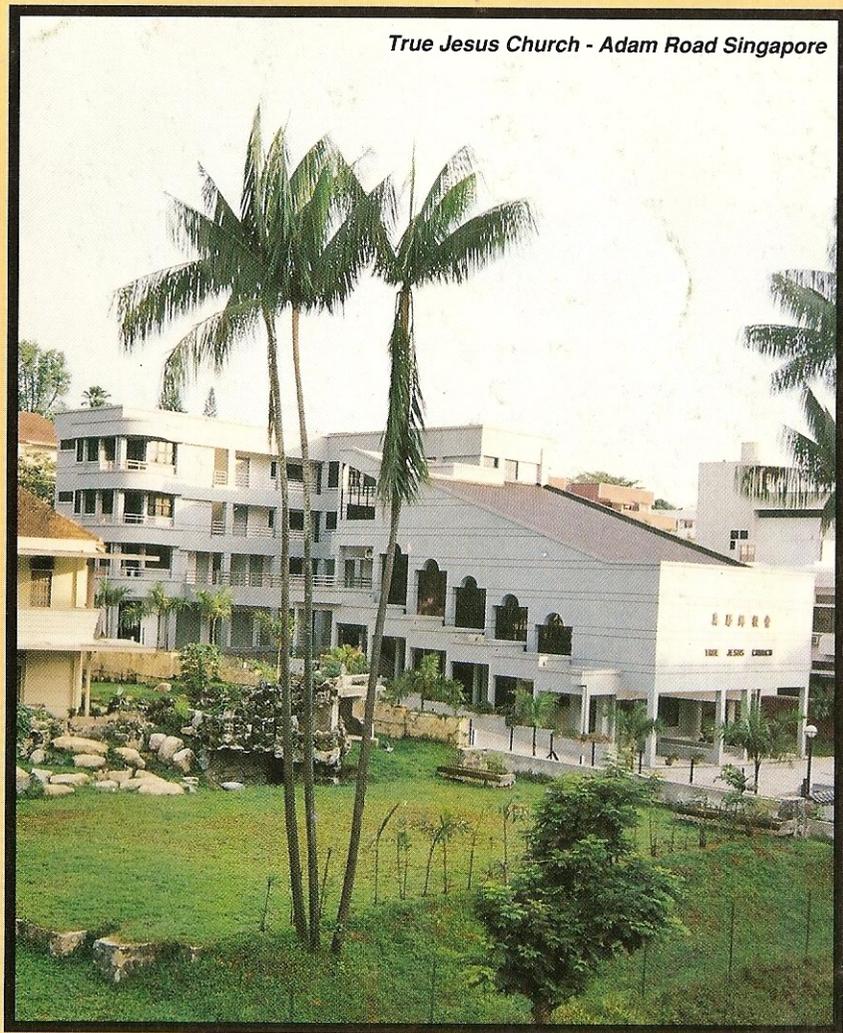


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True Jesus Church - Adam Road Singapore



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

As the Lord Jesus went about the cities and villages with His disciples, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, healing diseases and infirmities, He saw the multitude and had compassion for them because they were helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).

Our Church today is facing the same problem, ie, the lack of full-time ministers. In the IA Newsletter No. 11, the Chairman of the International Assembly of the True Jesus Church wrote, "We pray that the True Church in every country will propagate the gospel throughout the world." In the same periodical, the Director of Ministerial Training commented: "At present, there is a shortage of evangelists who are experienced and trained in Indonesia. If the holy work is to be carried out actively in Indonesia Otherwise, the fertile soil will be neglected." And in the editorial, it was said that currently IA is facing a great harvest with limited labourers.

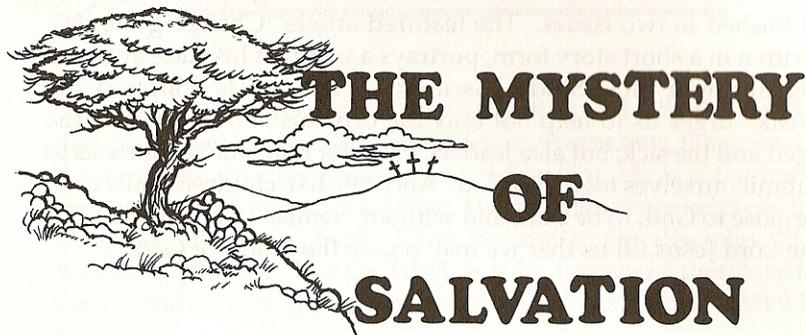
There is a shortage of English-speaking preachers. There is a need for them in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, India, the Philippines and Africa. A theological seminary will be set up in Singapore to train English-speaking evangelists. A four-year course of full-time instruction will commence on 1 October 1990. Application will be opened to brothers who are between twenty and forty years of age. Those who have set their minds on serving the Lord should submit their application as soon as possible, to the following address:

The Principal
Southeast Asia Theological Training Centre
17D Adam Road
Singapore 1128

In this issue the lead article deals with salvation and it was written by a very old deacon. It is rather lengthy, so it is to be published in two issues. The featured article "Changing Limits", written in a short story form, portrays a youth of his rude awakening during a Bible Study Discussion. The article "Support the Weak" urges us to help not only the orphans and widows or the aged and the sick; but also leaders. "Do not murmur" exhorts us to submit ourselves totally to God. And, "Be like children" calls us to be close to God, to be pure and without blemish. May the Spirit of the Lord Jesus fill us that we may regain the image of God.

Singapore

June 1990



THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION

By John Voon

The grace of salvation, when it was first ordained, was hidden in the wisdom of God. Rom 16:25-26 says, "(God) is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested ..." (see also 1 Pet 1:20).

In the Old Testament times, salvation can be known through the deliverance of Noah's family and the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Moses said to the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you today." This continued even after their entry into Canaan where God's hand was seen each time they were oppressed. Thus, salvation had been the theme of many prophecies and many Psalms but very few knew what salvation truly is.

At the ushering in of the New Testament times, John the Baptist proclaimed, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand", a phrase also used by Jesus.

Mt 4:23 states, "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom ..."

Mt 24:14 continues, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony into all the nations."

What is "the gospel of the kingdom"? It is the tidings of salvation. Thus, in the message of the New Testament, "Salvation" and "gospel" can be used interchangeably. Jesus Himself is Salvation (Lk 19:19), and the mystery of God is Jesus Christ (Col 2:2). 1 Tim 2:10 talks about "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus" while old Simeon said under inspiration, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Therefore, it is never erroneous to say that the tidings of salvation equals the gospel.

From ages past, "Salvation" had been hidden, but when the New Testament age arrived, salvation was manifested. But for the world to know this "Salvation" through human wisdom is impossible. Even such a one like John the Baptist required the revelation of the Holy Spirit in his knowledge of this "Salvation". He who had announced repeatedly, 'I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove ... and it abode upon him ... and have borne witness that this is the Son of God', "the Lamb of God" also said, "I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, 'Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:29-34).

The priests, the scribes and the Pharisees were men of carnal minds. Before their countrymen, they had status, followers, the Mosaic Law and the ordinances as their glory. Their hearts in complacency, could never be inclined to receive life and salvation in Jesus. Moreover, Jesus in their eyes was not one of noble background, but a Nazarene, son of Joseph, only a carpenter by trade. They had no idea, of course, that this apparently lowly one, was Israel's long awaited One, whom they had expected for generations, to fulfill their Salvation, the very Son of God (Is 53:1-3; Lk 24:21). Only few could want to believe on the Lord and Saviour who was raised a commoner! Jn 9 records the conversations revolving a blind person who was healed. A reading on the entire chapter makes it clear that the Jews and the Pharisees were from the start denying the healing that Jesus had wrought for the blind man. However, when

the conversation led to the blind man testifying for himself, and confounding the Jews and Pharisees with questions, they, fearing the lost of face, cursed him by saying, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us." And they cast him out. We see thus, the stubbornness and arrogance of the Jews and Pharisees. A prejudiced person will not learn, just as it is written in Jn 3:19, "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil."

The Lord Jesus preached the gospel on the one hand, and on the other exercised the power of heaven. Healing, exorcising, raising the dead, He caused any to believe that He came from heaven, sent from God as Redeemer for the fulfillment of God's salvation plan. For this cause He said, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me : or else believe me for the very works' sake" (Jn 14:11, see also 10:38). This is the most elementary form of faith, but yet the priests and the Pharisees continued to view Christ according to external appearance as before, maintaining that "by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons".

Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (Jn 1:49), "And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Of a truth thou art the Son of God'" (Mt 14:33). Martha, sister of Lazarus, likewise said, "Yea, Lord : I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." These nevertheless, continued seeing Christ from the worldly perspective, thinking that He would soon restore the Kingdom of Israel and become its earthly King. When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice from all the mighty works which they had seen; saying, 'Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ...'" (Lk 19:37-38). "These things understood not his disciples at the first but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they ..." (Jn 12:16).

"And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat.'" "And when the hour was come, Jesus sat down ... and he said unto them, 'With desire I have desired to eat the passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto

you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.'" "And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant is my blood, even that which is poured out for you.'" (Lk 22:7-20). None of the twelve understood what Jesus meant by these words. Judas was busy plotting his betrayal. The rest were still thinking and debating about who was the greatest among them, and perhaps not without indignation for the brothers, James and John (Mk 10:35-41). Such a state of affairs worked into the heart of the Lord sorrow upon sorrow. So as the time of His suffering drew nearer, in great agony of Spirit He spoke, saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth ..." (Jn 16:12-13).

That evening, Judas the betrayer, led men to his Master and saluted Him with a kiss. Thus was the Lord arrested, charged and condemned to death. His hands and feet were impaled to a cross, and blood flowed freely from the wounds. With His body firmly nailed to the cross, He was lifted up from the earth, His entire weight supported by only three nails. Then He was left to bleed to death. Only at death was He set free from the unbearable agony.

When the Lord died, the multitude of His disciples were scattered like sheep, leaving behind a few young men, some womenfolk from afar, and His mother, watching helplessly from a distance, the pitiful sight of the crucified Lord, and bearing with the insults, mockery and cursing of passers-by who rejoiced at His plight.

Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus, could be counted as men of honour and upright, for their spirit of justice determined that Jesus was a good man, whose death was only the result of unjust oppression. With righteous indignation, they bravely sought permission from Pilate to have the body of Jesus, to prevent its abuse, the act of which showed at the same time, their silent resentment for the priests and the rulers. The joint action of these two men made them stand out as a stark contrast to their contemporaries, for they reckoned Jesus as a prophet, sent from God.

After three days, news of Jesus' resurrection was noised abroad. Different individuals, including certain disciples and a few women, all testifying that the body was missing and that they truly had seen the risen Lord. The minds of the disciples then could be best described as confused, frightened, and doubtful. One of them remarked in response to all these reports, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:24-28).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ became an established fact. He retained His human form and could eat and drink, but at the same time could appear and disappear. Once the Lord appeared in the midst of His disciples who had gathered together, and expounded to them once again the Word of Life He had previously communicated to them, and also the prophecies in the Scriptures. He opened their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures and know assuredly that it was written beforehand that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead (Lk 24:36-46). Christ Jesus Himself is salvation, and His life, death and resurrection was all for the purpose of redeeming mankind.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared and disappeared in the midst of His disciples for a space of forty days. Once He appeared in a gathering of the disciples and said these very significant words, "... as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (Jn 20:21). It is like saying that since He had accomplished the work which the Father had entrusted Him, to lay the foundation of salvation, it is now time for Him to send His disciples to preach this salvation. When Jesus, according to God's plan of salvation proclaimed God's love and accomplished the work of redemption, He possessed the power of God in His hands. Now, He says, "even so I send you", "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation ... And these signs shall accompany them that believe", "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed" (Mk 16:15-20).

Prompted by his concern for the church, Peter, though advanced in age, wrote to several churches, "... you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be

revealed in the last time ... receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you ... which things angels desire to look into" (1 Pet 1:5-12). The way God's salvation was planned, developed and finally revealed, were things angels desired to look into. It is shown clearly that the mystery of salvation was unknown even to the angels.

Salvation and Covenanting

A study of the Scriptures imparts us the knowledge that man and the world in which he dwells were created by God. The dominion over the entire world was also given to man by God. Thus, man began to know God and establish a relationship with Him. This relationship, however, came about through a covenant, which both parties were expected to covenant (Dan 9:14) who will ever surely remember His covenant made with man (Gen 17:7). If man were to transgress the covenant, he would be reckoned a sinner and would have to face its curse (Gen 17:14, Hos 6:7). Having covenanted with God, man's position was raised, for he would enjoy the care and protection of God, just like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Gen 20:1-4, 26:23-25, 31:42). God's relationship with Adam, Noah and Abraham were all sealed with a covenant. In all instances, God desired their subjection and obedience (Gen 2:15-17, 6:17-22, 12:1-4, 17:1-4, 7-10).

When God told Abraham of His intention to covenant with him, he immediately fell on his face and worshipped, showing his trust and gratitude. And God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, saying, "I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee", "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." And again, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee : every male among you shall be circumcised ... and it shall be a token for a covenant betwixt me and you ... He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised : any my

covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Gen 17:9-13). "And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant" (Gen 17:14).

The Decalogue which God announced to the Israelites in the wilderness was a covenant extended from the everlasting covenant He had made with Abraham, made necessary by the quantitative growth of the Israelite population. The nation, beginning from then, through the time of the judges till the kings, based their civil legislation on the Ten Commandments. God Himself also judge according to their external principles. The covenant of circumcision remained good, for throughout their generations, the people of Israel circumcized their males on the eighth day of birth, without exception. This is the old covenant.

The Jews, from the people of Israel till the present time, recognize only the Old Covenant communicated by Moses. They deny the New Covenant given by Jesus (that is, Salvation through Christ Jesus).

That which we Christians received in the New Covenant, initiated and propagated by the Lord Jesus Himself. This New Covenant was announced on the last Passover feast Jesus had with His disciples, when He instituted the love feast. The Lord said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you" (Lk 22:20). We know thus that the New Covenant involves the Lord covenanting with believers with His own blood. If any man truly believe in the salvation of Jesus Christ, he should be motivated to covenant with the Lord Jesus.

The New Covenant found its initiation in Christ, but must be met with the believers' acceptance of what is done by Him, thereby establishing a personal relationship with the Lord. Some may ask, "What exactly is being motivated to covenant with the Lord?" The answer is, "Believe and be baptized" (Mk 16:16). Baptism is the Lord's command. It is also the arrangement for the covenant between God and man.

The Decalogue is a covenant, which God initiated when He announced it. Israel's obedience answers to being motivated. The Old Covenant was made with the blood of calves and goats (Heb 9:18-20, Ex 24:6-8).

Abraham believed God's promise and was circumcised. When men believe Jesus as the Saviour of the world, they ought also to "believe and be baptized". New Testament believers receive only baptism, for circumcision is no longer necessary.

The question may be asked, "Since Jesus by His own blood has covenanted with believers, is the New Covenant completed? Why then talk about the necessity of baptism in completing the covenanting process? Is there a Bible basis to maintain that a believer must receive baptism before he can truly be said to have entered in the Lord's covenant?"

Abraham believed the promise of God and received circumcision according to God's command. "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house ... every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised ... And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised" (Gen 17:17, 23-25).

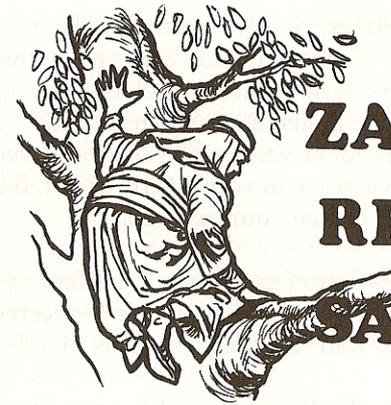
If the covenant is seen as a piece of fabric, circumcision can be seen as the underside while the command of God as the upper side. Likewise, a person's receiving of the salvation of Christ, that is, belief and baptism, is the underside while the blood of the covenant is the upper side.

The Apostle Peter tells of his unique understanding of the covenantal nature of baptism by alluding it to the Deluge in which eight souls were saved through water according to God's covenant with Noah (1 Pet 3:20,21). This demonstrates the fact that the shed blood of Christ points to a covenant involving two parties, one beckoning, one responding. Since there are essential steps towards

establishing a covenant, negligence with respect to any of them may invalidate the covenant.

The Apostle John, in support of the same truth, expounds it in another way: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one."

Reading through both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, one cannot escape the fact that water, blood and the Holy Spirit are instrumental in covenant-making. "Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the cows and the goats with water and scarlet bull and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you ... And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb 9:18-22). Christians must be clear that the covenant between the believer and Christ is a pillar in the grace of salvation. ■ (To be continued)



ZACCHAEUS RECEIVED SALVATION

(Luke 19:1-10)

In Luke 19:1-10, we are told of a sinner who sought Jesus and who eventually was accepted by Jesus and received salvation. Today, many want to seek Jesus and to receive salvation but sad to say they cannot find Jesus and so they are unable to receive salvation.

In the City of Jericho, there lived a man called Zacchaeus. He was a rich man and a tax collector. Even though he was rich he enjoyed no peace in his heart because he used unscrupulous means to obtain his wealth. His position and money could not pacify his troubled-spirit. He was very eager to find someone who could help him but he found none. One day, Jesus entered the city. The inhabitants of the whole city came to listen to His words. The sick were healed, the sinners were forgiven and the troubled received peace. Zacchaeus therefore made up his mind to see who Jesus was. But the crowd was big and he was short. He could not see Jesus. Yet he would not give up. He ran before the crowd and climbed up a sycamore tree to get a better view, for Jesus was to pass that way. After a while, Jesus came to him and said, "Zacchaeus, make hast and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So Zacchaeus came down and received Jesus joyfully. Upon arrival, Zacchaeus stood before Jesus and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I

give to the poor; and if I defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham." Zacchaeus has given up his possession but has gained peace in his heart which is far better than his ill-gotten riches and status, for he was saved. You may have status and money but do you have peace in your heart? If not, the salvation that Zacchaeus received can be yours as well.

Zacchaeus wanted to know who Jesus was. If he had not made up his mind to do so he would not have been able to receive the grace of salvation. Because he had this desire, he was saved.

Do you want to see the Lord? If you do not how can you receive salvation?

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector and a rich man. It was hard for a rich man in high position to find Jesus. The Lord said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God" (Lk 18:24). He said this to a certain ruler (Lk 18:18). This ruler wanted eternal life but his riches and status prevented him from following the Lord. But Zacchaeus did not allow his wealth to overcome him. You may be in a very high position, having a lot of money, but do not let such things prevent you from seeing the Lord.

Zacchaeus had to go ahead of the multitude and climb up a sycamore tree to see Jesus. His perseverance eventually enabled him to see the Lord and obtain salvation. Sometimes a person may wish to come to God but he meets with an obstacle. The obstacle may be his parents, his friends and relatives. The Lord Jesus said, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Mt 7:14). The Lord also said, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence and men of violence take it by force" (Mt 11:12).

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make hast and come down; for I must stay at your house today.'" (5,6). Here, we see that Zacchaeus wanted to receive the Lord to his house and then into his heart. As such, the salvation of God came to his house.

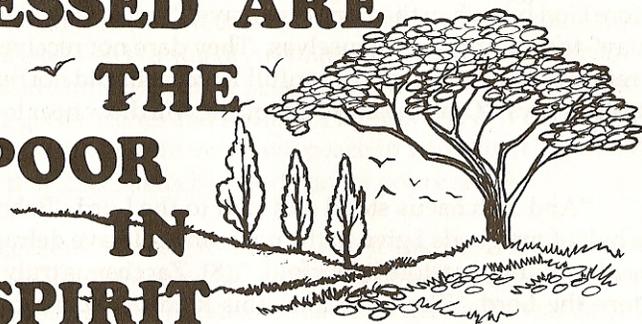
Today, there are those who would try very hard to come before God but when the Lord Jesus says, "I must stay at you house today" they withdraw themselves. They dare not receive the Lord or refuse to accept Him. How pitiful! Zacchaeus did not reject Jesus. The Bible says, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (Jas 4:8).

"And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold.'" (8). Zacchaeus truly repented before the Lord. The Lord likes this kind of repentance and so Zacchaeus was saved.

Do you have peace of mind? If not, it is because of your sins in you. It is sins that make you fear. But, remember, Jesus is the friend of sinners. He has come to save sinners who repent. You need to truly repent before Him. He will forgive all your sins and wash away all your unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9).

We must say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Lk 18:13). If we can do this then God will surely accept us. For God will not despise a broken and contrite heart. Therefore, be like Zacchaeus. Bring all our sins before the Lord and beseech Him for mercy and forgiveness. Then the Lord will also say to you, "Salvation comes to your house today, for you are also the children of God." ■

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT



The Lord Jesus went up to the mountain, and when He had sat down, His disciples came to Him. Then He began to teach them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3).

One who is poor in spirit is humble in his speech and actions. There was a Pharisee who prayed to God saying, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterous ... I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get" (Lk 18:9-12). In contrast, Paul, who was eloquent, a student of Gamaliel, educated according to the strict manner of the law of the Pharisees and a zealous servant of God, was extremely humble. He wrote, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and I straining it forward to what lies ahead" (Php 3:12-13).

And one who is humble will always accept the criticisms of others. Job was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil but at the same time he was self-righteous. So God reproached Job out of the whirlwinds, "Shall a fault-finder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it" (Job 40:1-2). Job finally confessed, "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?" and "therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6). Before this the spirit of

Job was full but after this his spirit was empty. It was well that Job confessed before God of his self-righteousness. One who is humble is like a servant before his master, always lowly and helpless. He will not boast of his achievements but is ready to accept criticisms.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit. The Ethiopian eunuch was a minister of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her treasures. Though he was rich and in a high position, he was poor in spirit. He travelled across the wilderness to Jerusalem to worship God. On his way back he was reading the Book of Isaiah but he could not understand it. Philip, the evangelist, went up to him and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch replied humbly, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" He then invited Philip to go up his chariot. Philip preached the gospel to him. He was humble enough to receive the truth. On the same day both Philip and the eunuch went into the water and Philip baptized the eunuch. After his baptism, the eunuch continued on his homeward journey joyfully. The eunuch was rejoicing because he was confident that he could go to heaven for his sins were forgiven. This eunuch was poor in spirit and was willing to accept the teachings of God. So his sins were forgiven (Ac 8:25-40).

At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people and prayed constantly to God. Despite his high position and charitable deeds he was poor in spirit. When an angel of the Lord instructed him to invite Peter to his house, he quickly called two of his servants and a devout soldier to send for him, while he and his kinsmen and close friends waited. When Peter finally came, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. Because he was so humble that God blessed him and all those who heard the word with the Holy Spirit.

In order to enter the kingdom of God we must be humble because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet 5:5). The kingdom of heaven is yours if you are humble. So, let us all be humble. ■



CHANGING LIMITS

(A Short Story)

'What would you do if you were given a year in which all that you do will not be accountable before God?'

Peter barely looked up. He was bored but did not want to show it. When he suddenly realized that the discussion leader was looking at him, his eyes tried vainly to register some flicker of intelligence.

'Look, say God gave you a year. In this period, he says, you can do anything you like. He will not judge you for it. You sin all you like and it will be wiped clean off your slate. It's as if that year did not exist at all in God's reckoning but for you, the experience will still hold. You get my question? Peter?'

He didn't like to answer this kind of question. In fact, he didn't like to answer any question in a Bible discussion. It hadn't always been like this but Bible studies were becoming more and more a burden to attend. The principles which used to be enlightening now weighed heavily as demands that were unreasonable and restrictive on one in the prime of enjoying life. Perhaps principles were like elastic bands fencing a stretch of road. They are nice and protective if one were to walk along the road but pulls backward if one were to stretch them to cross over to another road. And if they break, they leave a stinging whiplash on your body.

Peter readily admitted inside that Bible studies had begun to sting him since he met Nimrod. It was at one of those innocuous

birthday parties that students give to signal a certain coming of age. 'What?' he had asked when they were introduced. 'Nimrod. Hard to get at first but sure to remember later.' They had easily settled into a conversation on cars as both had just got their driving licenses and their fathers were rich enough for such a discussion to take place without it sounding like hopeless window shopping. Nimrod was a reasonably good-looking boy with a penchant for the braided things in life and a confidence acquired, like all other things he had, by his father's mammon. They had somehow gone on to discuss religion and Peter, surprised at Nimrod's interest, started preaching in earnest what little he knew. 'Come to my church' he had said. Sure, we'll make an arrangement. I have always wanted to find more meaning in life. Peter was glad and silently muttered a prayer of thanks. 'Anyway,' Nimrod asked, 'are there any pretty girls in your church?' Peter gave a hesitant laugh.

Nimrod came to church several times. Peter introduced him to his religious education teacher who explained in detail, over several sessions, the teachings of Jesus Christ. He looked interested, came regularly then irregularly and then stopped altogether. Meanwhile, Peter had also been introduced to his circle of friends and tit-for-tat as such friendships demanded, a visit to church had to be balanced by a party at Nimrod's friend's friend's place or a drive along the beach after a midnight show and long phone conversations where not long after the beginning, he says, 'Hey, let's not talk about church, OK?' And Peter would say alright, thinking to himself, to the weak I become weak and then plunging on to a good unspiritual discussion.

I know my limits, Peter had told himself when he went for the first time to a discotheque. No smoking and no drinking. He would just listen to the music and maybe dance a few numbers. After all, that was good exercise, he had heard this said many times before. The next day he found an excuse not to attend a college Bible study. The elastic bands of Bible principles had begun to be stretched.

There are some people who by the vice of their talents stay from the narrow way because of pride, in themselves and contempt, for the puny bands that would control their lives. The medical

student has no time for church attendance, the entrepreneur has no qualms about bending some ethical rules for that great opportunity to soar ahead of the competition and the beauty has no wish to reject the affections and accompanying gifts of admirers. There is however a much larger group of people who slide back morally because they have no obvious talent. Such resort to acts of infamy to gain attention and to shout out to the world that they have a stake in life. To each group then their particular illusion of the meaning of life pulls them forward down through the most energetic period of their lives. Peter belonged to the latter group. A tall, gangling teenager with a face one would politely call good-looking after a second look, he attracted no attention. One wouldn't call him boring but he left no impression, before, during or after meeting him. He had realized this and had made an attempt to excel at least in one area. He had chosen tennis and had made favourable progress on a whole course of forty-dollars an hour coaching. But his zeal deflated when he was easily beaten by a church friend who was self-taught in tennis. Church was no better for again he saw the more talented dominating him in all areas. It never occurred to him to work hard and long under the grace of God in prayer and Bible study for spiritual success. And it never really sank into him, in spite of all the earlier exposure to the Word of God what spiritual success was. His ideals in life were more shaped by the commercials in the blabbering mass-media than the common sense in the Bible.

Peter had not liked the discipline of the short-term youth theology course conducted during the year-end school holidays. Again, seemingly a lot of effort reaped little reward. He was sufficiently convinced of the need to escape the punishments of hell but heaven, as he imagined it reproduced in the seminar, held scant attraction for him. Vaguely, he formed a notion of doing just enough to escape hell, roughly set up a scheme of mortal sins to avoid, number of services to attend to ensure contact with God and a set of limits he must not cross. He did not like to talk about these limits in the presence of those whom he feared had higher standards. Troubled by the possible need to redefine guidelines he had become comfortable with, Peter started excusing himself from Bible studies. I will surely come, meant that he may appear. I am sorry but, became a constant rejoinder to concerned enquiries about his absence.

But then this question was different. What shall he do if God wouldn't count it? Ah, but then again wouldn't this reveal the depths of his thoughts? But who cares, he had not done anything really wrong. It was, on the other hand, good for him, therapeutic in fact, to release the pent-up need in him to let the others know that he had so far successfully prevented the evil in him from surfacing. He still walked the line though he could so easily have crossed over. The bravado he felt called to mind a cornered boxer's final gesticulations of defiance before submission into defeat.

'I'll probably kill someone.' He appreciated the gasps and the uneasy laughs he had generated. He imagined that this would be what some anti-hero in a film-noir would say. He had been inducted into this genre of film, fashion and mood by Nimrod and he found its suggestion of rebellion and greyness of morality compelling. They had taken to wearing French-style clothes which were not loud but understated. They enjoyed the camaraderie in late night jaunts and even later discussions on secluded beaches, watching the lights afar. These discussions were presumably on the meaning of life and covered depression, meaninglessness and their most recent romantic interests.

Peter had always wanted to marry someone of the same religious persuasion. His parents, being respectable members of the church, were also very supportive in this aspect, on the small condition that the girl were compatible socially. That was how he lost his first sister in church. Nimrod was very supportive during this difficult period, always keeping Peter company and supplying him with company to keep his mind off difficult thoughts. That was how he had met Nicole. And Ah Ling. And Akira, and June and the most recent romantic interest. He always believed that he could ultimately make these believe in Jesus. They had to anyway, or he wouldn't be able to marry in the church.

The Bible study leader had quietly taken Peter aside after the discussion.

'I'm worried for you, Peter.' He was an experienced Christian and he did not want to say he was shocked by Peter's confession.

That would only spur him on. He suspected that Peter had began smoking, drinking and dancing. He was not wrong. The first disco trip had been followed by others and Peter had had not enough time to build up a spiritual fortitude to withstand resonating to the rhythm of the world. His limits were broken. He felt the sting of breaking God's law, grew numb and then contented himself with the new limit of not committing mortal sins. He will still go to church on Sabbaths to keep in touch with salvation and definitely - no mortal sins.

It wasn't that no one in church cared for him. His obvious slide pained many of his contemporaries from religious education class and older brethren who had taught him. But he had found their company boring, their words grating, their concern unempathic and he avoided them. It will not be wrong to observe that all who leave the True Jesus Church never really do so on doctrinal grounds. Grudges, worldly attractions, laziness, persecution and even if some quote doctrinal grounds, further investigation often reveals the real root to be either grudges, worldly attractions, laziness, persecution and etcetera.

'I'll be all right. Don't worry, Brother John. I know my limits.'

Peter later married Nicole, a French-Chinese. He did not know that she carried a fatal incurable disease. He still come to church on and off and enjoyed only 'practical' sermons which touched on handling stress and day-to-day living. ■

By E G Tay

Some Bible passages to consider after reading the short story.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. 1 Cor 15:33 | 5. Prov 22:6 | 9. Eph 1:17-19 |
| 2. Mat 10 :16 | 6. 1 Tim 6:6-10 | 10. Mat 25:14-30 |
| 3. Mat 26:41 | 7. Phil 4:4-9 | 11. 2 Tim 2:20-22 |
| 4. Neh 13:23-27 | 8. 1 Cor 15:19 | 12. Prov 13:16 |
| | | 13. Mat 13:18-23 |



SUPPORT THE WEAK

Who are the weak? The impoverished, who cannot afford a decent living, the orphans and widows, the aged and the sick, the victims of unexpected calamities. Others are those weighed down by broken, disconsolate spirits, incapable of self-help, spending their days in gloom, without light and without peace. Hopeless and downcast, days seem to be years for these poor souls. These are the weak, who require help and comfort from stronger ones and those better endowed. The deficiencies of the poor must be nourished with the abundance of the rich, the spiritual depravity of the weak must be enriched by the Word of God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ, afforded by the tender love of the brethren, offering encouragement and support. As is often said, this world is a bitter sea, so every man born into it can boast of only labour and sorrow (Ps 90:10). This does not affect only the poor, but ensnares all humanity, and establishes the synonymy between laborious toil and earthly existence (Eccl 1:13). The Bible teaches, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). There is none that sail through life peacefully without meeting a storm. Trouble does not select its victim and pays no regard to wealth, poverty, nationality or race; it befalls one and all. And when it does, it not only thrusts a person into physical suffering but often in greater degrees, it disturbs his mental and spiritual well-being. It is opportune than, to render support and comfort; the yearning also, of those in the midst of trial.

Our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, was the Word become

flesh, God incarnate, and being flesh and blood as we are, he carried in His body the same fleshly weaknesses (Heb 4:15). Anticipating His imminent death, He solicited the prayer support of His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying, "My Soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; abide ye here, and watch with me." (Mt 26:38). Luke tells us in his gospel, "And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Lk 22:43-44). The cup from which Christ was to drink proved to be beyond the human. It necessitated the supplications of the disciples and the aid of the angel; the strength added thereby was enlisted to triumph over the weaknesses of the flesh, in order to accomplish the work of salvation on the cross.

During the battle between Israel and the Amalekites at Rephidim, Moses instructed Joshua to lead the army while he, together with Aaron and Hur, ascended a hill to supplicate. When his hands were lifted up in prayer, Israel prevailed, but his physical strength could not sustain the weight of uplifted limbs indefinitely, so each time his hands were let down, Israel was let down and the enemy prevailed. His companions found him a stool of stone on which he sat, while they supported his limpid forelimbs on each side till dusk, by which time the Amalekites were all falling, lifeless on the ground (Ex 17:8-13). Does this historic truth not teach us that the fatigued arms of Moses were upheld by Aaron and Hur when they threatened to come down and that without their support, Moses could neither have kept his hands steady nor persevered in the prayer that brought victory? The Bible alerts us, "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of the darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). Subtle attacks from our unseen foes may plunge us into spiritual weakness, indifference and degeneration. In such moments of weakness, the need for intercessory prayers becomes more evident; prayers by which implorations are made for increased faith and strength, not unlike the support rendered by Aaron and Hur to Moses, so that our hands which hand down and our feeble knees can be empowered against the adversary (Heb 12:12).

Elijah, a prophet of no meagre power, when fiercely pursued by Ahab's wicked queen, Jezebel, who would not suffer him to live much longer, succumbed like the weakest of us, to gross impotence and asked for death. It was God who sent timely aid through an angel who brought him food and drink, and by virtue of these, the man of God journeyed forty days and nights towards Horeb, the Mount of God (1 Kgs 19:1-8). This passage can serve as our guide as we tread the road heaven-bound, for our opponent is the devil, who like a roaring lion seeks to devour the devourable (1 Pet 5:8). Our Lord had warned Peter, "Satan asked to have you" (Lk 22:31) - a similitude of Jezebel's pursuit of Elijah. Our earthly pilgrimage reflects the harsh situations of Elijah's flight in the wild, thistled deserts, during which our hungry, thirsty souls, overwhelmed by weakness, often resign midway to spiritual slumber. In such a helpless condition, we await heavenly messengers from among our brethren, to awaken, support and comfort; to transfer our feebleness into physical and spiritual well-being, much needed for the journey towards our celestial destination.

We shift our discussion next, to one of the wealthiest men in the east, Job, whom the Bible declares to be perfect, upright and God-fearing, one who eschewed evil (Job 1:1-5). Through instigation of the devil, he suffered disasters claiming all his wealth and children within a day (1:13-19). Compounding to his suffering, he was inflicted with bodily pain in the form of sores, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, his skin broken, his flesh infested with worms. Such sorrow bade him to sit upon ashes all day, scrapping himself with a potsherd (2:7-8, 7:3). Such a pitiful, deplorable condition is beyond description, and the victim, writhing under its oppression, inevitably cursed the day wherein he was born (3:1-12). It ought to be deemed fortunate for Job that he had three or four caring friends who made appointment with one another, and came together from afar to bemoan his plight (2:11-13). Their effort contributed, more or less, to Job's stamina in sustaining the trial of his misfortunes, and after suffering to the fullness thereof, he received out of God's bounty ten children and a double portion of wealth and cattle. We must not fail to mention that in answer to his affliction, Job received from all his brothers, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, words of

comfort, apart from a piece of money and a ring of gold from each of them (42:11) - a harvest of recompense for seeds of kindness he had previously sown, in instructing many, in strengthening the weak hands, in upholding the falling, in making firm the feeble knees (4:3-4). Here is our lesson; we who render help and comfort shall also have times of woe, receiving in return the same kindness from others, for we have the Bible to teach us, "For man also knoweth not this time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of man snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them" (Eccl 9:12). Paul's remark does not differ, "When they are saying, 'Peace and safety' then suddenly destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape" (1 Thess 5:3). Job's uncourted disaster is ordained an example and a testimony to the truth of these Bible statements.

Tribulation and adversity, as they are usually not predictable, predispose no one to either the duty of bestowing, or the misfortune of needing help, but as the good Book says, "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). Thus the teaching of the Scripture, "A friend loveth at all times; And a brother is born for adversity" (Prov 17:17). While the heathens are guided by the Confucian ethic of Universal Brotherhood which prompts them to care for those in need, Christians born of the same Spirit and united as brethren in the Lord should excel and surpass them in mutual care and concern, transcending even natural fraternity, to function concordantly as one Body (1 Cor 12:13-26). The Scripture rules, "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn 3:17). Negligence towards the care of members of the same household amounts to denial of the faith and is worse than the sin of infidelity (1 Tim 5:8). It is not a rarity amongst brethren who are rich to have their mistaken notions about their own love and religiosity build a wall of complacency around themselves, while being in actuality hardhearted, tight-fisted and uncharitable toward the poor. Of what use is it if they were to say to an impoverished brother or sister, "Peace be with you. Keep warm and be well-fed" without lending or surrendering part

of their worldly goods to meet his insufficiencies? (Deut 15:7-8; Js 2:14-17). God wants those who have to give to those who have not, not the have-nots to struggle to assist fellow have-nots; so the Bible says, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it" (Prov 3:27). Inspired by Christ's teaching, "It is more blessed to give than to receive", Paul undertook to hard labour in order to obtain means to help and support the weak (Ac 20:35).

Supporting the weak and giving to the poor are kindness unconditionally offered, without expectation of reward whatsoever, exuding from a loving heart, fashioned into conformity with that of Christ (Phil 2:5). Jesus Himself propounded this principle at length, "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore thou does alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. But when thou does alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee" (Mt 6:1-4). We notice that reward, though not expected by the generous giver, nevertheless awaits him, which comes from the Father who sees in secret. The Bible tells us as a matter of fact that "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah, And his good deed will he pay him again" (Prov 19:17). We have nothing to glory in our benevolence, for all charitable acts must stem candidly from love and sympathy - imbued in our human nature and decreed as our fundamental duties by God. Jesus taught, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20). If unbelievers are impelled by nature to perform good deeds, how much more should believers covet every opportunity to do good, thereby illuminating the world with light and glorifying the Lord's name. Good deeds and alms-giving are sacrifices pleasing to God (Heb 13:16). May the Holy Spirit stir in our hearts that love which explodes in liberality, helping and supporting the weak with spontaneity, and at the same time enriching our lives with His bounteous grace. ■



DO NOT MURMUR

In I Cor 10, Paul quoted the story of the Israelites in the wilderness as a warning to us. He described how the fathers of the Israelites, after their exodus from Egypt, were baptised into Moses. They also ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink from the spiritual rock, Jesus Christ. This story prefigures our lives as Christians today. We have believed and have been baptised in the water and the Spirit. We eat the same spiritual food and drink the same spiritual drink. We strive in this secular world, comparable to the wilderness then, to enter into that beautiful place of rest. Reflecting on such biblical stories will help us to perceive our situation as that in the wilderness. Now that we are baptised, we need to ask how we can overcome this great and fearful journey in the wilderness. In the past, the disciples had said, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Ac 14 : 22). Therefore, the Bible clearly records the Israelites' journey in the wilderness as a warning for us today.

Paul stated, "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness." The reason for God's displeasure is their unfaithfulness and constant murmurings against Him (Heb 3 : 8). Paul also pointed the five kinds of sins they committed, ie, evil doings, idol worshipping, immorality, testing God and murmurings. Amongst which, murmurings against God will be described further for our exhortation.

Many do not pay attention to the sin of murmuring against God. We are aware of the seriousness of committing immorality or

idolatry but may not realise the severity of murmurings against God. For this reason, Paul warned, "Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer" (I Cor 10 : 10). As careful study of the Bible will make one see that consequences of murmurings are as grim as idolatry and immorality. A word of murmur can affect another person and damage goodness. The entire chapter of Numbers 17 describes how God put an end to the Israelites' grumblings by causing the rod of Aaron to bud in the presence of God. The rods of the 12 tribes did not bud. The budding of Aaron's rod was a testimony by Korah, that Moses and Aaron were used by God and cannot be replaced by men's wishes (Num 16 : 3, 11). The attacks in murmurings are the tactics of Satan in fighting the Church today. We should guard against such deception of Satan. An example occurred during the Apostolic times when the apostles overlooked in caring for some widows due to their busy preaching activities. Some murmured (Ac 6 : 1), perhaps saying, "There is no love in the Church!" or "Why is there no concern for widows!" or "Injustice! Injustice in Church administration". When such words are spread around, they will tarnish the Church's image and even hinder the preaching work. If heard by unbelievers, these words will create a much stronger impact than the gospel preached to them. Misconceptions will arise. As such, the apostles took this problem seriously and appointed seven deacons to oversee the distribution of food to the widows (Ac 6 : 3). A well organised Church who handles matters systematically and equitably will help to reduce murmurings in the Church. On the other hand, members should respect the Church administration as one authority, similar to Aaron's rod, in governing her matters. Undoubtedly, as the Church progresses into increasing number of members (Ac 6 : 7), Satan will utilise murmurings to cause disorders.

Murmurings are expressions of dissatisfaction. Majority of murmurings are done for selfish gains or to satisfy evil desires. No regards are given to others' feelings or edification of all concerned. When things do not go their ways, persistent murmurers will grumble over everything and nothing to create an atmosphere of animosity. Moses was described as a gentle and humble man (Num 12 : 3). But he was also provoked by murmurings of the Israelites on one occasion and was punished for speaking rashly (Ps 106 : 32, 33;

Deut 20 : 12). Thus, murmurings is not only self destructive but also harm others. Superficially, the Israelites appeared to murmur against Moses and Aaron. But actually, they were murmuring against God. God punished them accordingly. God was especially displeased with His chosen people, the Israelites, as their murmurings reflect their ingratitude towards His love and grace. God had delivered them from the bondage in Egypt and had promised to give them the beautiful Canaan. They should remember this great love of God and strive to serve Him. Even when faced with difficulties, the Israelites should choose to endure and rely on God instead of murmuring against Him.

We shall now list the reasons for the Israelites' murmurings in the wilderness for our self-examination :

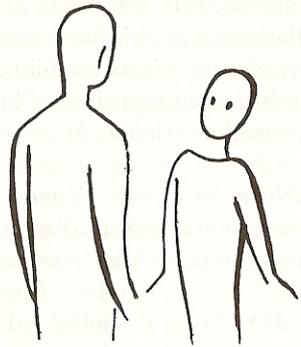
- i) Murmurings due to greed (Num 11 : 4 - 6). The Israelites were unwilling to accept the manna that God provided daily. Instead, they desired for the delicacies of Egypt (Num 21 : 5). As such, they murmured. We should be content with what we have (Heb 13 : 5) and as long as we have food and cover (I Tim 6 : 8).
- ii) Murmurings due to the hard life (Ex 25 : 23, 24; 17 : 3). When they came to Rephidim, they murmured because they had no water to drink. God then caused the bitter water to become sweet and also the water to flow from the rock. Despite satisfying them, the Israelites continued to murmur against Moses over many things. We should learn to make our requests to God in prayers (Phil 4 : 6). Also, let our prayers replace our murmurings so that God will listen to our prayers (I Pet 5 : 7).
- iii) Murmurings due to the difficult journey (Num 21 : 4, 5). In our journey to heaven, it is inevitable that we will meet with sorrows and difficulties. But we can cast our burdens to the Lord and look at Jesus with endurance (Heb 12 : 1, 2). Murmurings will get us nowhere. God will add to our strength as we wait for Him. Then, we will not tire nor become weary (Is 40 : 31) but our weak hands and knees will be strengthened (Heb 12 : 12).
- iv) Murmurings due to jealousy (Num 16 : 11, Ps 106 : 6 - 7). Korah

and his gang murmured against Moses out of jealousy over his position. He incited a rebellion but God destroyed them quickly. Jude 16 says, "These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage." In contrast, we should follow the Biblical teachings of "Do all things without grumbling or disputing" (Phil 2 : 14) and "Do not complain against one another" (Jas 5 : 9).

v) Murmurings due to disbelief (Num 14 : 36). When the Israelites heard the ill report from the spies, they murmured against Moses. God said, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe Me? Despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?" (Num 14 : 11). Their disbelief led to murmurings. They disbelieved that Canaan would be a better place than Egypt. They were already at the doorways of Canaan yet they still desired to return to Egypt. Their faith deteriorated all the way from Egypt to Canaan. Moses said, "... you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned from following the Lord. And the Lord will not be with you" (Num 14 : 43). God wanted them to move forward but they moved back instead. How can the faithless keep ahead with God? So, God said, "... according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you" (Num 14 : 29, 30).

vi) Murmurings due to non-submission (Num 16 : 41). Two days after the death of Korah and his gang, the Israelites again murmured against Moses and Aaron. They accused Moses of killing God's people. They were dissatisfied over God's righteousness in destroying the gang of Korah. They failed to distinguish the loyalists from the betrayers. They regarded good men as evil and vice versa. This greatly aroused the anger of the Lord. God inflicted them with a plague and 14700 died (Num 16 : 49).

In conclusion, Christians should always be thankful for the grace of God. There is no reason for murmuring. Instead, we should forbear and not murmur against one another. With some self restraints, we will find no basis for murmuring against God or men. ■



WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Solomon in his book of Ecclesiastes concluded that, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccl 12:14). This serves to remind us that whatever we do we are answerable to God. For the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. David in his Psalms said, "O Lord, who shall sojourn in the tent? Who shall dwell on thy holy hill? He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks truth from his heart" (Ps 15:1-2). It is understood then that only those who fear God and keep His commandments, do what is right, pure in mouth and minds are qualified to draw near to God.

To the Chinese there is a common saying that if you look upwards you have no shame to face God and if you look downwards you have no remorse to face man. This is their basic principle in life. We, as worshippers of God must lead a life compatible to the gospel of Christ. Our character must be upright before believers so as to bring glory to God. The Bible says, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts" (Prov 20:27). The Psalm of Asaph also says, "I commune with my heart in the night; I meditate and search my spirit" (Ps 77:6). Self-examination is a conscience given by God. We must do it often lest the lamp in our heart be extinguished.

I The Lord God Asked Eve What She Had Done

Eve had gone against the commandment of God by eating the forbidden fruits and after that she was afraid to see God. When God called her she replied that she was naked and therefore, she dared not see God. The Lord God asked Eve, "What is this that you have done?" Eve replied that the serpent had beguiled her and she ate (Gen 3:1-13). Because Eve had sinned and in turn had also led Adam to sin. Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sin (Rom 5:12).

Eve, tempted by the serpent also because of her own lust. She was not watchful but had given way to Satan. James pointed out, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (Jas 1:14-15). Actually, when Eve saw the fruit which was beautiful and could be consumed as food she had an urge to eat it and this gave the devil an opportunity to tempt her. When she had taken the fruit and eaten it she also gave it to her husband to eat.

God's commandment is absolute and pure and it will not change but it was a pity that Eve did not look upon it as something important and this had resulted her sinning. The Lord said that His words were Spirit and Life (Jn 6:63). He said again, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love" (Jn 15:10). Eve did not keep the commandment of God. She had departed from the love of God. What a pitiful state of affair.

II God Asked Cain, "What Have You Done?"

Man started to kill during the second generation and the one who was killed was the younger brother.

After Cain had killed his own brother, God inquired Cain of his brother; to this he said he did not know and he even questioned God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But God said, "What have you

done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen 4:9-12). Will not God inquire of Cain whose hands had killed his own brother? Will God let Cain go unpunished?

The killing of Abel by Cain accounts the first bloodshed of mankind. Eversince there happened countless numbers of killings and murders. Therefore, God in His Ten Commandments forbade people from killing each other (Ex 20:13). The Bible teaches us to love one another. One who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 Jn 4:20). The Bible also records, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 Jn 3:14-15). We learn from here that as brothers and sisters we should love one another, and if we hate each other it amounts to killing each other.

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that any one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come offer your gift." (Mt 5:21-24).

Peter said, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart" (1 Pet 1:22). So let us not love in words or speech but in deed and in truth, that our hearts may remain peaceful before the Lord. We must truly love one another for love can cover a multitude of sins. Cain had no love for his brother and this led him to the killing of his brother.

III Samuel Said To Saul, "What Have You Done?"

The Israelites were at war with the Philistines. Saul had no patience to wait for Samuel and he offered the burnt offering himself. When finally Samuel arrived and asked Saul, "What have you done?" Apparently, Saul had done something which had violated the commandment of God and this had enraged Samuel to reprove him, "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which he commanded you; for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever" (1 Sam 13:8-13).

After this incident Saul was still not repentant. Later God had commissioned him to destroy all the Amalekites including their animals but Saul did not do as he was told by God. Saul had compassion on Agag, the Amalekite King and Saul also kept some of the best animals. When questioned by Samuel, Saul replied that the animals that he had kept were for the burnt sacrifice to God. And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king." (1Sam 15:22-23).

We learn from here that it is important that we should be submissive to God. Saul was disobedient to God and so he was rejected by God and deprived of his kingship and also lost his life. So, let Saul's downfall serve as a warning to us. Learn the way Jesus had submitted Himself to God. Paul in his epistle to the Phillipians said that, "though Jesus was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8). Indeed, the Lord had received the bitter cup whereby fulfilling the will of the Lord (Mt 26:42). We, too, must carry His yoke and follow His example (Mt 11:29).

IV The Boatmen Asked Jonah, "What Is This That You Have Done!"

Jonah, a prophet to Jeroboam II, King of the Israelites (2 Kgs 14:23-27). God sent him to the city of Nineveh to warn the people to repent for this wickedness had come up before God. But Jonah did not obey God's commands, instead he boarded on a ship intending to escape to a place called Tarshish. However, God had sent a great storm tossing the ship to and fro to a dangerous point causing the ship nearly to capsized. The passengers on board the ship were very frightened, each one calling to his god to save them. When the storm did not stop they resorted to the casting of lots to find out who was the cause of the trouble. The lot fell on Jonah. The boatmen asked Jonah, "What is this that you have done!" Jonah told them unreservedly how he had tried to escape the commission of God. Finally, Jonah told them to lift him up and throw him into the sea, then the sea will quiet down for them (Jon 1:1-15). It is hard to imagine that a prophet like Jonah could also fail to carry out the will of God.

King David in his psalm wrote, "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me! Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up; thou discernest my thoughts from afar. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!" (Ps 139:1-3, 7-8).

God also makes such remark thought the prophet saying, "'Am I a God at hand', says the Lord, 'and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?' says the Lord. 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the Lord" (Jer 23:23-24). God's eyes are everywhere. We must submit to His will and not to shirk our responsibility.

Jonah had avoided God because of his self-righteousness. He had reasoned with God that what he did was right but according to his own judgment (Jon 4:1-9). Paul in his epistle to the Romans wrote that, "For being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit

to God's righteousness" (Rom 10:3). So, Jonah's self-righteousness and his rebellion against God may well serve as a warning to us.

Paul said, "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph 5:17). Though the four people mentioned : Eve, Cain, Saul and Jonah had offered God to different degrees, nevertheless they had committed a common error, ie, they had disregarded the will of God; they had acted on their own will instead of the will of the Lord. They regarded themselves more than God.

As disciples of Christ, we must act according to the will of the Lord as Paul did, he said, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or we die, we are the Lord's" (Rom 14:8). The correct interpretation of Paul's statement here is we must obey God unto death, a total sacrifice. Therefore, we must spend more effort in spiritual training so that we may grow up into maturity and we would not be deceived like a small child. When we have equipped ourselves with the truth we shall be able to discern between the good and the bad then slowly we shall attain perfection. ■

BE LIKE CHILDREN

Sending for a child and putting him in the midst of His disciples, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:2-3). On another occasion, He said, "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mt 10:15). These teachings were not meant for the multitude but His disciples. They had quarreled over who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They had forbidden children from going near Jesus. Though they had followed Jesus for some time they had not changed. They were still carnal. The Lord wanted them to be reborn; to be like children.

To be like children, one must be born anew. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night and spoke to Jesus on matters concerning the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told him that man must be born anew in order that he may enter the kingdom of heaven. However, Nicodemus could not understand that. He asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Then Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (Jn 3:1-8).

To be born of water is to be baptized in water. To be born of the Spirit is to receive the baptism of the Spirit. So only after we have been baptized in water and have received the Holy Spirit that we can be like children.

Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mt 16:16). As such, the first step of salvation is to believe and baptize. Paul endorsed this further by saying, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is free from sin" (Rom 6:3-7).

But how are children like? Children love their parents. In the eyes of a child there is no one more dear than his parents. His parents may be ugly, wearing dirty clothes, living a very hard life, staying in a shabby house, suffering from material wants, yet he would love them. If a very rich person were to buy him lots of toys, beautiful clothes and all sorts of sweets and candies do you think that this child will follow him? No. The child may like the things he can give but he will not give up his parents for them - for he loves his parents above all.

We are children of God. We must love our heavenly Father. The Bible says, "And to you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mk 12:30; Ps 73:25).

Children will not depart from their parents. Giving a lost child sweets to eat and toys to play may pacify him for a while, but soon he will start to cry again, until he finally finds his parents. Therefore, we must not depart from our heavenly Father.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Indeed, we are nothing if we are detached from the mercy and grace of God. We can do nothing. Paul said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribula-

tion, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or perils, or sword? ... For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:35-39). No matter what happens or under any circumstances we must not leave our true God.

Children rely on their parents. Even so, we must rely on God for God is love (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:8). The love of God for us is even greater than the love of our parents. So, the person whom we can rely on is our heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, our true God. The Bible tells us that the Lord is our refuge and our fortress. He will deliver us from the snare of the fowler. He will give His angels charge of us to guard us in all our ways (Ps 91:2-11). Prophet Isaiah tells us that if we put our trust in God we shall live in perfect peace (Is 26:3). Very often we see our brethren relying on human effort rather than on God when they meet with difficulties. This is very wrong. Paul says, "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Php 4:6-7).

If we can put our trust in God, He will surely send His peace and blessing to us. David trusted the Lord. He took only a staff and five smooth stones with him to fight the giant Philistine. David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled" (1 Sam 17:45). Eventually David killed Goliath by simply relying on God. Therefore, if we can be like children, entrusting everything to God, God will care for us and fulfill our undertakings (Ps 37:5; 1 Pet 5:7).

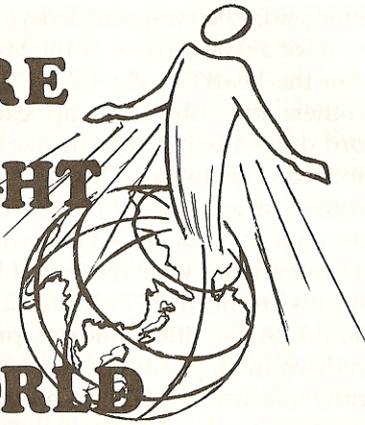
Children love their brothers and sisters. If someone were to suggest to a child that his baby brother or sister is to be given away, he will be very angry. He is not willing to lose any of his brothers or sisters. The church is the house of God (1 Tim 3:15). Everyone who repents and is baptized is a new born babe of God (Jn 1:12-13; Jas 1:18). The love of a little child for his brother is pure, there is no guile.

Peter said, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart" (1 Pet 1:22). But it is sad to note that there are brothers and sisters who appear to be full of faith, who serve the Lord diligently but who dislike a brother or a sister. To them, the Bible has this to say, "If any one says, 'I love God' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn 4:20-21). So, if we truly love our God, we should be like little children, pure and without guile, loving our brethren in all purity. If we love one another then the world will know that we are His disciples (Jn 13:34-35).

Children like to imitate their elders. Children learn from their elder. They see what their elders are doing and they will also do. Likewise, the Lord Jesus wants us to be like children so that we may learn from our fathers. Paul says, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). And, "Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us" (Php 3:17). The Lord Jesus Himself also says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise" (Jn 5:19). And Peter says, "For to this you have been called, because of Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21). Therefore, follow the examples of our Lord and the apostles.

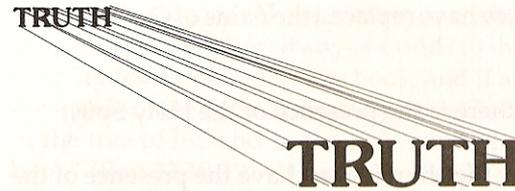
Finally, children do not love the world (1 Jn 2:15-18). They are not proud and they have no ego (Jas 4:6). They have no part in evil doings (1 Cor 14:20). In short, children are innocent. They are pure and without blemish. Their nature is very close to God's. May the Spirit of the Lord Jesus fill us to help us become like children. ■

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



The first recorded creative work of God is light. One cannot work without light. But today, with the discovery of electricity we can choose to work anywhere and anytime we like. There seems to be no darkness. However, the Bible has this to say, "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you" (Is 60:2). Because the whole world is under the clutches of Satan and the people are defiled (2 Tim 1:4) the world is even "darker" than night

We lack the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. For in Christ was life, and the life was the light of men (Jn 1:4,9). And the light of Christ will shine upon those who sit in the darkness of death, so that whoever accepts Jesus shall receive the light of life, and they shall not walk in darkness. In the days of Moses, God led the Israelites with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Neh 9:12). We, His people, are to preach the salvation of God so that the world may turn from darkness to light (Ac 13:47, 26:18; Rev 1:20). The Lord said, "You are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:14-16). We must shine for the Lord so that this perverse generation may see the Light of Life and become children of God. Let us respond to the call of prophet Isaiah, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Is 60:1). ■



"Truth" is a popular word. Politicians, philosophers, scientists and theologians talk about them. When the Lord was tried before Pilate, He said, "My kingship is not from this world ... You said that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice" (Jn 18:37,38). Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Indeed, what is truth? Before the Lord Jesus was crucified He prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (Jn 17:17). One who is not sanctified by truth cannot go the Father. This truth is the "truth" which the Lord referred to when the disciples were troubled in their hearts on hearing that their master would depart from them for a while. Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth ..." (Jn 14:16,17). The promise of the Lord to His disciple was to sanctify them with the Spirit of truth. Before His departure the Lord prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth" This fulfilled the promise of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the truth. In John 17:17 it is written : "Thy word is truth". The "word" refers to the word of God as well as to God Himself (Jn 1:1). Thus, God is truth. The Lord Jesus who was "Word became flesh" came to the world and said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Jesus is the truth. But the Lord has already been taken up to heaven. Where then can we find the truth?

1. The place where the name of God is upheld.

In Exodus 20:24, it is written : "An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you." Do the churches today magnify the name of the Lord? Most of them bear the name

of a person or a place. They have replaced the name of God with that of man or place.

2. The place where there is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit is truth, the church must have the presence of the Holy Spirit.

3. The place which has the word of truth.

The teachings of the Church are based on the teachings of Christ. The Church must not compromise the truth. It must always follow the Bible.

4. The place where there are signs and miracles.

Before the Lord ascended to heaven, He promised the disciples that signs and wonders would follow them evidencing that the word they preached was true (Mk 16:17,20). In the ministry of the apostles, signs and miracles were accompanying them confirming the word they preached.

Truth exists for ever. The **Scriptures say**, "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens" (Ps 119:89). Peter in his epistle also says, "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides for ever" (1 Pet 1:24). Similarly, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb 13:8).

What are the consequence of trying to change the truth? Paul in his epistle to the churches in Galatia says, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel - not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:6-9).

John warned, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book : if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Rev 22:18-19). What then should we do?

Thirst for the truth.

Prophet Isaiah says, "It shall come to pass in latter days that the mountains of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say : 'Come, let us go up to the mountains of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Is 2:2,3). In this passage, the "mountains", "house", "Zion" and "Jerusalem" refer to the Church of God in the last days. Let us all go up to this mountain, enter this temple of the Lord and He will surely teach us the truth.

Hold fast to the truth.

If some one has found a treasure he will surely take good care of it (Prov 7:3). It is hoped that those who have received the truth will hold fast to it.

Uphold the truth.

To uphold the truth is to protect it. We are to contend for it (Jude 3). We should never compromise.

Practise the truth.

A true believer not only listens to the Word of God, he also practices it. David wrote in his psalms : "Teach me thy way, O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name" (Ps 86:11). ■

THE WORTH AND STATUS OF MAN

We cannot help but marvel at the wonders of the creation - the boundless universe and the countless stars, the birds of the air, the beasts and insects of the earth, the fish and creatures of the sea, and the numerous varieties of plants which exude fragrance and bear nutritious fruits, each according to its season. God provides all these not only as everyday sources of food but also as objects to please the eyes and relax the mind. If man only realises that he is more valuable than all these, then he will have self-esteem and self-respect, desiring a virtuous life. Otherwise he will resign himself to a hopeless life.

The Bible states: "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." (Gen 2:7). "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Gen 1:26). "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food." (Gen 1:29). Clearly, man is created by God after His own image to rule over the creatures.

If man realises this, he will understand how noble he is and that he is in an exalted position. However, those who believe in Darwin's theory of evolution, think that they evolved from monkeys.

But there is a great distinction between man and animals. Man has a soul. When God created man, He used earth to form the physical body and then, breathed into him so that he became a living

soul. Hence, man is composed of two parts, namely, the physical body and the spirit. The physical body belongs to the earth. The spirit belongs to God. The Bible records: "and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." (Eccl 12:7).

The Lord Jesus tells us, "Man shall not live by bread (material things) alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Mt 4:4). He further said, "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (Jn 6:63). Therefore, the worth of man lies not in the physical but rather in the spiritual. That is why Paul says, "I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." (1 Cor 15:50). The physical body will die, decay and turn to dust (Ps 89:48; Gen 3:19). But the spirit of man is given by God. It is imperishable and indestructible (Job 19:26).

It was Christ who pointed out the worth of man: "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?" (Mt 16:26). Paul also states, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." (2 Cor 4:7). To Christ, even the whole world cannot be exchanged for a life. It's a pity that many do not realise how precious their souls. They are ruled by their base impulses, performing evil and unclean deeds, fornication, greed, hatred, jealousy, murder, incest, blasphemy, insolence, etc (Rom 1:18-31). The worth of man is not determined by their status in life but by their inner self (2 Pet 1:4).

We have mentioned previously that man has two kinds of life - the physical life from our parents and the spiritual life which is not from our parents. The spiritual life is the breath that is given by God, enabling the spirit to have eternal life. In order to receive eternal life and to be reconciled with God as His children, we must first believe in Jesus Christ, be baptized and received the Holy Spirit. Then only can we be considered as born again in the Lord Jesus Christ and have the living hope of salvation for the soul. Peter teaches: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him." (Ac 2:38, 39). Man must, therefore, repent first of his sins, receive baptism for the forgiveness of sins, then pray for the Holy Spirit which is the guarantee of our inheritance and salvation (Eph 1:13, 14). In this manner, through baptism, the old self was put to death and buried with Christ, then raised again to walk in the newness of life (Rom 6:3, 4). The reborn man is unlike the former walking dead which, like dead bones, has no spiritual life. Receiving the Holy Spirit is like receiving the breath of God, enabling our spirit to live eternally. The Bible teaches, "The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4). Thus, we are restored to the positions of children of God. Since we are sons of God, God will send the spirit of sonship into our hearts to bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and therefore, heirs of God (Rom 8:16, 17; Gal 4:6, 7).

From the above teachings, we may conclude that the worth and status of man do not depend on a few decades of life and fortune but rather on the eternal spiritual life. Those who died in the Lord shall be resurrected at His coming (1 Cor 15:20-22). Those who are born again and are waiting for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ shall have their physical bodies transformed into spiritual bodies and be taken up into heaven (1 Thess 4:16, 17; Phil 3:20, 21). This is the greatest need and hope of the human race. ■

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