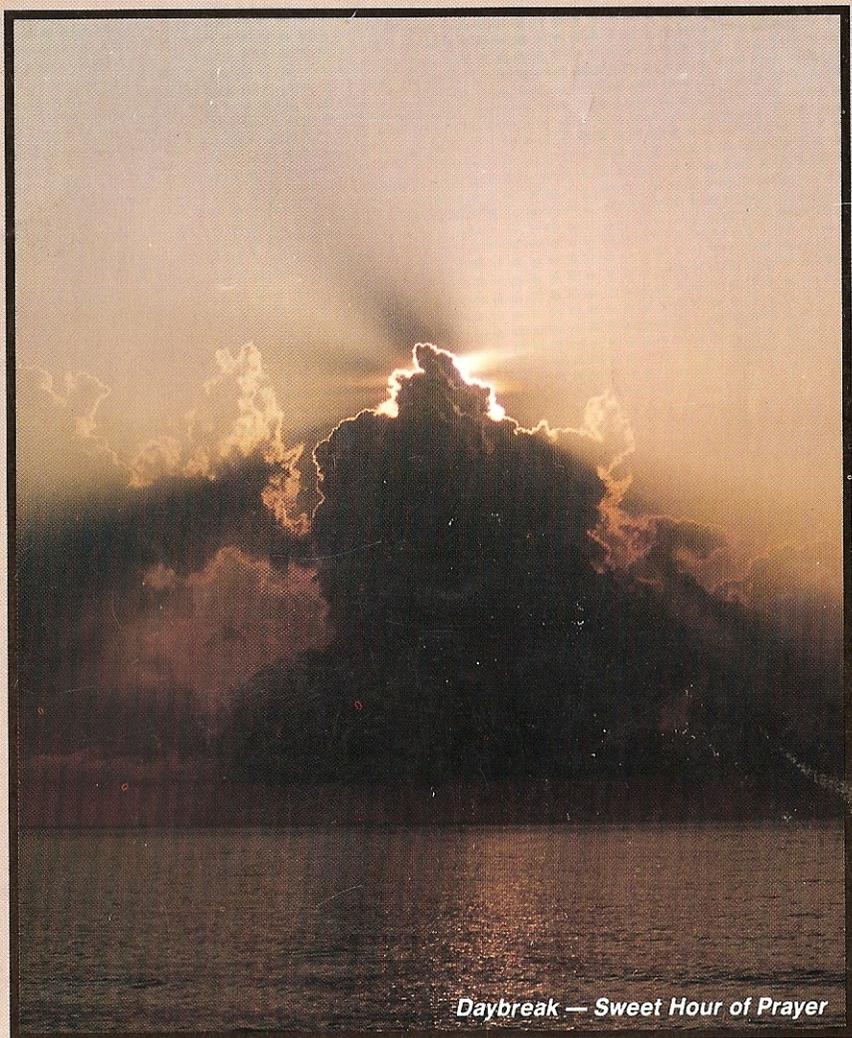


manna



Daybreak — Sweet Hour of Prayer

1989.12

13

CONTENTS

Editor's Preface

2

Prayer, the Dynamic Force of Revival

4

Daily Living and Prayer

5

Be Imitators of the Lord in
Prayer and Supplication

9

The Woman of Samaria

13

Though I Am But Dust

18

As Long As We Remain in His Grace

23

We Walk by Faith Not by Sight

24

Deacons' and Preachers'
Bible Research Meeting

27

A Supplementary Note

39

In Loving Memory of . . .

42

News

45

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Practically all mighty workers of God described in the Bible have one thing in common : they were men of prayers. A fine example was Noah. The first thing he did after he and his household came out of the ark was to erect an altar for offering burnt sacrifices to God (Gen 8:20-22). Prayers work wonders. Moses was a great man of prayer. One of his famous prayers was on Mount Rephidim. When the Israelites were fighting a fierce battle against the Amalekites, Moses went up to Mount Rephidim. He brought along with him Aaron and Hur. Whenever he lifted up his hands (in prayers) the Israelites prevailed. Moses helped Joshua fight the battle through prayers. In this battle Joshua overcame the Amalekites and slew their king (Ex 17:8-13). Daniel was another good example. He persisted in praying three times a day despite the royal decree against it. In the end he was delivered from the lion's den. The apostle Paul was yet another man of prayer. He prayed three years, day and night, in tears to strengthen the faith of the Ephesus believers. The theme of this issue is prayer. We need to pray for the accomplishment of our divine mission.

God has a unique way of saving a person. Saul, a Hebrew, circumcized on the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee to the law, was persecuting the Church and entering homes dragging off men and women and committing them to prison. It was at the height of his personal campaign against Christianity that a light from heaven flashed about him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Later, Saul was converted and God changed his name to Paul: The Lord also saved the woman of Samaria in a unique way. When Jesus was by the side of Jacob's well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus spoke to her and in the end she was converted. "The Woman of Samaria" in this issue will deal with this truth.

"Though I am but dust" is taken from the Book of Genesis. It was spoken by Abraham. He was requesting God to spare the lives of the people who lived in the city of Sodom. From the plea of

Abraham and the answers given by God we can conclude that God is merciful but at the same time He is also righteous and just. He will not tolerate wickedness. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans said, "Note then the kindness and the severity of God : severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in His kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off." (Rom 11:22). Another lesson we may learn from the plea of Abraham is that as long as we remain humble and faithful to God, we can be vessels for noble use though we are but dust.

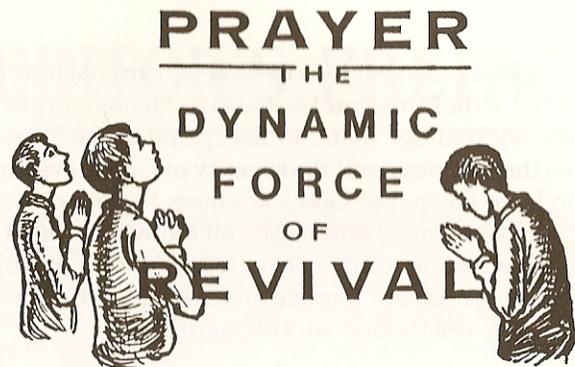
The author of the letter to the Hebrews defined "faith" as the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Faith is absolute trust in God. A man of faith entrusts everything to God. An example was Moses. When told by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he entrusted everything to God and in the end he succeeded. In "We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight" we are told how the Israelites failed again and again because they had depended on their own insight rather than on God.

At one time the churches in Malaysia and Singapore were troubled by controversial teachings. A Bible Research Conference was organized by the General Assembly of Malaysia and Singapore in 1979 to resolve the disputes. At the Seminar, a total of 35 issues were raised. The resolutions of this conference are published in this issue.

Singapore

October, 1989





What the Church needs today is not human ingenuity but the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not work in proportion to human ability of organization. The Church consists of people called out by God. What the Church requires is people through whom the Holy Spirit can work, ie, the mighty men of prayer.

Prayers not only bring about the spiritual growth of a person, they account for the prosperity or downfall of a Church.

A preacher must be a man of prayer. He must have the likeness of God's nature. Only through prayers can he obtain a God-like mind. Then only would he have the kind of zeal from on high to push his work through.

A preacher is not merely an author of sermons but an example for believers to follow. He need not be a man of great ability, a man of great learning, or a man with administrative skills, rather he must be pure in the sight of God. He should have faith, love, conscientiousness, and be able to endure hardships, to be greatly used by God. What he preaches he also puts into practice.

Through prayers a preacher will be strengthened with the wisdom from on high and become strong. In the Church, prayers must be emphasized.

So, let us examine ourselves and remind the whole congregation to see how much lacking we are. The driving force of divine work is nothing but prayer. ■

Daily Living And Prayer



Prayer is a privilege God has given to His children. Unless one belongs to Him, he cannot understand the value of prayer, nor obtain blessings therefrom. Hence, prayer is to those who belong to the Lord an absolute necessity but an unattainable blessing to those who do not.

I. Importance Of Prayer

Prayer is communion between man and God. Through prayers, we receive strength, help, comfort, and understanding. Unfortunately, many believers are unable to obtain these in their prayers. They have stumbled along the way and deviated to wrong paths. Some, lacking vigilance, fearful and weak, have been devoured by the Devil. They have all experienced spiritual rebirth but failed to reach the blessed end. The reasons for their fall may be many but all of which may be linked to prayer or the lack of it. Lacking in prayer summarizes all the reasons for failure. Having lost the strength of prayer, spirituality plunges and this spiritual journey will inevitably end in failure.

Our Lord who was the Word manifested in flesh set the perfect example by totally relying on prayer. Before His ministry, He went into the wilderness and fasted and prayed for forty days and nights to obtain strength to do the will of God. The Bible records

that Jesus regarded prayer as something indispensable in life. He was praying at all times, for all things (Mk 1:35, Mt 14:23, Mk 6:46, Lk 11:1). He often prayed for many hours or all through the night (Lk 6:12, 22:39-46). Thus, He was able to overcome the Devil, perform great miracles, proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of Heaven, and finally sacrifice Himself. The saints of old also accomplished great tasks through prayers (Ac 13:3, 14:23). Many of the commandments and teachings of the Lord indirectly tell us to be vigilant in prayers in order to triumph in all ways (1 Pet 4:7, 5:7-8, Mt 26:41).

II. The Effects Of Prayer

Prayer is not ceremonial and believers must not allow prayer to become a ritual. Prayer gives motivation and comfort. One obtains joy and strength by it. If prayer brings neither encouragement nor strength, it is only a ritual. God delights in those who worship Him with a truthful heart (Jn 4:23). Regardless of the number of services a believer attends or the good deeds done, if they were done ritually, they were done not with a truthful heart. The Bible even tells us that there will be some 'workers' whom the Lord does not know (Mt 7:22). Their hearts are not linked to prayer, not knowing how to pray in the spirit, having no communion at all with the Spirit and, hence, not belonging to the Lord (Rom 8:9). There are also some believers who, although they were reborn and had communion with the Spirit of God, were unable to have living water flowing continuously from them. Their spiritual life ended due to suffocation. Prayer is the breath of spiritual life; the source that keeps living water flowing. A lack of prayer means an absence of communion with God. The result is weakness and failure. Therefore, prayer is the key to a lively spirituality and strength in daily living.

III. Criteria Of The 'Prayer'

The prayers of those who are pleasing in the sight of the Lord are effective. The Bible records, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Jas 5:16) because "the eyes of the Lord

are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Pet 3:12). The utterings of evil-doers are unworthy of the Lord's ears (Is 59:1-2). Prayers springing from lusts, for wrongful purposes, exhibiting self-righteousness and hypocrisy shall be despised by the Lord (Jn 9:31, Jas 1:16, 17, 4:13, Mt 6:16). One who does not seek God wholeheartedly and pursue holiness (Heb 12:14) and is proud and unrepentant also will not find his prayers effective. Praying with truth and faithfulness brings much fruit and edification, and by it one finds favour with the Lord. On the other hand, one who does not place high regard for prayers and does not want to seek to pray effectively, will meet with failures and will not find the acceptance of God. Each and every believer, hence, should strive to eliminate the barricades between himself and God, that his prayers may have results and be heard by the Lord.

IV. Methods Of Prayer

Since prayer is the pouring out of our hearts before God, we ought to "be anxious for nothing, but with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6). But it has to be in accordance with the will of God. As long as God is glorified and we can be edified, we can make requests to Him. We can pray in tongues or in intelligible words. Praying in tongues is uttering mysteries and although no one understands, the one praying is able to obtain edification, strength, and revelation (1 Cor 14:2, 4). Praying in intelligible words is praising God, giving thanks or making requests to God. It is good to pray in intelligible words if the praying is not in vain repetitions or in lofty words which do not spring from the heart. But it is even better to pray in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance for we do not know how we ought to pray but the Spirit makes intercession for us.

While praying in tongues, one must pray with understanding. One must pray for the church and other people as well. We ought to strive for longer prayers. Do not merely kneel down as a ceremony or get up before your heart is even at peace or even before any feelings are evoked. How does such ceremonial prayers, void of truthfulness and zeal, bring one to edification?

May the Lord move us to search our hearts as we pray before the Lord. May each of us pull down the barricade between man and God, clear the obstacles blocking the progress of the Church. For the sake of the whole Church, for the sake of our spiritual life, may the Lord help us to see our imperfections in prayers, granting us zealous hearts to build ourselves up with vigilant prayers. ■

BE IMITATORS OF THE LORD



PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATION

Paul says, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). And, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

Many of the books that are written about the life of Jesus Christ place emphasis on his works and teachings but have neglected his inner communion with God. This inner communion is reflected in his daily prayer life.

Prayer is a manifestation of a religious life. If we neglect to pray, our faith will not be firmly established.

Jesus Takes Time To Pray Even In His Busiest Moments :

"And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there" (Mk 1:35).

“But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and great multitudes were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray” (Lk 5:15-16).

“And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone” (Mt 14:23).

We must follow this example of the Lord. The more busy we are, the more we need to take time to pray.

The Lord Jesus Prays More Ferently When Great Trials And Tribulations Are About To Befall Him :

“And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Lk 22:44).

Just before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus prayed even more fervently to God. He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears and He was heard because of His piety (Heb 5:7). For this reason, we must not forget to pray when misfortunes befall us. If we imitate the Lord and offer our prayers with loud crying and tears, God will hear our prayers. Even on the verge of being put to death, we must not cease to pray. During the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, a few deacons and elders of the church in Shanghai were taken to the streets by the Japanese soldiers. They were made to kneel in a row. When they were about to be executed, they cried out loudly, “Hallelujah!” They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. Their bodily vibrations were so vigorous that the soldiers were greatly surprised and did not proceed with the execution. Thus, they were released unharmed. This shows how God saved those who prayed earnestly on the verge of being put to death. For this reason, in difficult situations we must not forget to pray to God. The prophets and the apostles were able to escape from dangers and calamities because of their earnest and unceasing prayers to God (Heb 11:32-34).

The Lord Jesus Always Prays For Others :

He said to Peter, “But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Lk 22:32). And, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word” (Jn 17:17, 20).

The Lord Jesus not only prayed for those who loved him and those whom he loved, but also prayed for his enemy. Even when he was nailed on the cross in the midst of great pain, he did not stop to pray for those who persecuted and crucified him : “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34).

God is love (1 Jn 4:8). Christianity is a religion of love. The Lord Jesus prayed for those who persecuted Him in order to set us an example that we also must love our enemy so as to manifest the love of God. Paul himself also urged us to pray for one another : “Pray for the believers. Pray also for me” (Eph 5:18-19).

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men” (1 Tim 2:1).

James also told us, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another” (Jas 5:16).

Abraham prayed for the city of Sodom so that it might not face destruction because of God’s wrath (Gen 18:23). Moses prayed for the people of Israel so that they might escape from the wrath of God (Ex 32:31-34). Thus, we see that the Lord Jesus, the prophets and the apostles all prayed for others in an unceasing manner.

Jesus Does Not Cease To Pray :

“I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Mt 11:25).

We see that the life of Jesus on earth is a life of prayer. In other words, prayer is the source of His strength. His prayer does not

consist of 'asking' or 'requesting' for material needs but for his spiritual well-being. He prayed freely to God and experienced the togetherness between a father and a son (Jn 8:35). He is in God and God is in Him (Jn 14:10). His prayer proceeds from the heart (Jn 17:21-22). The religious life of the Lord Jesus is a spontaneous revelation of His true self. His prayers are not something external or forced. They are not ritualistic. The true nature and all the fullness of God are revealed solidly and concretely in the daily life of the Lord Jesus (Heb 2:9).

John said, "Our prayer is our communion with our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:3)." Paul said that we who are spiritual prayed for the things of the spirit (Rom 8:26-27). Prayer is conversing with God (1 Cor 14:2). In prayer, our spirit reaches out to the Spirit of God. Prayer is oneness with God (1 Jn 4:13). Prayer produces an intimate spiritual union between Father and Son. For this reason, we who are Christians must never neglect to pray. For prayer is like the breath of our spirit. It must be done in order to provide food for our spirit. Thus, Paul encouraged us "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Eph 6:18). Therefore, follow the example of Christ in prayer, so that we may reach greater heights of spiritual growth. ■

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA



The Bible contains an account of Jesus saving a Samaritan woman (Jn 4:3-17, 27-30). The Lord treasured lost souls, and though she was just one soul, he did not hesitate to travel a great distance into Samaria to save her. Such was the compassion that typified the Master; he would go great lengths just to bring one sinner to repentance. He treasured each individual lost soul, for whom he would offer even the greatest sacrifice.

The conversion of the Samaritan woman excited not only the heavens but stirred the earth as well, for the entire city was moved in no small way. This woman of Samaria is representative of the saved sinner, and the phases she underwent in her spiritual encounter are typical of the experiences of every repentant sinner. Many of these are exemplary, and call for our emulation. A total of six phases outline the progress from her initial rejection to her receiving of the abundant life.

Rejection

The historical account saw the Samaritan woman assuming an attitude of rejection when Jesus struck a conversation with her. Jesus had just begun, "Give me to drink", breaking the ice before venturing into the gospel, when the woman found reason to reject

him saying, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" From ages past, sinners have been the same. They would exhaust every possible excuse for rejecting the Lord. Citing problems of all kinds, geographical, national, chronological, environmental, emotional, they would formulate reasons for resisting the grace of salvation.

Doubt

Faced with rejection from the woman, Jesus nevertheless pressed on to unfold the gospel of salvation. First, she ought to know the Saviour who could give living water, so he said, "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given the living water." (vs 10). This, alas, received a doubtful response. She was not persuaded to believe in his power - "Sir, thou has nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?" She even suspected his very authority - "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" In comparing Jesus with a great saint of the past, she betrayed her carnality, her lack of spiritual insight. Men of the world are presently perceiving things in like manner, which leads to their distrust in God's almightiness, or His salvation. Many stop short of believing Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, regarding him to be at most a sage or a sainted being whose life on earth exemplified perfection. The fearful consequence of this is that in cleaving to their unbelief, they forfeit themselves of eternal bliss. Women of Samaria are reckoned to have extraordinary shrewdness and in this instance of a God-given opportunity, and this one seized hold of it earnestly.

Humble Submission

Jesus persisted through the rejection and doubt, and patiently continued, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, ... (it) shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life." The critical factor of the woman's conversion was the humility in her seeking. Not only must she inquire about the fount of eternal life, she must also by all means

acquire it. So she asked with all meekness: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw" (vs 15). What precious faith! This matron had the knowledge of her own desperate need and the wisdom to seek fulfilment. The Bible's promise of blessing could not fail her, for it is written: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Mt 7:7). We have been eye-witnesses also of many of God's children obtaining the eternal blessing, but it is lamentable that many today still lack the humble and submissive heart to seek and ask, finding their lot in eternal toil and thirst.

Recognition And Confession Of Sin

In answer to the woman's request for living water, Jesus replied: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither" (vs 16). This Jesus had done to induce confession, for she was husbandless, yet having five husbands. Having her sin brought to light generated faith in her, for she declared: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." The woman admitted her faults, and she trusted, obeyed, and advanced to recognise Jesus as a prophet. This is the result of her humble, repentant attitude, which brings her into reverence and faith toward the Lord. We see hordes of worldlings today who, though having their sins exposed by the illumination of truth, refuse to yield to humble themselves in contrition, and to prostrate themselves before the One who is able to grant pardon. On the contrary they harden their hearts, standing forever on the platform of pitiable contempt, even while the Saviour is beckoning, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). We watch with regret multitudes that avoid the spiritual fount of living water, roving great distances only to attempt at broken cisterns to satisfy their never ending thirst. This foolish endeavour to satiate the soul with worldly means is destined to disappointment. That inner prompting of the Samaritan woman, which entreated her to recognize and confess her faults, is therefore very precious, for it opened to her the fount of life.

Trust And Obedience

When Jesus had finished dealing with the problem of sin, he continued to instruct the woman in the truth, expounding on the importance of true spiritual worship. He pointed out the mistakes of her former faith which hinged on externalities - worship on the mountain or at Jerusalem - but lacking in conduct. The woman exhibited willingness to trust and obey, saying : "I know that Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will declare unto us all things" (vs 25). Jesus corrected her attitude of procrastination and revealed, "I that speak unto thee am he" (vs 26). Jesus had corrected some of her errors : attitude of worship, procrastination, inadequate knowledge of the Saviour. Such amendments went a long way to inculcate in her a strong sense of trust and obedience. There are many sinners now who, though having heard the gospel, fail to learn the way of trust, looking forward indefinitely to days ahead in the hope that things may change for the better, totally unaware that the Saviour is right before their eyes and that such an encounter with him is an immeasurable blessing. But God be thanked that many have, on the other hand, received the Lord's grace, leaping in elation just as this Samaritan woman did.

Forsaking All

As the narration tells us, the woman, after receiving the Lord's teaching, "left her waterpot, and went away into the city". What a change within such a short span of time! She who had initially refused even the request for a little drinking water now forsook her entire waterpot, for she had found something even more precious than her earthen vessel. In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told the parables of the hidden treasure and the goodly pearls, which, when found, caused their finders to sell all that they had to acquire them. Paul the Apostle, when he found Christ, forsook all things, counting them but dung (Phil 3:8). One who has truly caught a glimpse of Christ would certainly find great transformation in his temperament, thoughts, and actions. Consider this woman, who at the outset regarded Jesus as merely another chauvinistic Jew, but after having been enlightened about

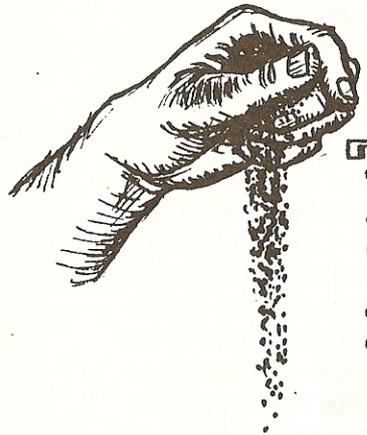
the fount of eternal life, she began to address him 'Sir' and progressed to 'prophet' and 'Christ'. God's mighty power is manifestly seen throughout her marked sequential transformation.

Bearing Witness

Why did the woman leave her waterpot and enter the city to do? To witness that Jesus was the Christ and proclaim her own encounter with him; "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did : can this be the Christ?" Apart from proclaiming the Lord's power, proving that he was the Christ, she beckoned to the masses, "Come, See!" Then the people started pouring out of the city to meet Jesus. Every Christian who has been redeemed and saved by God should not just acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and publish His holy name, but should also lead a life of good testimony, thereby causing others to know Christ and come to Him.

Conclusion

The woman of Samaria conducted herself in an exemplary manner after her conversion. Every believer should likewise live this kind of abundant life. May God have mercy on us and help us to progress daily in our spiritual life, so as to allow rivers of living water to flow from within us, reaching out to our fellow-men as effective witnesses, to the glory of His name. ■



THOUGH I AM BUT DUST

"So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord ... Abraham answered, 'Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust ...'" (Gen 18:22-33).

The Lord God and two angels wanted to find out the grave sins committed by the people of Sodom. They passed by the tents of Abraham by the oaks of Mamre. Abraham received them heartily and in return the angels blessed Abraham and promised him a son. Then, the three continued their journey and Abraham went with them for a short distance to send them on their way. Abraham learned that God would destroy the city of Sodom for the grave sins the people were committing. He thus pleaded with God not to destroy the city for Lot, his nephew whom he loved, lived there.

Abraham said he was but dust. Yet he dared to make his supplications to God to grant mercy and not to destroy the city because of a few righteous people living in that city. We noted that Abraham humbly admitted the baseness of the human state (Ps 103:14; Gen 2:7). The words spoken by Abraham to God imply strongly that the Lord was righteous and yet merciful. He would surely listen to the intercession of His faithful servant.

The prayer of Abraham was in accord with the will of God. In fact God is desirous that all men be saved and that they would come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). Moreover, Abraham was concerned about the righteous people and his nephew, Lot, in the city. This kind of supplication made by Abraham was like the cry of the saints of ancient times when they would lift up their hands and pray to God in the most holy place (Ps 5:2-3; 28:2). But we may wonder why Abraham was able to speak to God face to face without fear?

The Bible records that Abraham was the friend of God (Is 41:8; Jas 2:23). Through faith Abraham had carried out the will of God which resulted in his being justified by God. And because he was pleasing to God he was able to walk with God. Abraham walked with God for some distance when he sent Him off. The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him? No, for I have chosen him, that he charge his children and household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." (Gen 18:17-19). Such was the closeness between God and Abraham. Should we Christians today not also learn from Abraham?

The Bible records, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to be just, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mica 6:8). Justice and loving kindness are the attributes of God manifested to man since time immemorial. God requires man to be like Him. We must be as humble as Abraham who confessed that he was but dust before God, then only will we be able to walk with Him.

Humility is the virtue of a saint chosen by God. There are a lot of conflicts springing out of personal pride and egoism. The ten tribes of Israelites rebelled against King Rehoboam because the latter showed no compassion for the people and what more, he said to the people harshly, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." (1 Kgs 12:1-19). King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, for a time was enjoying his golden reign.

Apparently, he did not know that a nation's prosperity or downfall lies in the hands of God. One day, he boasted that the great empire was built by his mighty power. But such pride caused his destruction (Dan 4:28-37).

But there were many great men of faith who lived up to the expectations of God. Those great people had achieved greatness, yet they were selfless; though they were men of God, yet preferred to remain in obscurity. They had done a lot of good thing for others yet would not claim credit to it. They sacrificed themselves in order to achieve something good for all. And when they have accomplished their tasks they would bring glory to God. Such were the people who were pleasing to God. Indeed, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (Jas 4:6). In the parable of the Tax-collector and the Pharisee (Lk 18:9-14), the Lord mentioned that though the latter possessed good virtues, was upright, God-fearing, abhorred all evils, he contracted a fearful disease - self-righteousness. As a result, he fell short of the glory of God and was rejected by God. On the contrary, the tax-collector, although despised by the people, lowered himself and said, "I am but dust". This real penitence was what Paul wrote about in his second epistle to the Corinthians, that is, such kind of "godly grief" produces "what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment." (2 Cor 7:11). The final result was that the tax-collector was accepted by God.

"The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes (the Lord Jesus) and inherit a seat of honour."

(1 Sam 2:7-8; 1 Cor 1:27-31; Eph 1:3-14)

We must emulate the tax-collector and humble ourselves to inherit the Kingdom of God (Mt 5:3, 8).

Since God revealed His plans to Abraham he enjoyed close intimacy with God. Among the apostles, Peter, John and James were the three closest to the Lord. When the Lord was healing the mother-in-law of Peter (Mk 1:30), the three apostles were there; when Jairus daughter was brought back to life (Lk 8:51-56), they

were also there. On the mountain of transfiguration, (Lk 9:28-36), and even at Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-37), the trio were by the Lord's side. And of the three, Peter was most loved by the Lord. He had special revelation from God to know that Jesus was the Saviour, the Son of the Living God (Mt 16:13-18). Before the Lord ascended to heaven, He asked Peter three times to feed His lambs (Jn 21:15-17).

John was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' and was most admired by all for his close friendship with the Lord. During the last supper, John was lying close to the chest of Jesus (cf Ps 133:1-3; Prov 18:24).

One who is always near God will receive special grace from God and he is also the one who will understand the will of the Lord best. John was always close to the Lord. So he knew who Jesus was and he was fully aware of what Jesus wanted him to do. After the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross, all the disciples were very worried. They had no one to turn to and so they went back to fishing. When the resurrected Lord appeared to them, everyone was puzzled. But John was the first to recognize that it was the Lord (Jn 21:4-7). This kind of insight is what Christians need today. We need to understand whom we believe in and what we should do (Col 1:9-14; Eph 4:13; 2 Tim 1:12-14).

Only if we understand the will of God can we walk with Him throughout our lives and be pleasing to Him. Enoch lived 365 years. He walked with God for 300 years (Gen 5:21-24). Noah was a perfect man because he walked with God. He built the ark and preached the word strictly in accordance with the instructions of God (Gen 6:9, 15-22). When we administrate the church today, the pattern of divine work and personal spiritual nurture must also be conformed to the measurement of the Lord. If we do this, are we worthy to be called "the disciples whom Jesus loved".

Conclusion

No matter what we are and it does not matter what role we play in the house of God after having successfully completed all the task entrusted to us, we must say, "We are unworthy servants; we

have done what was our duty." (Lk 17:10). Even though we are but "uneducated, common men," (Ac 4:13) yet our God is a great moulder (Rom 9:20-27; Is 64:8). He can mould us into vessels for noble use (2 Tim 2:20-21). As long as we remain in His mighty power and rely on His spiritual strength and wisdom, even though we are but dust, the Lord will manifest His mighty works and lead us to tread on His way. ■



As Long As We Remain In His Grace

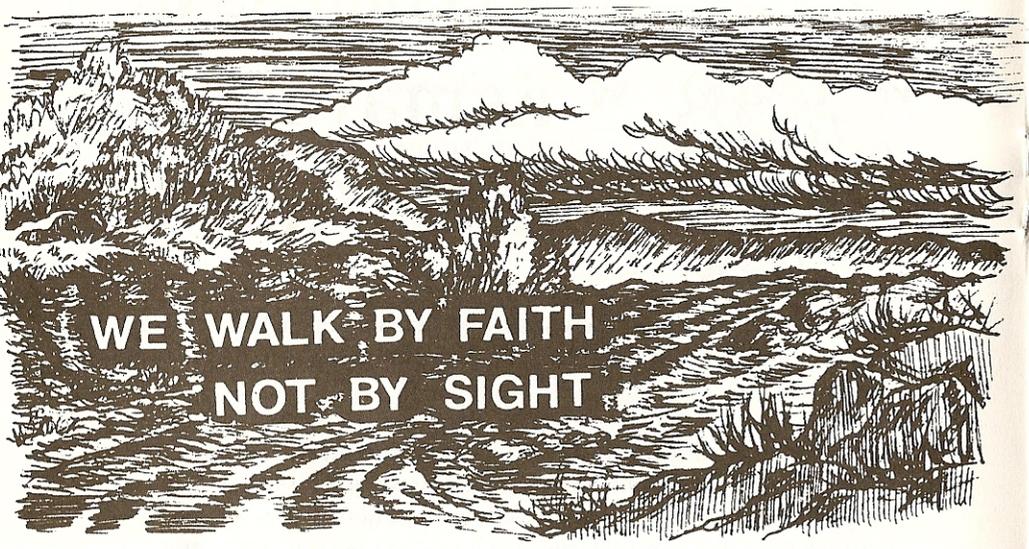
Like a fish out of the water, and like a leaf plucked off from its stem, so will a Christian be, if he does not remain in the grace of the Lord.

Jesus is kind to those who always remain in His grace but severe toward those who have fallen. Chicks will be safe as long as they remain under the wings of their mother hen. If they are always wandering away from the mother hen, they become easy prey to eagles. It is better to fall down within the ark than to fall overboard into the flood. A fish which took the bait and was hooked out of the water cannot complain there was not enough water. It was the fish which left the water and not the other way around. The abundant grace of God is like water in the ocean. It is sufficient for all. But those who have departed from the truth(1) are like the fish that was hooked up from the sea.

The Lord has said, "For apart from me you can do nothing"(2) and "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love". As believers, we should keep ourselves in God's love (3). Shimei was clearly told by King Solomon not to depart from Jerusalem. The day he crossed over the boundary of Jerusalem he would surely die (4). But after some time Shimei was not watchful and he departed from Jerusalem. As a result he was put to death. Let us therefore continue to remain in the grace of God.

(1) Jn 15:5
(2) Jn 15:9-10

(3) Jude 21
(4) I Kings 2 ■



**WE WALK BY FAITH
NOT BY SIGHT**

Paul said, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). To be the salt and the light of the world, this is how a true Christian should live.

"Faith is an assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Faith is complete trust in God in all that he has promised in the Bible. When Abraham was in despair, through faith he obtained hope. At nearly a hundred years old, God promised him a son. His wife, Sarah, was barren. But his strong faith enabled him to look forward to God's promise. Never was he doubtful in his heart; on the contrary he gave glory to God and was confident of the fulfilment of the promise.

Judging things by sight is unreliable as it depends on our limited wisdom and experience. For example, when Philip told Nathaniel, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." He immediately replied and said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Next, when Jesus wanted to test the faith of Philip, He said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may

eat?" To this Philip replied, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little" (Jn 1:45-46, 6:5-7).

Faith enables man to see the might of God. He who has faith will, in all matters, remain strong and joyful. Thus strength will not fail him, wealth will not corrupt him and poverty will not weaken him. Bearing the cross he will follow Christ faithfully. Those who depend on themselves will have much worries and sorrows.

When the Israelites reached the wilderness of Paran, after having left Egypt, God instructed Moses to send twelve spies to scout the land of Canaan. After forty days the twelve spies returned. Before Moses and the Israelites they reported, "The land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey yet the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large". However, Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it for we are all able to overcome it." The other ten spies said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we the land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature"

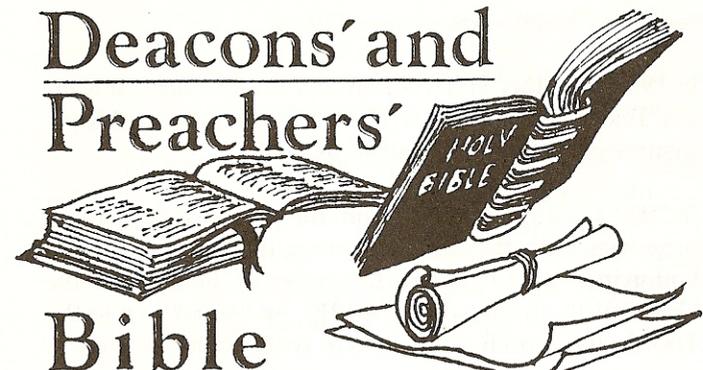
Then all the people of Israel raised a loud cry and even murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why does the Lord bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become prey; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of Israelites. Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes and said to the congregation, "The land which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into the land and give it to us ... do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us, ... and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

Caleb and Joshua had faith. The other ten spies did not. However, the congregation believed and accepted the judgment of the ten and not Caleb and Joshua's. Thus, the anger of God was kindled.

When famine struck, Abraham migrated to Egypt. His lack of faith led to even greater trials in Egypt. When he returned to Canaan he separated from Lot. On the other hand, his son, Isaac, encountered famine too but God appeared to him, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you ..." So Isaac dwelt in Gerar, sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundred-fold. The Lord blessed him, therefore he became rich and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. This was all because he had faith and obeyed God.

We must have faith in order to do the will of God. By faith, Jesus was willing to endure the sufferings of the cross. But when Peter knew what the Lord had to go through, he immediately took Jesus and said, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are not on the side of God, but of men." May all of us depend on faith and not on sight in all that we do. Then will we be able to receive divine blessings. ■

Deacons' and Preachers' Bible Research Meeting

An illustration featuring a stack of books on the left, a scroll with a quill pen resting on it in the center, and an open book with the words 'HOLY BIBLE' written on its cover on the right. The style is a simple line drawing.

A Bible Research Seminar was conducted by the GA of Malaysia and Singapore in 1979. The following are answers by Dn Hsieh Soon Tau to questions from the Central Region Churches. The result of this seminar was not published because of its "controversial nature" reckoned by some renegades of the KL group, is now considered a thing of the past, released for your information.

In order to keep the answers to their original form we have decided not to add or to delete any part of this article, so that a full view of Dn Hsieh was truly represented at the time when the seminar took place.

1) Can other churches also receive the Holy Spirit?

- Ans:
- a) Before the True Jesus Church was established, the Holy Spirit had descended in USA, the result of which had initiated the Pentecostal Movement.
 - b) It is not the Holy Spirit if the teachings of any other Church oppose the basic faith of the True Church (1 Jn 4:1 & 6).

2) Where was the first downpour of the Holy Spirit in the Latter Rain Period - America or China?

- Ans: a) In 1900, the Holy Spirit descended in the cities of Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, etc. Later, the Pentecostal Movement began in other countries as well.
- b) In 1909, Chang Lin Sheng from the province of Shantung met with the members from the Apostolic Faith Union in Shanghai, and on December 21, he received the Holy Spirit. In the spring of 1918, he went down to the True Jesus Church in Tientsin to work with Paul Wei.
- c) In 1910, Chang Lin Sheng preached to Barnabas Chang. On March 1911, Barnabas Chang received the Holy Spirit.
- d) On January 27, 1919, Barnabas Chang and Chang Lin Sheng baptised each other facing downwards in the water. Later, they baptised thirty over believers.
- e) On August 17, 1916, Paul Wei contacted the members of the Apostolic Faith Union in Peking. A few days later, his illness was cured. A few months later, he received the Holy Spirit. On November 20, 1917, he decided on the name, The True Jesus Church.
- f) In February 1919, Paul Wei went to Shantung to preach throughout the province, together with Barnabas Chang and Chang Lin Sheng.

3) What is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit?

- Ans: a) Speaking in tongues (Acts 10:44-46).
- b) This is in line with the condition of the first downpour of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 10:47; 11:15).

4) What is meant by "to be filled with Holy Spirit"?

- Ans: a) In the Greek original "to be filled" is a verb which implies that an action is done sporadically in the past. It also suggests an action done in the present continuous tense.
- b) The action that happens sporadically in the past is a sudden action (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9).
- c) Action in the present continuous tense suggests a continuous action or experience happening (Eph 5:18). In this manner it will bring forth spiritual fruit.

5) What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

- Ans: a) The word "gifts" in the original text means "rewards from grace".
- b) The gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to 1 Cor 12:8-10, amounts to nine. These are all the pre-requisites needed to establish a church.

6) When we speak in tongues, do we speak in repetitious sounds?

- Ans: a) In the 'Chien-Wen-Li' (of the Chinese Bible), it is known as 'spiritual tongue'. Whereas in the 'Kuo-Yu-Ho-Ho' version (of the Chinese Bible) it is 'provincial tongue', and in the Greek original, it is 'glossa' - meaning tongue, and thus it is 'sound of the tongue'.
- b) So long as this 'sound of the tongue' is uttered through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whether the sound made is in the rolling action, or in stammering manner or in the style of speech intonation (ie, in language form), they are all the same.

7) **Can we have crosses, pictures of Jesus Christ and the Last Supper?**

Ans: As long as one does not revere (worship) the pictures as idols it makes no difference whether one has them in one's home or not.

8) **How do we remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy?**

Ans: The Sabbath in the New Testament is a Sabbath under grace (Mk 2:27 & 28). If one is free to decide, one should attend the Sabbath service. If circumstances do not permit, the Lord will forgive.

9) **Silent prayer.**

Ans: The purpose of a silent prayer is to put the congregation in a calm and reverent mood for service. But it does not need to be done so often in one service.

10) **Can a woman speak in Church?**

Ans: a) The Ho-ho version (of the Chinese Bible) states: "I will not allow women to speak" (1 Tim 2:12).

The translation from Li Cheng Chung version: "I will not allow women to teach men in public."

The English Bible also translates it as 'teach'.

b) To deliver a sermon is different from teaching.

To deliver a sermon is to speak on behalf of God and the speaker can be of either sex (1 Cor 14:31). Teaching means being a leader. A woman should not over-ride authority in church (1 Tim 2:11-13).

c) 'A woman can preach with head covered' (1 Cor 11:5).

It is thus evident that women then can preach as long as they veil their heads.

11) **Must the congregation wait for the service leader to begin first and then all start to pray?**

Ans: The service leader will first utter: "In the name of Jesus, we pray". Only then does the congregation begin to pray. When the service leader sings the closing hymn or recites the Lord's prayer, the congregation ought to do the same, only then will there be order in the service procedure.

12) **Must we use the Lord's prayer?**

Ans: a) The contents of the Lord's prayer represent our aspirations and contain many precious teachings. Up till now, the aspirations have yet to be fulfilled so we should still recite the Lord's prayer together.

b) In ancient times, the Lord's prayer was used as one of the programmes in the service (Mt 6:13).

13) **Must women use their veils when they attend church services?**

Ans: a) It is only necessary during prayer and preaching (1 Cor 11:5).

b) The women in Corinth originally had the custom of wearing veils. This is because these women at first had the misconception that in Christ they are equal to men so they discarded the custom. Therefore, Paul rebuked them, and clarified that such equality only refers to matters of salvation (Gal 3:28). It does not refer to equality in family life or life in church.

- c) To wear a veil denotes humility and submission (1 Cor 11:3). (People in places where the veil is used can carry on with the custom but it need not be forced upon, in places where the veil is not used.)
- d) The intention is far more important than the action itself. If one merely wears the veil but does not manifest humility and submission, what is the purpose then? If one does not wear a veil but yet manifests these two virtues, then is it not equivalent to wearing a 'veil'?
- e) Foot-washing is a sacrament. Apart from putting into practice the teachings from this sacrament, the act itself should not be neglected. Wearing a veil is not a sacrament, so, as long as the teachings (of humility and submission) are put to practice, the act need not be emphasized.

14) Must we pay tithes?

Ans: Jesus taught us that paying tithes is something we ought to do (Mt 23:23). Thus, we should pay tithes so that the Lord's house may be bountiful.

15) Do we believe in such a thing as "holy water" for members to drink if they are sick?

- Ans:
- a) The Bible does not record the use of "holy water" for healing the sick.
 - b) The efficacy of healing any sickness depends on faith (Jas 5:15). If only one has faith, one can be healed without drinking holy water. If one does not have faith, then drinking the water is also ineffective.

16) Do we cast out the evil spirit from those who are sick?

Ans: a) To cast out evil spirits is a common method used by Jesus in curing the sick (Mt 9:32-33; 17:18).

However, it is not required on every occasion to do so (Mt 8:3, 13, 15; 9:6-7, 22, 29 & 30).

- b) Whether one should cast out the evil spirit from those who are sick depends on the guidance of the Holy Spirit at that particular moment.

17) Must we kneel down to sing closing hymns?

Ans: a) The closing hymn follows the end of the prayer to close the service. If one stands up to pray, then of course, one should continue to stand in singing the closing hymn. If one kneels to pray, then it is logical that one continues to kneel down for the closing hymn.

- b) In March 1926, the gospel was preached from Mainland China to Taiwan and at that time the congregation stood up to pray and sang the closing hymn.
- c) In 1929, Dn Tsai Seng Min from Taiwan stayed for two months at the GA headquarters in Shanghai. At that time, the members from the various churches in Shanghai city knelt in praying and also in singing the closing hymn.
- d) In March 1936, Eld Thomas Kuo came to Taiwan to organize a one-month Bible Study seminar. It was only then that, on Eld Kuo's service the congregation knelt to pray and to sing the closing hymn.
- e) The following Bible verses show that one may kneel to pray and praise God (2 Chron 6:13-15; Ps 95:6-7; Dan 6:10).

18) **Must blessings be given after each church service, house gatherings and funeral service?**

- Ans: a) A member in coming for church service will be blessed by God and it is not necessary to give additional blessings.
- b) If blessing is given after every service, the same words are repeated then the significance of blessings may be lost.

19) **Must our members wash "one another's feet"?**

Ans: The most important teaching from "washing one another's feet" is to love one another, to forgive one another and to serve others. Therefore, the act itself is not required.

20) **Are the elements of the Holy Communion really the body and the blood of Jesus Christ after prayer?**

- Ans: a) Jesus said, "This is my body; this is my blood" (Mt 26:26 & 28). It is thus evident that the bread and grape juice, after blessing, becomes the flesh and blood of Jesus.
- b) This transformation is not in the physical but spiritual sense (Jn 6:52-56; 60:63; 1 Cor 10:3; Jn 6:48-51).

21) **Must only the leader bless the elements of the Holy Communion and the congregation remain silent?**

Ans: The purpose of this is to let the congregation remember the Lord's sufferings so that they will receive the Holy Communion with thanksgiving.

22) **Can a deaconess lay hands?**

Ans: The Bible does not prevent a deaconess from laying hands. However, according to our church tradition, a deaconess can only lay hands on sisters, not brothers.

23) **Can a deacon in his old age be called an elder?**

- Ans: a) An elder is considered an overseer, (Acts 20:17, 28). The word "elder" denotes a qualification whereas "overseer" denotes a position.
- b) An elderly deacon, if he is in reality performing the functions of an elder, should then be ordained as an elder so as to be in line with the function he performs.
- c) The Bible teaches that every church ordains an elder (Tit 1:5). If an elderly deacon is not to be ordained as an elder, then the number of elders will decrease gradually.
- d) The ordaining of elderly deacons into elders had also been done by the General Assembly in mainland China.

24) **Can an elder-deacon, deaconess or preacher resign?**

Ans: If he feels that he is not qualified, he is allowed to resign. Of course, it is necessary to discuss the validity of the reasons behind the resignation.

25) **Can our members go to other churches to listen to the gospel?**

Ans: To prevent his faith from being infiltrated by false doctrines, we should advise him not to go to other churches to listen to the gospel.

26) **Can our members also attend the Theological Seminars of other denominations?**

Ans: It is allowed under the following circumstances :

- a) If he goes on his own account and is not officially sent by the church.

- b) If the individual concerned is firmly rooted in the basic faith of the church and will not be influenced.
- c) If his primary purpose is to understand the original Biblical text and only treats studying the doctrines of the secular churches as secondary.
- d) During the individual's attendance at the seminar, deacons and preachers should keep in close touch with him, lest we should lose a fellow worker in Christ.

27) Can we invite other church leaders to come and preach on the church pulpit?

Ans: We cannot.

28) Was the year in which the True Jesus Church was founded in 1917 biblical?

Ans: No. There is no biblical evidence as to the year in which Jesus was born and neither is there biblical evidence to prove when the True Jesus Church was to be found.

29) Was the founding of the True Jesus Church in the East and in China biblical?

- Ans:
- a) There are biblical references to the founding of the True Jesus Church in the East (Gen 2:8; 3:24; Ezk 43:1-2; 47:1; Rev 7:2-3; Is 24:15).
 - b) The founding of the True Jesus Church in China has no biblical support.
 - c) Ever since 1917, we have not heard of a church from the East which is more perfect than our church, not even from the West. Thus, we strongly believe that our church is the

true church from the east which the Bible promised to emerge.

30) Can we practise birth control?

- Ans:
- a) The Bible does not prevent a member from practising it.
 - b) Birth-control methods which go against the faith or are harmful should not be used; other methods, however, may be used.

31) Can we donate blood and receive blood?

- Ans:
- a) The Bible prohibits one to drink blood as there is life in blood (Lev 17:10 & 11).
 - b) To donate blood to others incurs no harm upon oneself but instead benefits others. It also does not go against the Bible.
 - c) Receiving blood can save one's own life at times. And it also does not harm the person who donates. Therefore this is allowed.

32) Can church members observe festivals?

- Ans:
- a) It is not allowed to observe days and festivals dedicated to idols.
 - b) It is permissible to observe public holidays and national celebrations other than the above.

33) Can church members observe Chinese funeral rites?

Ans: One should abstain from rites of superstitious nature.

34) **If a husband or wife commits adultery, can the other party live together with that person? If they do so, are they committing adultery?**

Ans: a) If a wife commits adultery, the husband can divorce her and remarry (Mt 5:32; 19:9). This teaching gives permission to the husband for divorce and is not a definite ruling. So, if the wife displays a repentant attitude and for the sake of the children, it is also alright if the husband should decide not to divorce her. It follows that they can still live together, but the church has to ex-communicate her.

b) If a husband commits adultery and the wife should remarry, she is considered to have committed adultery. The person who marries her is also committing adultery (Mt 5:32; 19:9). So, if a husband commits adultery, the wife is not allowed to divorce him and then to remarry. If they should divorce, the wife cannot remarry as long as her husband is still alive (1 Cor 7:10-11; Rom 7:2-3).

35) **Can divorced members remarry? If they can, what are the reasons? If not, can we allow the member's wife if she is an outsider to be baptised?**

Ans: a) If the wife commits adultery, the husband can divorce her and remarry. If the husband commits adultery, the wife cannot remarry (Mt 5:32; 19:9).

b) If the wife has not committed adultery, her husband cannot divorce her (Mt 5:32).

c) The husband and wife cannot simply divorce each other. If they do divorce, they are not allowed to remarry (1 Cor 7:10-13).

d) The unbeliever's past sins are forgiven once she gets baptised (Ac 2:38; 22:16). Therefore, she can receive baptism. ■

A SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

By : Tsai Shen-Min

1. **Should we stand up or kneel down while singing the closing chorus?**

The closing chorus is sung immediately after the last prayer of the church services. Hence, if the prayer is conducted in the standing position, it is automatic that the closing chorus is sung while standing. During the first few years of the early period of Taiwan Churches, the prayers were always carried out in standing form; hence, during that period the closing chorus were sung while standing. I myself had been a believer of the early period. After I had received the grace, I began to preach and had established 5 to 6 churches. Since at that moment, prayers were always carried out in the standing position, we sang the closing chorus while standing also.

In March 1936, Elder Thomas Kwok of the General Assembly of China came to Taiwan to conduct a 1-month Theological Seminar. He pointed out that to pray kneeling down during the closing of the services is to have more reverence. Since the last prayer was carried out in the kneeling position, it would be more convenient to sing the closing chorus whilst kneeling. These choruses are sung to end the last prayer of the services, they are not part of the hymnal singing. Hymnal singing, of course, would have to be sung standing, the short chorus that is sung to end the prayer should be sung in the same manner as the prayer.

In 1929, I myself has stayed in Shanghai General Assembly for two months. At that time, the Shanghai churches had already started to kneel down to pray and they also sang the closing chorus in the same manner. I had personally attended services of a few

churches and witnessed that they knelt to sing the closing chorus. Hence, it is clear that singing closing chorus in the kneeling position had long been carried out in GA of mainland China and it is not something that Taiwan Church invented and practised alone. The True Churches in various countries should follow accordingly in order to have uniformity. No one should ask the believers who kneels to sing closing chorus to stand up because it would disrupt the order. Hence, there should be no changes but to kneel and pray and continue with singing of closing chorus.

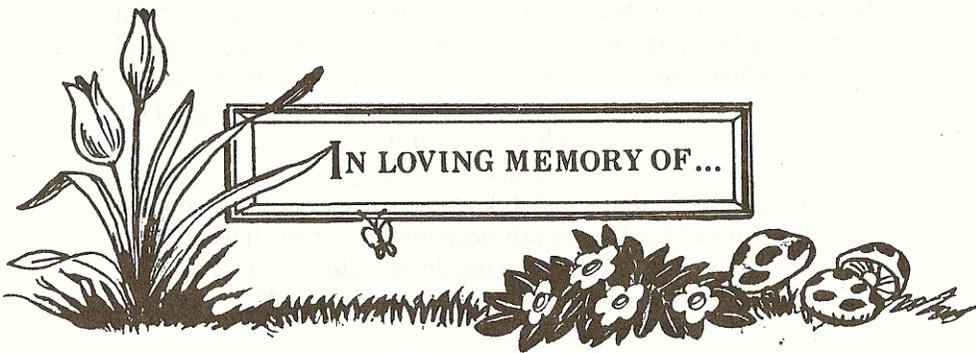
2. Question regarding the Cross.

The Cross is the most important part of the salvation grace of the Lord. There are many recordings in the Bible and it is not necessary to elaborate further. Even the secular churches which had deviated from the truth, place importance on the Cross (sign of the Cross), it is even more so for the Roman Catholic Churches. Presently, there are more than 100 Catholic Churches in the West, each individual Church claiming that they possess the Cross which actually nailed Jesus. The secular churches place much emphasis on the Cross that they not only put the Cross in their Churches, they even put the Cross on the tomb of their believers. Hence, there are people who say that the Cross is the sign of a dead man's tomb. The Cross is further abused by people who make it an ornament for women to wear, including even the prostitutes and harlots. Hence, the sign of a cross is no longer precious. For the True Jesus Church, ever since its establishment it has never place importance on the sign of the Cross but place importance only on the spiritual significance of the Cross. Hence it does not encourage people to place the Cross in the Church.

More than 20 years ago the Churches in Taiwan brought out the question concerning the Cross for discussion and the conclusion arrived at was: "To put up a Cross in the Church is to indicate that this is a place where the gospel of Jesus is preached so whoever wishes to seek the Grace may come here." In a city where buildings are crowded together, a building with a Cross could enable others to recognise easily that it is a Church. The Cross on the building of

the True Church with true doctrines is definitely not a sign of a dead man's tomb but a sign for the propagation of the salvation grace of the Lord. Hence, we must not forbid our Church to put up a Cross. Let each case be determined accordingly by the surroundings of its location where a new Church is to be built.

If a Church had through its Cross attracted people to come to study the truth and subsequently accepted the Grace, it is indeed a beautiful thing. (In Taiwan, such incidences did actually happen.) So, please let no man object to the Cross anymore. ■



IN LOVING MEMORY OF...

It happened twenty-five years ago. One summer afternoon a postman delivered a letter. It was from a nursing school in the United Kingdom. You have been accepted in their school and that you must obtain the necessary travelling documents before the September term. You were happy then to hear of the delightful news and were anxiously getting ready to go. However, father had a different plan for you. He wanted you to go to Taiwan to study theology with the hope that you would be able to teach the children when you return. There was hardly any children's classes then. The Theological College in Taiwan had just started a three-year theological course for the first time. You offered yourself to the Lord submissively as advised by father.

After three years you had successfully completed the course. On your return, you did not know what to do because you did not expect some church leaders against full-time preachers as hirelings. Therefore, in the beginning most of your work was confined to a few churches in the Northern Region. You also refused to accept the allowances given by the church except reimbursements for transport expenses. You were not discouraged despite the odds against you. On the contrary, you ungrudgingly helped the church, taught the children and visited members and delivered sermons. We thank God for giving you the perseverance during those difficult times. We also praise the Lord for helping you go through the period of trial until the early seventies when more preachers came forth to serve the Lord. It was not until then that your services were appreciated and you were ordained a preacher.

A few years later, with the blessings of the churches in Malaysia and Singapore you were sent to serve the Indonesian churches for one year. There, perhaps because you could not adapt to a new environment (for the inhabitants in the Pontian Islands were still depending on rain water for consumption) you contracted a strange disease. As a result you returned home and were admitted to the Penang Mission Hospital for treatment. After an operation you were much distressed. We were a bit worried about your illness. But the doctor who treated you assured us that it was quite natural for you to be upset. Later, you came to understand that it was the gracious Lord who had granted you a complete rest and you kept thanking God for it.

In 1974, mother was called to rest with the Lord. You were very sorrowful. You felt guilty because you had no chance to talk to her before she passed away. But who can blame you for it? You were always on the move, travelling from one church to another. But father comforted you and said mum had departed in peace. Because in the morning she was still doing free-hand exercises with our relative from Thailand before she collapsed and went into a coma. And she passed away on the same evening. She did not suffer any pain at all. Then you accepted it as the will of the Lord.

Whenever you were home for a brief period you would always play the role of Martha and every member at home, young or old, was your honoured guest. You would serve each and everyone with delight. The allowances you received were small but you would cut down on your food and clothing expenses in order to save some money to help the needy. I am deeply impressed. Indeed, you believed that, "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

I also remember you telling me of the days you spent in the seminary. One day a deacon brought you all visiting. You passed by a convent and saw many nuns there. This deacon said to you, "These nuns offered their whole lives to God without getting married. Their devotion is worthwhile of our emulation." You said that you had understood him. He meant to say that if you could be like the nuns it would be well for you. Was this the reason you chose to remain single to serve the Lord?

Eight years ago the churches in Malaysia and Singapore sent you to the seminary college in Taiwan again to take up a one-year course in religious education. While you were there, you wrote to me three times encouraging me to dedicate myself to God. I must confess that your three letters had moved me to serve the Lord. For this I give thanks to God for your encouragement and prayers. When I think of your prayers I could not help but give thanks to God again. When our younger sisters fell sick you would pray for them in tears with fasting. Because of your long prayers your two knees had callouses. Some biblical commentaries say that the callouses on James' knees were as thick as the camel skin due to long prayers. I would say that yours were no thinner than the cow skin.

Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and withers; he flies like a shadow, and continues not."

Though I understand that even the best concert must have a finale, and the life of man is like a sojourner, I really do not expect you, my dear sister, to depart so soon. You have ended your 22 years of service to the Lord, in fact 25 years (three years in the seminary), just like that. The value of a man's life is not measured by the length of his stay in this world. Some have come into vanity and have gone into darkness. Others have stayed a long time in this world and yet they have passed their days meaninglessly. It is a waste. As for you, though you had only lived 50 years, you lived a meaningful life. You knew the eternal God to whom you also had offered yourself. Preacher F M Che wrote your epitaph thus :

"The beauty of a grain is not its golden husk but its sacrifice and its new life."

Oh, my dear sister, we were companions in our heavenly pilgrimage. You were also a good helper in my ministry. Now that you have left me, I feel that I have lost a source of strength - the strength that can find no substitute! Oh, Nyuk Lin, my precious sister, I cannot help but hold you always in my bosom. ■

Henry

News

The multi-storey church complex of the True Jesus Church at Adam Road, Singapore was dedicated to the Lord on the 12th of November 1989. Praise the Lord. A three-day holy convocation held in conjunction with the dedication began on the 10th and ended on the 12th.

The convocation was well-attended. Distinguished guests included church ministers and believers from many parts of the world. 1008 partook of the Holy Communion on the 11th. They came from USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Brunei, East Malaysia and West Malaysia. 15 received the Holy Spirit and 15 were baptized. The sum of S\$71,423.37 was received during the thanksgiving.

The church complex is situated in the heart of Singapore. Five different buses pass it. It is also not far from a MRT station. We thank the Lord for providing such a good location.

The address is as follows :

True Jesus Church
17-D Adam Road
Singapore 1128
Republic of Singapore



Department of Literary Ministry
International Assembly of
The True Jesus Church
11236 Dale Street
Garden Grove, California 92641
U.S.A.