord to cleanse you.

November 12

"Create in me a clean heart, Oh God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51:10).

It is only after David became a man with a broken heart, that he became a man of true salt. This is the first stage in becoming divine salt: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. 5:3). Now see what reward is received by such people. Not only do they become God's dwelling place, and God's salt, but God's Word says here: 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven! They became partakers and heirs of God's Holy kingdom. You have to become more and more humble before God. It is a life-long lesson. That is why the Lord says we should know our own spiritual poverty, and our inward corruption. God's grace and love are available to change us.

Now the real light is the light which you receive in the Lord. The light of God has to come into us so that we may see our own personal condition. He says very clearly, "I am the light of the world." He is the Eternal light. In the new creation there is no need of any kind of lighting. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the Light. We ought to be thankful when we are made to see our true condition. Then we can call upon Him with a broken heart saying, 'Yes, Lord, I never knew; my heart is very wicked, sinful and defiled. Have mercy upon me!' Then He replies, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; and with cords of love I have drawn thee.' We must have a broken and contrite heart. That is the beginning of the process of becoming salt. The holy, loving God, the great God, the living God, wants to come and dwell in us. May God give us a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

November 13

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted". (Matthew 5:4).

These words are full of meaning, and this is the second step in making us good salt. We find that as soon as we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ from our hearts, we have to face situations which we had never thought of before. Before our conversion, our friends, relatives and parents praised us very much. But as soon as we decided to obey Lord Jesus Christ, our friends become enemies! Our brothers and sisters, children and parents who love us very much, have begun to hate us! In my family I am the eldest son, and so from childhood my mother, father, brothers and sisters showed me much love. They never said a word to wound me or hurt me. But when I became a Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ became my personal savior, changed my life and delivered me completely from my evil ways and gave me new life, then my relations and friends rejected me!

When I came back to India in 1933, my parents met me in Bombay. Even though I had come back to India, after seven years, they did not want me to go home unless I agreed not to tell anyone I was a Christian. At that time I thought, if I had come back to India as a drunkard and adulterer, they would have welcomed me. Now that my Lord had changed me and given me a new life, they did not want me! After a few moments, I heard these words, "no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Whosoever loveth father or mother, brother or sister more than Me is not worthy to follow Me." So I said to my mother. 'I am sorry, my Lord comes first.' Then they both left me in Bombay and went away.

November 14

"The God of all comfort ... Comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble" (2 Corin. 1:3,4).

There are times when we all have to go through sorrow and criticism. You cannot help but be sorrowful when your own brothers and sisters hate you, curse you and abuse you. But thank God, we are comforted by our Lord Jesus Christ. As time went on, God began to speak to all in my family in His own way. I allowed them to curse me and abuse me and I never said a single word against them. Also, in my heart I had no hatred for them. I thank God for the privilege of suffering reproach for my Lord's sake.

Those very ones who were cursing and abusing me, afterward came to me for comfort. During those days the Lord drew near to me and said, 'I am with you always'. He became very dear to me in my sorrows. He took me through many sorrows for several years. I say it only for His Glory. I spend many hours in tears. I was not wanted by anybody in the family. But the time came when they would call on me in their every need.

A few years ago my third brother lost his eldest son, a young man of 21 years. On receiving the news I went by air to see him. When I saw his condition I did not know what to say to comfort him. He said to me, "Tell me, where is your God now? What has happened to him?". I kept quite. I could not answer him. I just knelt down and prayed, 'Lord, comfort him; his sorrow is so great. He has lost his eldest son a very nice young man. If only thou wilt comfort him, he will change'. That same day he got up, changed his clothes, shaved and went to work in his office. What a comfort that was! So we ourselves have to mourn, in order to be able to comfort others.

November 15

"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

He says, 'ye are the salt of the earth.' This is possible only when He comes into us. He must become your living saviour. When He became my saviour, I did not know anything about salvation, or new birth, or atonement. I did not know anything about the devil. But the Lord appeared to me and showed me the awfulness of all my sins. Then a loving voice came, 'This is My body broken for you, and this is My blood shed for the remission of your sins'. I said, 'Lord, these words are beyond my understanding. I am so stupid. I don't know what these words mean, but I know they are thy words. Although I do not understand, I believe them'. Then came a small voice saying, 'thy sins are forgiven thee'. From that time I was completely changed. My taste for sins were taken away. My loving Lord came into my heart. I thank God even now for that happy day. I was a blasphemer and yet he forgave me. I am not worthy that He should love me and make me His for eternity. I know He is a loving savior. He loves me. I besiege you, therefore, do not reject Him. Do not be afraid of suffering and sorrow. He will give you everlasting comfort. He will lead you day by day. In every suffering He will say, 'My son, My daughter, I am with thee, do not be afraid'. I have proved Him in every sorrow. I love Him. He is my God. He will become your loving savior. He will become very precious to you.

November 16

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return... with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ has been seeking to save sinners with the object of making them as salt which will bring new joy, new peace, a new life to mankind. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to give joy to men. In every era people had a great desire for joy, but they do not know how to get it. They do not know who God is, where He is and how to find Him and talk to Him.

I remember the hunger and thirst I myself had in my un-converted days. According to the teachings of Sikh religions, I thought God was very far away, and I used to wonder how human beings could ever get near him. I used to pray in my childhood days, 'O God? Who art thou? Where art thou? How can I find thee?'. Many times I only felt I was getting further and further away from God. In the same way there have been many men like me through out the ages searching for God, longing for peace and trying to know Him as He is. In the end they have given up in despair.

Heavenly Joy has to be shared with others once we get it. We can never keep it with ourselves. Have you found that joy? How many people have found through you the same joy which you have? Your joy will become more as you share it. Our Lord says, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'. Where ever you may be, you will spread happiness. We can become pure salt, by having a pure spirit and a broken heart. We will be comforted by our Lord when our relations and friends begin to hate us or despise us. We have to go through every kind of sorrow to know divine comfort. Thus we will be trained to give comfort to others.

November 17

"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

Many people have no idea how much God has planned to give to them. He will give us much more than we can ever think or imagine. But we would have to enter into God's heart to understand the privilege that is offered to us. We find it so hard to believe that God can offer us so much (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9,10 ; Matt 13:17 and Rev 21:7). Are they not wonderful verses? 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for them that love Him.' Again, God's word says that there were many prophets and righteous men who desire to see these things, but could not. God not only wants to forgive us our sins but He wants to give us all that He has. Our Lord knows fully well what heavy burdens all of us have to carry as sinners. So our Lord says to all of us, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' What a loving invitation. The Lord Jesus was willing to pay the price for our sins. He paid it fully, even for our sinful thoughts and imaginations.

Our Lord came into the world to recover every loss. He will not be satisfied till we receive everything from God; everything in full, as purposed in the heart of God. This we can do by learning meekness, and this is the third step in becoming good salt. only thus can we inherit all the wealth in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why He says, 'Come unto me... and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' This is a life-long lesson to learn. We must get rid of the pride we had before our conversion- pride of family, country, friends, relations or qualifications.

November 18

"By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

We take pride in ourselves. Yet all these things will soon pass away. Talents and gifts will soon pass away. We are nothing before God. In the Bible we read that the holy God calls our righteousness 'filthy rags'. Such is our condition before God! After our conversion we are made into a peculiar treasure. But it requires meekness in us to understand our heavenly calling. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10: 'the grace of God which was with me.' He was a man of God whom the Lord used so mightily. Judging by his family, knowledge and education, he was a highly qualified man of the world. It was afterwards that he became an Apostle. Yet he says, 'By the grace of God I am what I am'.

When we are born again, God gives each one of us some gift or other. But we should not feel proud of it. Whatever we receive from God we transmit to the people around us, and do so because of His grace. There is no reason why we should be proud of the talents given to us by God to be spent for others.

God will use us only when we are humble and meek, thankful to God everyday for His grace. By humility alone can one be qualified for God's kingdom and not by bible knowledge or educational qualification. Please see Matt. 5:5, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.' Any believer can obtain this inheritance. Thank God, our inheritance does not depend upon our education or any such thing.

November 19

"My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

After my conversion I went on praying for two years asking God to show me the secret of His

power, so that my life could become triumphant and fruitful. After two years of prayer, one night the Lord met me and talked to me. 'Tell me, Bakht Singh, how were your sins forgiven? I replied, 'Lord, I believed that I was the greatest sinner living. I believed that you shed your blood for my sins and you forgave my sins'. The Lord said to me, 'Tell me now, do you believe that you are the weakest person living and that you have no power? At once all my doubts disappeared, and I learned my weakness and helplessness without my Lord. He is so faithful and He knows my weakness and He said, 'My grace is sufficient.' It is abundant grace, sufficient grace, for any person. It does not matter who we are, in His hands we can become wonderful instruments, if we remain humble and meek. I can say that I am weak and helpless at every step, but I believe in His grace. Such faith alone will qualify us for His kingdom.

But first of all, your sins must be forgiven. That is the beginning of the Christian life. All these truths cannot be understood by us without the experience of new birth. Now when we say, 'Are you born again? It means: 'Are you well spiritually? Has He become your loving friend? Does He speak to you? Do you speak to Him? Are you conscious of His presence? If you cannot say Yes, to all these questions then come to His feet right now, this very moment while you are reading this, He will forgive your sins, wash you, pour His love into you and make you a member of His kingdom. But you must first ask Him to come into your heart.

November 20

"Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The Bible proves three things about God. Firstly, it shows that God is. In their folly, men of all races have even been trying to prove that there is no God. But the Bible declares that He is, and that He is a living and personal God; we can hear and feel and speak to Him. Secondly, the Bible shows us that God is love. Thirdly, it shows us that God loves you, no matter who you might be. Even though you are hated and despised by your fellow men, yet I can definitely say to you: God loves you. When once we have tasted Him, then wherever we go and wherever we live, others will be able to taste that divine love through us. The divine Love can flow out from us all the time, not only by our preaching, but by our lives also.

Our Lord wants us to be good pure salt. even though He spoke these words to a very big crowd on the mount at that time, they were really meant for a few disciples; not because He did not want the multitude also to be such pure good salt but because the majority of them were only after loaves and fishes. He summed up the whole sermon in one verse, Matt 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." Consider what a high standard that is! That is why He came to make us perfect. Even though we have been completely ruined and defiled by sin, by coming into our Lord's hands we will become perfect and complete, without spot or blemish.

November 21

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

There are different refining processes to make us pure salt. The fourth stage is given in verse 6 of Matthew 5. The Lord says, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Now, there are many people who claim to be looking for God, but in reality they are not looking for God. They only want something for themselves. To get such a reputation they are prepared to go through very great suffering and sacrifice.

We see in Hebrews 5:12,13,14 how many believers remain spiritual babes for years together. You will find many people like that; it is only when they are in trouble, distress, affliction or sorrow, that they start praying. Many school children and college boys and girls are like that too. Just for their exams they will start praying: 'O Lord, help me to pass. If I pass I will give you five rupees, but if I fail, I will not go to any meeting for two months.' That is how they pray, only when they want something. Very few have that longing for righteousness of which God speaks here.

In the beginning of our Christian life, we long for many different things. Some of us long for signs and miracles. I used to think that if I could see some divine light shining in the room, I would be very much blessed. So I prayed, 'O Lord, send some divine light into my room'. I thought that by seeing some kind of divine light, I would have more power. Then one night as I was praying, I saw some dim light shining in my room. I prayed again, 'Lord, make it brighter!' when I opened my eyes after some time, it was brighter. But again after some time, when I opened my window, I discovered that the light coming into my room was only moonlight!.

November 22

"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 36:8,9).

I used to have a great longing for a gift of some kind from God. Because I am not able to sing, I prayed for nine years that the Lord should give me the ability to sing songs or play some instrument. I thought that if I could play the violin, I would be able to do great work for God. But God gave me nothing. He left me without any such talents at all. Then a new desire came to me, 'Oh Lord, I only want Thee. I have no other desire now. I don't want any gifts of any kind. I only want to know thee more and more, that you may become more precious and real to me.' From that day on, everything changed in my life, and I found a great sense of satisfaction. The scripture says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." They are the ones who shall be satisfied. When we begin to pray that way we will say: 'Lord, I have no other desire. I have not come to Thee for any favor. I am not asking you for anything but just to be with thee forever and to enjoy Thy presence and to feel Thine arms around me.'

November 23

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee". (Psalm 73:25).

Now some people find it very hard to pray. I also found it very hard in the beginning. I used to read the Bible many hours a day. God took away the desire for the cinema and other worldly things. So I gave up all other books and used to read the Bible the whole day. I never got tired of reading the Bible, even though I would read for twelve hours or more. But I could not pray for more than five minutes. I tried very hard, but always, after a few minutes, my thoughts would go wandering, or I would go to sleep. This went on for more than two years. Then I thank God He taught me how to speak with Him. That became my most precious how to speak with Him. That became my most precious experience and the Lord took away from my heart all others desires. I used to say whenever I went to Him, 'Lord, I have not come to Thee for money, or for knowledge, or for other favors. You can keep me anywhere, send me anywhere, I want only to be with Thee. Give me the privilege and the honor of being with

Thee and Thee alone.' Whenever you thus enter His divine presence, straightaway all tiredness, fear, or anxiety will disappear. Whatever may be your wounds, when you go to the Lord Jesus Christ, do not tell Him your worries, troubles, or sorrows; He knows them before you tell Him; you kneel down and say to Him, 'Lord I want to come and spend this time with Thee'. Let me enjoy Thy presence.' Then all your troubles will vanish, and when you get up from your knees, you will feel blessed and refreshed.

November 24

"Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (I Pet 2:5).

The question is, with what can soul's hunger and thirst be satisfied? The answer is given in Psalm 36:8, 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house.' Only by coming into God's House can God's people be fully satisfied. We ourselves are the living stones which have to be put together to become God's House, according to I Peter 2:5.

When I visited Palestine, I saw there some very big stones in an old Jewish building called the Synagogue. If you take a small stone and strike one of these huge stones in the wall, it will produce a very sweet musical note, like the note of an organ. Every stone has a different note. Till today they do not know how these stones were cut. People come from great distances to see these stones, to knock them and listen to the sweet note. In the same way, when you are born again, you become a living stone of the Lord Jesus Christ, with heavenly music in you. Let people curse us, strike us, and speak ill of us, we can still say to them, 'The Lord bless you, and make you more happy, and forgive you'. Even though he was being stoned Stephen said: 'Lord lay not this sin to their charge.' That is, he was saying, 'Lord, forgive them'. The Lord gave him heavenly music. All such living stones put together make God's House.

November 25

"Jesus Christ Himself... the chief Corner Stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:20,21).

After my conversion I used to wander to different places, to different church buildings, with hunger in my heart. But in spite of such big buildings, highly qualified preachers and grand organs, I would come out of the buildings with my hunger unsatisfied. One morning I went for a walk in the streets of Vancouver. There I saw a small hut. I thought, 'Let me go there for Sunday worship.' When I went in, somebody with a bright shining face came to greet me. He said, 'I am happy to see you.' Without even asking my name he asked me to come in and told me that there were only a few believers, but they loved the Lord. Everyone of them had Bibles. I was very happy there in the little hut.

It is only by assembling together with God's children and worshipping God in spirit and in truth, with understanding of the heavenly mystery of God's house, that our hunger will be abundantly satisfied. But sad to say, many believers do not know the meaning of the true church. We believers, put together, make the true church. Only when we take our full share of the fatness to be found in the House of God can we find our hunger and thirst fully satisfied. As we worship the Lord, and as we see Him and feed upon Him, He will become more and more real to us. We will then be able to give the taste of good salt to the earth.

November 26

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

'Blessed are the merciful' (v. 7) this is the fifth stage. Only a true believer can show real mercy and kindness. They will be able to show mercy to anybody, anywhere and at any time. The most unlovely can be shown mercy, but it will be possible to us only if we have divine love. This love cannot be produced in us by any human activity or effort. It must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Only by such divine love will it be easy for us to forgive others. There are many hard-hearted Christians. Whatever love they do show is only in words and not from the heart.

We get an opportunity to show mercy in Christ's name when others ask us to forgive them, (Matthew 18:35). I have known in my experience that many people, when they were touched by God's word, went and apologized to the persons concerned. But those persons would sometimes reply, 'Yes, I forgive you, but I don't talk to you. I will forgive you, but please don't come to my house any more'. That is not forgiveness. You must forgive them from the heart, even though they might have sinned against you many times (cf. Matthew 18:21,22). Be merciful and kind and forgive others as our Lord also has forgiven you. See again Colossians 3:13,14. If you want to be merciful, then please be willing to forgive those who ask for forgiveness.

It is only the Lord Jesus Christ that can put such love into our hearts. Oh, praise God, the 'salt' is a blessing, not only to our friends and relations but also to our enemies (cf. Romans 12:20,21). "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

November 27

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

People often make fun of us when we preach in the open air, and say to us 'We want to see God. Show us your God, then we will believe Him'. They do not understand that before they can see God, they must have a pure heart. The Bible says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". They shall see Him, not for one moment or one minute or one hour only, but for eternity. They will see Him in His full glory, and they shall be very near to Him.

God's Word says in 1 John 1:7 that the blood of Jesus Christ goes on cleansing us continually. Let me explain this. The eye is so made that whenever any dust or foreign matter, however small, gets into it, the eye starts blinking and watering, until the dust is washed out. Thus the eye-ball is always kept clean. In the same way the blood goes on cleansing us. We always find some evil thought or other trying to come into our hearts. They will not go away except by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we say by faith, 'Oh Lord, cleanse me', straightaway we are cleansed. The Lord will not say, 'I have no time now. I will come and do it tomorrow.' On the other hand He says, 'Cry unto Me and I will answer'. How can we know that we are cleansed? Because then we will be able to see God. According to John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." When we have been cleansed in our spirit we will know God, see Him and be with Him.

November 28

"Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt 5:9).

By nature, all of us were God's enemies. When we were born again we become children of God. When you are born again you become a peacemaker. Then God's enemies will become God's friends through you, and this ministry is a privilege given to you as a child of God.

Is God speaking to you: 'Follow Me, follow Me'? Do not resist Him. Do not waste your time arguing with God. How the devil tries to prevent us from obeying God! May God help you to obey Him even though He might send you to the uttermost parts of the world. You must be willing to undergo much discomfort in the preparation. Do not think much of human qualifications. God can use any one of us if we are willing to yield to Him. But He will not use force to compel you. Only when I said to God, 'I give Thee my life', did He take me and use us. Then in His own way He gave me training. He took me through many painful trials, and I thank God for them all. Now I would plead with you, please obey Him now. Say to Him. 'Take my life and use me as Thou wilt'. When we give ourselves to Lord Jesus Christ, He can bring out through us wonderful, heavenly music. So yield to Him, respond to Him and say, 'My Lord I will follow Thee; take my life; make me Thy witness; use me for Thy glory. I am willing to spend and be spent for thee.' While you are yet young give your life to Him. Do not wait until old age. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." They shall give God full pleasure.

November 29

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10).

Some years ago a Muslim man came to me and said he wanted to become a Christian. He was a university graduate. 'Have you been to meetings anywhere?' I asked him. 'No,' he replied I asked him how he had become interested in the Gospel. He told me that one day he had gone to see a Hindu friend in his neighbourhood. There was a small verandah in front of his friend's house and while he stood there a sweeper came to sweep it, and put his basket in a corner. While this man was sweeping, a Hindu shopkeeper also came to the house and entered the verandah. He was wearing a dhoti, and his dhoti happened to touch the basket. The man got very angry. He removed his shoe and started beating the sweeper with it, saying, 'Why did you put your basket here?' That is my duty; I have only come to sweep,' he replied. So saying, the sweeper turned his other cheek to him and continued 'God bless you.' When it was all over, the Muslim who had been watching said to the sweeper, 'Why did you allow him to beat you? It was not your fault; you were only doing your duty. It is entirely his fault; he should have lifted up his dhoti a little and walked carefully.' But the sweeper replied, 'If my Lord suffered so much for me, should I not suffer a little for His sake?' The Muslim continued his story and said to me, 'It was the sweeper's love that worked in me. That is the reason wanted to become a Christian.' He became a Christian, was baptized and became a good witness for the Lord. Love can be shed abroad in the hearts of others if we endure persecution patiently.

November 30

"Blessed are ye, when me shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt 5:11,12).

If you want to be faithful, you must be prepared to be persecuted by ungodly people. How many suffer because they refuse to take a bribe or give a bribe! Many lose their promotions for many years. So be patient, even though you have to suffer. God's Word says that you are going to be abundantly rewarded in heaven.

There are some Christians who put a thilakam (a religious mark of the Hindus) on their foreheads. They are ashamed to be called Christians. They wish to be identified with Hindus. During the communal riots in Karachi (Pakistan), a Christian woman with this mark on her forehead was seen by a Mohammedan. He thought that she was a Hindu, so he approached her with a dagger to kill her. The woman began to shout, 'I am a Christian!' He asked her, "Are you a Christian?' Then what about that mark on your forehead?' She immediately put her hand to her tongue and rubbed it off. Many Christians are ashamed of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are afraid to suffer persecution. As a result, their lives are barren, shameful and corrupt.

May the Lord prepare us into good salt which not only gives taste, but shows abundant grace and compassion for all those around. As the salt of the earth we can wipe away many tears and bring joy to many homes, and thus make sorrow and misery to flee away from them. God is calling you for such a ministry. If you humble yourself and confess your sins, the Lord Jesus will wash you in His blood and give you a new life. With that life you can become like salt, always giving new taste, new life and new blessing whenever you go.

12. The secrets of the Holy Spirit

DECEMBER

December 1

"Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of the hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18).

The first chapter of book of Revelation shows the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as our everlasting High priest. This book is a message for spiritual recovery. Every loss can be recovered if we obey the divine laws. We read that John heard behind him a great voice, and he turned to see the voice that spoke to him. John was looking in the wrong direction (Rev. 1:10-12). We too get discouraged because we look in the wrong direction.

In Rev 1:20 we see what kind of Church the Lord Jesus Christ is building. Rev. 1:13 shows Christ as the everlasting High Priest. This chapter shows seven features of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. His head and hair were white like wool: Rev 1:14-18.
2. His eyes were like a flame of fire:
3. His feet were like fine brass: Brass stands for judgment. In Gen. 3:15 the prophecy is given that the serpent's head would be crushed.
4. His voice was like the sound of many waters: Rev. 1:15; 19:6.
5. His hands' held seven stars: The Lord holds the churches in His hands.
6. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: In Hebrews 4:12 the Word of God is compared to a sharp two-edged sword.
7. Lastly, His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.

The Lord gave John the apostle a new vision of Himself. Present Christ, not only His teaching, but also His heavenly glory and beauty. Rev. 19:16 reveals Him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

December 2

"These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1).

The book of Revelation is a special message for the end days and a special blessing is promised to those who hear and keep "the words of the prophecy." (Rev. 22:7). Rev 21:7, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" and this book teaches us how to overcome. In this chapter the Lord Jesus is seen in the midst of the churches (Matt. 16:18).

The message of this book can be divided into seven parts, and each part represents a period of history. There are in all seven messages and each message again has seven parts. Seven titles are given to the Lord Christ. By this He makes Himself known to the seven churches, and in each church or age it was the knowledge of Him in the role by which He introduced Himself, that enabled the overcomer to overcome.

The *first* period is pictured by the Church at Ephesus. In Rev. 2:1, speaking to the angel of the church at Ephesus, Christ introduces Himself as the *One who holds the seven stars* in His

right hand. The Lord also introduced Himself to this church as the One *who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*.

He makes a serious charge against the church: "Thou hast left thy first love. I cannot use you. You have lost your love for the Lord." Without love for the Lord He cannot use us. The reward promised to this church is that to him that overcometh will Christ give to eat of the tree of life. (Revelation 2:7). The reward of faithfulness is to eat of the tree of life.

December 3

"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14-15).

The *second* period is that of the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:8). The name indicates suffering. We are called to suffer that we should give forth a sweet fragrance. "Ye shall have tribulation ten days", the Lord told them, --- "be thou faithful unto death." The number 10 stands for testing. Those who stood the test were to receive a *crown of life*." (James 1:12).

The promise to the second church (Rev. 2:11) is that the overcomer shall not be hurt of the second death. The Lord comes to this church as "the first and the Last", the One who "was dead and is alive."

The *third* period is that of the church of Pergamos, Revelation 2:12, Christ presents Himself as "He who hath the sharp sword with two edges." The church also had among its members those of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:15). It is the doctrine of man appointed headship in the church of God. Here the promised reward is *hidden manna*, the spiritual food that we require for new life. There is also a *white stone promised* to the overcomer. With the help of the white stone we too will be able to find God's will.

The *fourth* period of church history is that of the church at *Thyatira* (Rev. 2:18). Christ introduces Himself as the Son of God. He says 'Look at my eyes!' Dare I do so? Unless the sin the Devil causes is judged we cannot conquer the Devil himself.

The promised reward is the Morning Star in Rev. 2:28.

December 4

"Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

The *fifth* period (Rev. 3:1) is the period of *Sardis*. The Lord Jesus Christ introduces Himself as the One who has the Seven Spirits of God. The white raiment promised to the overcomer in v.5 speaks of heavenly beauty. He has promised also that He will not blot the overcomer's name out of the book of life.

The *sixth* period of Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7) is the missionary period. Here the Lord introduces Himself as the One who shuts and no man can open, and what He opens no man can shut. His promise to the overcomers in v.12 is fourfold. The overcomer is to be a pillar in the temple of my God. A source of strength to other believers. He will bear the name of the city of my God, and my name and above all the names of my God.

In Revelation 3:14, we have the *seventh* or *Laodicean* period. The Lord introduces himself as the beginning and the ending. He is the beginning of creation. In v.15 He tells the church how they are in His sight lukewarm, indifferent, no hunger for the Word of God, but only formality, the desire to be decent and respectable; to have many books, buildings and money. When we have longings to share the throne of God, as He promises in Rev. 3:21 we wonder how we can do so with so many human limitations.

We shall share that throne not because of what we are, but because of God's covenant, Psalm 89:34. He promises: 'My covenant will I not break'. The rainbow is the token of God's faithfulness. We must believe and claim His promise.

December 5

"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Psalm 89:34).

There are seven colours in the rainbow which stand for seven covenants:

1. God made *covenant with Adam* in Gen. 3:15.
2. God's *second covenant was made with Noah* (Gen. 9:9-11).
3. God's *third covenant was with Abraham* – an everlasting covenant. (Genesis 17:19).
4. God's *fourth covenant was with Moses* (Deut. 18:15).
5. God's *fifth covenant was with David* (2 Samuel 7:12-13).
6. God's *sixth covenant was with the Lord Jesus Christ* (Psalm 2:7-8).
7. God's *seventh covenant is with the believer* (Heb 10:12-17).

Revelation 21:7 promises that the overcomer will inherit all things. Revelation 4 and 5, These chapters reveal the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly church when the church is perfected. There was a rainbow round about the throne. The seven spirits of God speak of the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 4:5). The four beasts speak of the four great virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ, of which we partake when we come under His headship.

The lion: (Proverbs 30:29,30), is the strongest of beasts. It goes straight across a river even though the current is strong. *The calf:* (Matt 11:28) is used for ploughing. A weak oxen is yoked to a strong oxen who carries most of the burden. *The man* (Heb 2:17). He became a man like us. He allowed Himself to be tempted like us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. So we can come boldly to the throne of grace. *The eagle:* (Deut. 32:11) The eagle builds a nest in a high place. We receive these four characteristics by coming under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 4:9,10. The elders represent the overcomers full of praise. The strongest proof of an overcomer is that he is full of worship. If there is no worship, there is little growth. We may have good teaching, but if there is no worship, there is no growth.

December 6

"Lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6).

In the midst of the Throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain. No commentary can open the book. Only the slain Lamb (Rev. 5:6). The Lamb of God is mentioned in the book of Revelation twenty eight times. This gives a twenty eight fold meaning of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The *seven horns* show that He is a King, for the horns mean kingship (Rev. 17:12). The *seven eyes* speak of the great secret of the fullness of the *Holy Spirit* by identification with the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lamb opens the seals, and as the *first* seal is broken John sees a white horse. The Anti-Christ comes trying to deceive people that he is Christ. The world authorities will appoint the Anti-Christ as their leader, and he will become a world dictator. In the *second* seal the rider on the red horse in verses Rev. 6:3-4 is given a great sword. This speaks of the many wars. At the *third* seal, is revealed a black horse in verse 5-6 which fortells a great famine for food in many parts of the world.

In Revelation 6:8 the *fourth* seal revealed the rider on the pale horse which is Death, accomplished by Hell. At the *fifth* seal, in Rev. 6:9-11, John saw that many who are faithful will be killed. There will be worldwide persecution which goes on to the end of the tribulation (Rev. 10:7). In revelation 6:12-17, at the *sixth* seal, the sun became black, the moon as blood and the stars of heaven fell to the earth. Compare Matt. 24:29.

December 7

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

When the seventh seal was opened the seven angels were given seven trumpets in Rev. 8:7. John was told that when the seventh angel would sound, the mystery of God would be finished (Rev. 10:7). We now come to *Revelation chapters 11 to 19*. These chapters contain a description of the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. The seventh angel sounds, and now all can see that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to reign. We have three weapons with which to overcome the devil (Rev. 12:11).

1. The first is the Blood of the Lamb.
 2. The second is the Word of our testimony.
 3. The third is that we should love not our lives unto death.
- By a bold stand we are able to defeat the enemy.

Certainly it would be better to suffer and die than to worship the beast. Then comes the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9) and He that is called "Faithful and true" comes from an opened heaven on a white horse (Rev. 20:11). The devil is seized and bound for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed (Rev. 20:7,8) and goes out to deceive the nations again, and to gather them together to battle. But fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. Then the devil is judged and cast into the lake of fire (v.10). The dead are raised to stand before the great white throne. Those whose names are not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire (v. 11-15).

The book closes with the marvelous promise; *Surely I come quickly. Amen*; and the writer replies: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*, and adds: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* (Rev. 22:20 and 21).

December 8

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

There is a special blessing promised for reading this book of Revelation. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3) also "Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the Prophecy" (Rev 22:7). The message of this book is intended to prepare us for the second appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason you will find much help by reading slowly and prayerfully the book of Revelation.

Blessing is given to us as we begin this study of the seven names of the Holy Spirit from Rev. 1:1-6; 3:1; 4:1-5; 5:5-6. The number seven in the Bible speaks of perfection. When Christ speaks of His seven Spirits He means the complete and perfect work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. God says in effect: 'You know the meaning of the seven Spirits? Then let them work in you freely and you will be raised to my throne.' The seven Spirits speaks of the complete Spirit.

We find that phrase, the 'seven Spirits', coming four times in chapters 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6. We can divide the work of the Holy Spirit into four parts.

Firstly, there are seven names given in the Bible to the Holy Spirit. Secondly, there is the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit, which goes on very quietly in the believer. Thirdly, there is the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit that can be seen outwardly by other people. Fourthly, there is the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

December 9

"Hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5).

The first name given in the Bible to the Holy Spirit is in Romans 1:4, "and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." He is given that name that we may understand the meaning of God's holiness and we also can become holy, as God is holy. That is God's standard for you and me.

In Hebrews 9:14: we read: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" That is the *second name* we see in the Bible: the *Eternal Spirit*. He has given the Spirit to us to teach us about eternal things.

In John 14:16 we read: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." The *third name* that is given to the Holy Spirit is the *Comforter*. He is called the Comforter, that the love of God may be fully enjoyed by us.

The fourth name of the Holy Spirit is given in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come". The Spirit of Truth will teach me day by day things to come, and at the same time give me a clear understanding of the whole plan of salvation, for by the Holy Spirit we know clearly how we become just and righteous before God; how all our sins are forgiven; and how the Lord Himself is our sanctification and righteousness. Similarly He says: 'He will show you things to come'.

December 10

"The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

The *fifth* name given to the Holy Spirit is found in Galatians 4:6: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit of His Son* into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Verse 7 also "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The Spirit of God's Son gives us liberty and boldness to call upon God at any time.

The *sixth* name of the Holy Spirit is found in 2 Timothy 1:7; "For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." That is the sixth name; *the Spirit of power, and love and a sound mind*. These three go together, so do not separate them: power, love and a sound mind. Some want power but not love. They do not want both but both must go together. The Spirit of power, love and a sound mind will first of all take away all my fear. The same Spirit will give you power over sin and temptation and a sound mind to understand the mind of God, to know God's wisdom and plan, and God's perfect will.

The *seventh* name is in 1 John 2:27 the "anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." That is the seventh name, *the Anointing*. He is called the Spirit of Anointing to save us from the wrong teachings of false prophets.

December 11

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The whole message of the book of Revelation can be summed up in one verse from Rev. 21:7 where God says: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I shall be his God, and he shall be my son." It is very hard to understand on this earth what our inheritance really is, but we accept it as God's Word and believe it without any question or doubt.

At the beginning of this book of Revelation our attention is being drawn to the throne. The Lord Jesus answered all the questions that were in the mind of the apostle at that time, how He was to defeat the enemy, and how He would one day bring all of us to a very high position upon His throne, as He has promised.

Note particularly Rev. 3:21. Thus is the clear purpose of God revealed that our Lord wants us to be there upon His throne. The message is so simple "to him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." Naturally we question how we weak human beings can ever rise so high as to come upon God's throne, but by faith we can accept it easily for God is so merciful, and so gracious that He wants to forgive our sins, and that is why He has made a way of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. It becomes simple to us when we know that the honor is "to him that overcometh", and further that those who overcome will inherit all things (Rev. 21:7).

December 12

"It is God, which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13).

When we say in our minds: 'How can men like us rise so high as to sit upon God's throne? The answer is the 'seven Spirits'. The number seven speaks of perfection and completion. If we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us deeply, fully and freely, we are qualified automatically to sit on the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not by human faculties, not by our cleverness, but by the Holy Spirit working in us daily, deeply, freely and fully. Firstly, as we have seen already, there are seven names of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Secondly, the work of the Holy Spirit is going on inside us very quietly, like the roots of a tree underground, spreading over a large area, going down deeply, but playing a very big and important part. These roots are often tiny, like threads, but they go on spreading and gathering the food necessary for the whole tree. And that quite hidden work cannot be seen by men outside. Similarly, the sevenfold work of the Holy Spirit is going on inside us very quietly. We know it, though others do not always see it.

Thirdly, there is a work of the Holy Spirit that can be seen by our neighbours, friends, enemies and relations. So you can divide the work of the Holy Ghost into a seven-fold unseen work inside, and a seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit that can be seen by others. Fourthly, the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit which is accomplished in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you divide this work into these four groups you have the secret of the fullness of the Holy Spirit for all human beings whatever they may be.

December 13

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

Let us study in detail the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit which goes on in us very quietly, by which work we are being prepared by our loving saviour for our position with our Lord upon His throne. That work is inside, and you cannot see it. When the Lord Jesus comes back the second time, and we see Him face to face, we shall know fully how that work has been going on.

The work of regeneration is the first inward work of the Holy Spirit. By this we are made new in our Spirit. In other words we are born again (John 3:6, Titus 3:5). "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). If we want to know and hear God, if we want to touch Him and feel Him, it is only in our spirit that we can know Him. God gives me a spirit for spiritual things. God tells us so clearly in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." God can be seen, but not by natural sight. We can hear God's voice, though not often with our natural ears.

In Psalm 16:11 we read, "In thy presence is fullness of joy". Yes, we can feel God's presence, not in the body, but inwardly and spiritually. Unless we are inwardly renewed by the Holy Spirit in our spirit we can not see God, touch God, know God, or feel God. When God comes into me and into you He can only come in through the spirit. I am conscious of His life coming into me, and He answers my call. How is this? It is by His Spirit. Why is it that we cannot see Him clearly even in the Spirit? Because of sin.

December 14

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

There are three components in the spirit. Firstly, the *conscience*, that inward faculty which tells me this is wrong. Secondly, *worship*, longing to know the Unseen who is my Creator. Where is He? How can I find Him? Where can I find Him? That desire comes to all of us at different times. Some want to find God in nature, some want to find Him in buildings, temples, some want to find Him by ritual ceremony. God cannot be found that way, but only by the Spirit.

The third component of the spirit is the *instinct* or *intuition*. Suddenly a thought comes. The work of the Holy Spirit is to renew me completely that I may receive into me the Holy Spirit. Before the Holy Spirit can come into my spirit all the guilty stains caused by sinful thoughts, and words and deeds must be washed and taken away. God has put a tape-recorder in our hearts and every word we speak, every single thought we think, and what we do is being recorded quietly in the conscience. That is God's tape-recorder.

When I am inwardly cleansed and purged by God in the blood of Christ, then the Holy Spirit comes into me to make me a new person. That is called *regeneration* and is the *first great work of the Holy Spirit* (Titus 3:5). The *second inward work of the Holy Spirit* is to baptise me, or unite me, or to put me into the body of Christ, to make me a member of the heavenly family, to bring me under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Inwardly we are joined in oneness with all believers of any country you go to. (Ephesians 2:11-13).

The *third inward work of the Holy Spirit is the sealing for safety*. When we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, we have the assurance that my Lord knows and will protect us from every possible danger around us.

December 15

"God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:22).

The *fourth inward work of the Holy Spirit* (Eph. 1:14 and 2 Cor. 1:22) is that *He is the earnest of our inheritance*. The Lord Jesus Christ has called us for a great heavenly inheritance (1 Peter 1:4). The Lord Jesus Christ wants you and me to be ready for our share of the heavenly inheritance. The proof is the earnest of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of revelation is the *fifth inward work of the Holy Spirit* (Eph. 1:16-20). The Holy Ghost is given to me that *I may know how to use that wonderful power of resurrection* for all my needs.

The *sixth inward work of the Holy Spirit* is seen in Eph. 3:16-19, "*that we might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man*". That work is going on inside the believer. The more we are strengthened in the inner man, the more we are qualified to be filled with God's fulness. Try it whenever you feel spiritually empty and barren, or helpless and weak. Get upon your knees and say: 'Lord, please strengthen me in the inner man and pour thy Spirit into me'. Then wait for a while by faith. Finally the *seventh inward work of the Holy Spirit* within us is sanctification (1 Peter 1:2), '*Unto obedience*' and '*sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*.' Sanctification helps me to obey God's Word. The Holy Spirit by sanctifying me gives me extra courage, till I say: I do not care what people say, I will obey my Lord. That is true sanctification because I know all that I have is only for him.

Sanctification is also '*the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*'. The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring into me the sprinkling of the precious blood to keep me perfectly clean every

second, every moment, every hour, not only once in a while. The *seventh work is sanctification for obedience and for constant cleansing.*

December 16

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

There is also a seven-fold work of the Holy Ghost which can be seen outwardly, that is, the seven-fold outward expression of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives which can be seen by our friends and our enemies. It cannot be hid, and that work is made clear to us in Rom. 8:9. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The first is *the work of the indwelling Spirit*. In other words the Holy Spirit will bring into us the virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you allow the Holy Ghost to possess you, others can see the good He has done for you. The Holy Spirit will surely bring upon our faces a peculiar glory and beauty, but to obtain this we have to obey Him. He will make us like Himself. The first great work of the Holy Spirit outwardly is to bring into me those virtues that can be seen by people around.

Col. 3:12-16 lists the virtues of a believer: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye, thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

December 17

"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The work of the quickening Spirit is the *second work* seen outwardly. The quickening Spirit will one day make our bodies immortal. We shall be given immortal, glorified, heavenly, spiritual bodies, and with that body we shall see Him and be like Him, by the power of the quickening Spirit. Even now upon the earth we can have a foretaste of that quickening Spirit. When we feel weak physically, God gives extra strength to serve Him.

The third is the work of the leading Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). This is the third outward expression of the work of the Holy Ghost in our lives. We are so foolish, we cannot find God's will. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). To be sure of God's will you have to have a seven-fold evidence. I will give you in brief these seven evidences of God's will. First of all, 1 Sam. 16:12. We can call this *the witness of the Holy Spirit*. The *second* evidence is in Psalm 119:5. This is *the witness of the Word of God*. The third evidence is found in Daniel 2:17-19, the *witness of fellow believers*. The fourth evidence is in Isaiah 32:17, the *witness of the growing, inward, multiplying peace*. The *fifth* evidence is the *witness of a strong, active, growing faith*. The *sixth* evidence is *the witness of a sure sign*. The *seventh* evidence is in

Heb. 12:21; *the witness of His name being glorified*: These are the seven evidences by which you can find God's will.

December 18

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

The work of the Spirit of adoption, leading to maturity is the fourth outward work of the Spirit. God gives us the Spirit of maturity. He gave authority to His servants, that means to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. They have authority to give God's Word with authority.

The fifth is the work of the witnessing Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom 8:16-17). The fifth work of the Holy Spirit is to teach me about my share of the heavenly inheritance that the Lord Jesus has for me in heaven for we are joint-heirs, and I must learn upon the earth, how to look after it. All my suffering upon the earth is for a purpose, to teach me, to educate me, to help me, to train me to enjoy my heavenly inheritance. The work of the Holy Spirit is to tell me how God has prepared for me in heaven a great inheritance. That is why we are triumphant in our trials, and do not murmur or complain, but thank God for suffering; for through this suffering we are qualified to reign with the Lord Jesus in heaven.

December 19

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:26).

The work of the helping Spirit is the sixth outward work. We do not know what to pray for, but as we begin to obey the Holy Spirit, He will remind us for whom to pray. "And this the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us". (1 John 5:14). The Holy Spirit will remind you almost every day to pray for somebody. He has helped me to remember many people wherever they are and whatever their needs.

The seventh is the work of the Interceding Spirit. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27). The Spirit is given to us that we may be able to intercede for God's saints. I have been reminded again and again with a burden upon my heart to intercede for so and so, and that means perseverance and travail in prayer. We protect them by intercession, by travelling in prayer.

This is the seven-fold outward expression of the work of the Holy Spirit which can be seen by friends, enemies, neighbours or relations. Claim the seven-fold fullness, and He will show you how it can become yours.

December 20

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16).

From the beginning I knew the Bible is the Word of God, but I had to go to it a hundred times before what God has shown me.

Now we shall see the *seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

In Luke 1:34 we read: "Then said Mary unto the angel. 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? Verse 35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." That is the first great work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was *conceived by the Holy Spirit*, and not by human activity. In the same way we also are born again by the Holy Spirit, and not by human wisdom, or cleverness. Unless the Holy Spirit comes into us, none of us can know the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior.

The real work of God is wrought only by the Holy Spirit. We cannot leave Him out, however clever we may be. The Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. Our eyes can be opened only by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 12:3 tells us: "I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." This is a very important truth for salvation.

December 21

"We are buried with Him in baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

The second work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is found in Luke 3:21 onwards. Luke 3:21,22 tells us: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Before *the Lord began His public ministry He was filled with the Holy Spirit*. See also Luke 4:1 "And Jesus, being, full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

The Lord's baptism was a foreshadow of His death, burial and resurrection. The Lord showed in a simple way that if we want His fullness, we have to identify ourselves with His death, burial and resurrection, and then we have fullness. Thirdly in Acts 10:38 we read: "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*". That was the third work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He went about doing good with the *anointing of the Holy Spirit*. In other words, He never performed any miracles of His own choice.

December 22

"And they could not take hold of His words before the people: and they marveled at His answer, and held their peace" (Luke 20:26).

In Isaiah 11:2-5 we read: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of *his* eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his lions, and faithfulness the girdle of

his reins." This is the fourth work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, -- perfect wisdom. Every word He uttered had power and authority. See Matthew 7:29: "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." See again in John 7:46: "The officers answered, never man spake like this man."

Fifthly, in Isaiah 42:1 to 4 we read: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; *I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall be not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. *He shall not fail nor be discouraged*, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law". See verse 2 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street,' but by love and kindness and truth he would win the world.

December 23

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:17, 18).

The *sixth* work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus we find in Isaiah 61:1-3. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of Joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." The very same passage was quoted by the Lord when He first came to the synagogue in Capernaum, after his baptism.

Read also Luke 7:21-22: "And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

Finally Romans 1:4 gives *the seventh work of the Holy Spirit* in the life of the Lord Jesus: "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the Dead." He was raised from the dead by the Spirit of holiness.

Now that we have seen the seven fold work of the *Holy Spirit* in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the whole secret. We cannot have the fulness of the Holy Spirit without fulfilling divine principles. Whatever God does He does by divine laws, which cannot be changed.

December 24

"Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's". (1 Cor. 3:22-23).

There is a special exhortation by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to all believers to pay extra attention to this book of Revelation. First, we learn to overcome by faith (1 John 5:4). That

is how we begin a life of victory; "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." In this book we are told in a sevenfold manner how to overcome. The phrase 'he that overcometh' is repeated seven times in Revelation 2 and 3.

Similarly, there are seven rewards for those who overcome, and there are seven great spiritual experiences which we will have to go through in order to overcome. The *first* great spiritual experience is *love*. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love". We become so unkind: we speak unkind, hurtful, painful words, and say things that hurt others to give ourselves pleasure. The Lord is also hurt and wounded by these things, and says: 'I have somewhat against thee'.

When we find our hearts becoming hard, we must pray, 'Lord, make my heart soft.' That is my daily prayer, 'Lord, keep my heart tender.' We talk so much that we become very hard-hearted. We say so many hurtful things, without any regard for the feelings of others. It is only by prayer that our hearts remain tender, loving and kind. *Loving and forgiving others is the first* and fundamental experience in becoming an overcomer.

December 25

"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; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-14).

The second experience is found in Revelation 2:9-10. "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou *shalt suffer*...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

It is an honor and privilege to suffer. And we cannot escape it. "The disciple is not above his master, not the servant above his Lord, it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord."

We as believers must live a life of separation. We cannot imitate the world, we cannot be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-17). This is the *third experience – living a life of complete separation*. In habits of dress, manner, custom and conversation we are God's people, and have to be governed by God's Word, and show it by our conversation, dress, taste, music or interest of any kind, that His name may be glorified.

Now for the *fourth* experience (Rev. 2:18-20). They started to worship the cross, and gradually one by one they brought many images into the church and began to worship them. But *all these heathen customs must be put away*. All these things take away the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is a spirit and we have to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. *Keep your worship simple and free* from meaningless rituals, rites and practices.

December 26

"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Rev. 3:1-2).

Be *watchful*. That is our fifth spiritual experience. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto you all. Watch" (Mark 13:35-37). Let us watch for His coming. By watchfulness we enjoy our share of the heavenly inheritance.

For the *sixth* experience we see Rev. 3:2. "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8). The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Behold I have set before thee an open door". A door, that is opened by the Lord.

We *have to go out*. We have found by experience that as we pray together the Lord tells us where and when to go, and we have found souls ready for the Gospel. And He will give us souls. The souls we win under God's guidance are for God and He knows them. We have found that through one person, many more have been saved.

December 27

"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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

This is the *last or seventh spiritual experience*. Rev. 3:18: "I counsel thee to *buy of me gold* tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and *white raiment*, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with *eyesalve*, that thou mayest see." It is a picture of *strong and living faith*. Gold has to be purified seven times. God says if we want such clear faith we have to go through many refining fires. In these last days we require strong faith.

Then He says further to buy of Him eyesalve. "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve; that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). There are many things in God's Word which we do not understand. So we go to him to understand these things. As the Psalmist says "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

Now you have these seven simple experience. The first is *love*; the second is *suffering joyfully* without murmuring; the third is separation from the world; the fourth is freedom from man-made customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies. The fifth is watching to be ready for His coming. The sixth is *entering open doors* and learning how to win souls for Him by finding who are prepared by Him; and the seventh is strong active faith; a living faith and life, using spiritual eyesalve, so that we can understand his heavenly mysteries. By these simple things we are qualified for our share in the spiritual, heavenly, glorious inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ.

December 28

"And I will put my Spirit within you ... ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:27-28).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The first part of verse 18 is very important, "and all things are of God's". It does not say, 'if any man be a Christian', but 'if any man be in

Christ he is a new creature.' 'If any man be in Christ... old things are passed away, all things are become new.'

What are these new things? "A *new heart* also will I give you and a *new spirit* will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you shall keep my judgment and do them." That is the first thing that happens, 'a *new heart* will I put within you'. That is the first great change which takes place in a person who has received a new heart: he has a love for heavenly things.

The *second thing* God gives us is a good *conscience*. All the guilty stains caused by sinful thoughts and deeds have been washed away by my Lord by His Blood. The proof is boldness and liberty in His Presence. Hebrews 4:16 says: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

December 29

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

We receive a *new nature*. This is the third new thing. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). God gives us a divine, holy and pure nature, for our sinful nature can never be refined by human effort.

When we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we enter into a seven-fold partnership. Firstly, by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour we are made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, we are made partakers of God's holiness. Thirdly, we have partnership in a heavenly calling. 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling' Heb. 3:1. What is that calling? To show forth God's glory and power to the heavenly authorities.

Fourthly, we are partakers of the heavenly inheritance. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. 1:12).

Fifthly, we are made partakers of the heavenly glory. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also... a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1). Sixthly, we are partakers of the Lord himself. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). Partakers of all that He has. And seventhly, we become partakers of the divine nature. This seven-fold spiritual partnership we enter into by accepting Christ.

December 30

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).

The first three of the eight new things are a *new heart*, a *new conscience*, and a *new nature*. Fourthly, we are given *new wisdom*. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). We are given heavenly wisdom to understand heavenly mysteries. Heavenly things can only be known by heavenly wisdom. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Fifthly we are given a *new song* in our mouth. "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And he hath put a *new song* in my mouth even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Psalm. 40:2, 3). Has God given you a new song in your mouth which is able to praise Him under all circumstances?

Now this is the *sixth* new thing, a *new beauty*, a beauty that does not come by wearing worldly garments. The Scripture says, "He hath covered me, clothed and surrounded me with a garment of salvation" which becomes brighter and brighter. Try it and your face will be shining with God's glory. Everything will be new. 'Behold I make all things new'.

December 31

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, where-in dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

He gives us *new relations*. This is the seventh new thing. "But He answered and said unto him that told him, who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples, and said "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:48, 49, 50).

Finally, we do not defeat the Devil by worldly weapons. "For the *weapons* of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

God gives us *new weapons*. This is the *eighth new thing*. Now you can defeat the enemy. In Isaiah 54:17, we read, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." In Romans 12 we read of the weapons of our warfare. "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." (Romans 12:20). Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. The new weapons of our warfare are love, kindness, sympathy, prayer, tolerance and patience. By finding and doing God's will, and by honouring God's word we defeat the enemy.

Read the Word of God, and call upon him, if you want Him to forgive you and transform you and make you a new person.