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THE 5 WORDS FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF MEN

One day, when I was reading the Bible, I came across this particular verse, and I began to wonder which five words were referred to. Paul did not specify which words and probably it was just a coincidence that he mentioned "five" which may be insignificant. However, the words are to instruct men and they must be, without doubt, teachings which would lead men to be blessed and saved. Since they are more effective than ten thousand words spoken in a tongue, they are certainly very important and are essential for the needs of the faith of the believers in general. As these five words are for instructing men, they must be related to the salvation of every man. Paul himself said, "And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4); he also said, "For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith

Biblical text:

"Nevertheless, in Church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor 14:19).

and truth" (1 Tim 2:7). Teaching men to believe in the Lord Jesus and teaching them to learn about the truth are duties of preachers. This is for the edification of believers in faith, in Biblical knowledge, in love and in virtues, so that the church can be firmly established upon the foundation of the truth. If preachers teach what they have no right to teach they would upset whole families (Tit 1:11). Some preachers "preach the gospel" on the one hand and "preach leaven" on the other, i.e. they "teach as doctrines the precepts of men" and "leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men", or they "keep their own tradition" (Mk 7:7-9). Teaching as doctrines "the precepts and tradition of men" would lead men to the wrong faith and to the wrong path so that they would be lost. Is not this kind of worshipping a vain one? (Mt 15:9) The traditions and the precepts of men are considered as leaven; and the Lord Jesus advised us to take

heed of and beware of leaven (Mk 8:15) — doctrines and teachings which are not in accordance with the Bible. The ideology of men, their vain philosophy, the modern Theology, and the heresies of idol-worshipping, Purgatory, and the Sunday-worship of the Catholic Church, cannot lead men to salvation. Such teachings please men — they regard themselves as intelligent, but they are actually foolish. What we believe and what we preach should be the gospel of the crucified Christ Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life; He never changes; His words also never change. Amongst His thousands of words, there are five which are most important. We are to follow these words because they are directly related to our salvation. Briefly they are the following:

I. He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mk 16:16)

The Lord Jesus asked us to believe in Him Who is the Saviour sent by God. Paul had clearly said, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). Men have sins and are unable to deliver themselves. Punishment and death are the consequences of sins. In the future, both the soul and body will be destroyed, which is most frightening (Mt 10:28). Nevertheless, God does not wish that any should perish, but

that all should reach repentance. As such, He sent His Son as the Saviour of the world (1 Jn 4:14), to be the expiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10). The Lord Jesus died for our sins; He was crucified and He bore our sins (1 Pet 2:24). Hence, the Lord Jesus is the mediator between God and man. He had to shed His blood to redeem us from sins and to deliver us from the devil so that we would belong to God. Every sinner must believe in Jesus and accept Him as the only Saviour. He also has to believe that Jesus was resurrected from death, i.e. after being buried in the tomb for three days, He arose; He was raised for our justification (Rom 4:25). Forty days after His resurrection, He ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us. At the last day, He will come again to receive us to His place (Jn 14:2-3). These are the doctrines which should be taught. After believing, one must be baptized, and this is the most important manifestation of faith. This is a Salvation grace to be received in faith. A person is baptized not merely to fulfil a procedure in accepting the faith. It is also because he is being baptized unto Christ, being dead, buried, and raised with Him; the soul which was dead in sin has now been raised through baptism (Rom 6:4,5; Eph 2:5; Col 2:12). Hence, it is known as the "washing of regeneration" (Tit 3:5). Unless a man be born anew, he cannot enter the king-

dom of God (Jn 3:5). It is also a baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) because the Lord's blood and the Holy Spirit bear witness to it (1 Jn 5:6-8). Therefore, baptism is the starting point to salvation and the beginning towards everlasting life.

II. **You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5)**

This was spoken by the Lord Jesus to His disciples just before He ascended to heaven. It was an important promise. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. He is from God, the Father, and is given to those who believe in the gospel of the Lord Jesus (Acts 15:7,8; Gal 3:2). Ten days after Jesus had ascended to heaven, i.e. on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and they received power (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:8; 4:33; 6:10), gifts (Acts 10:45; 11:16,17), and they spoke in tongues, which is the proof of receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). Such a gift manifested in the believer, which can be heard and seen, is the special feature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). The Bible records that while some believers received the Holy Spirit before they were even baptized (Acts 10:47), some received the Holy Spirit only after they had been baptized (Acts 8:16,17). Thus, it can be seen that water baptism and baptism of the Holy Spirit are two different events which must not be confused. The two

baptisms are equally important. Although the people in Samaria had believed in the Lord Jesus and had also been baptized in the name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit had not descended on any of them. Hence, Peter and John specially went to Samaria from Jerusalem to pray for them so that they could receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14,15). It can be seen then that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not immediately received upon believing or during water baptism; only after constant prayers can one receive the Holy Spirit. At Samaria, after Peter and John had laid their hands on the believers, the Holy Spirit descended upon the believers and some even saw the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17,18). It can be seen that there is evidence when one receives the Holy Spirit. In actual fact, the proof is in the gift of speaking in tongues. Therefore, at Cornelius' house, Peter could see that the condition during which the Holy Spirit was received by the Gentiles was similar to that when he first received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47). Moreover, after Paul had laid hands on the Ephesians, they received the Holy Spirit — the proof being that they spoke in tongues and prophesied. The number of people who received the Holy Spirit could even be counted (Acts 19:6,7). From here we know that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a phenomenon which can be heard and seen and is not something which is

hidden in the heart. The most important effect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that we receive strength and spiritual gifts. After the apostles had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the spiritual gifts and power were manifested. The apostles bravely preached the Lord's Words and they had the power to perform miracles and wonders (Acts 4:31,33; 5:12-16; 6:8). The Holy Spirit dwells in the believers to become the guarantee of inheritance (Eph 1:13,14). The Holy Spirit also sustains the spiritual life of men (Jn 7:38,39; Eph 3:16); instructs men on spiritual wisdom (1 Cor 2:11,12; Jn 16:13); cultivates spiritual nurture (Gal 5:22); guides men in spiritual work (Acts 8:29; 16:6,7); help in spiritual warfare (Gal 5:16,17; Rom 8:13); showers spiritual love (Rom 5:5); and motivates the body to be resurrected, to be changed and be lifted to heaven on the last day (Rom 8:11; Phil 3:21). Therefore, every believer should receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and be subjected to the power of the Holy Spirit, in order that our edification may be complete and we shall truly become believers belonging to Christ (Rom 8:9).

III. **You shall wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14)**

These words were also personally spoken by the Lord Jesus. At that time Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to go to our

Father. He had loved His own who were in the world and He loved them to the end. Thus, during supper, He got up and started to wash His disciples' feet, in order to show His love for them. There are three points of significance in the Lord's foot-washing:-

1. It shows His love. Since the disciples belonged to the Lord, He washed their feet to demonstrate His love for the disciples eternally. Hence, He said to Peter, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me" (Jn 13:8). To have 'no part' means to have 'nothing to do with'. Therefore the washing of feet shows that believers have a close relationship with the Lord (Rom 8:35-39).

2. It shows that the whole body should be sanctified. Although a believer has been baptized and his sins remitted, he still has to seek sanctification of the whole body and should not defile his body by sinning again. Foot-washing implies cleansing as well. Thus, the Lord said, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet" (Jn 13:10). He was referring to Judas who was going to betray Him when He mentioned that the disciples were 'not all clean' (Jn 13:11). Therefore, foot-washing signifies that one should seek to sanctify one's whole body (2 Cor 7:1) and the church as a whole should also be perfectly holy (Eph 5:26,27).

3. It shows an example of humility. Washing of feet was

originally performed by servants in the country of Judah. The Lord Jesus willingly humbled Himself as a servant to wash His disciples' feet personally. He said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn 13:14). Since the washing of feet by the Lord is an example of humility, we must follow the Lord's meekness and not be haughty, and to associate ourselves with the "lowly" (Rom 12:16). Let us not be selfish or conceited, but be humble and count others better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). Following Christ's humility, loving one another and forgiving one another are important teachings of the Lord Jesus. If we are able to follow them, we shall receive the Lord's promised blessings (Jn 13:17).

In any case, although washing of feet must actually be performed, the spirit of doing it is even more important. In fact, we need to practise humility daily so that we shall have a part with the Lord. Besides that — seeking holiness and loving one another are also actions which must not be neglected.

IV. Do this in remembrance of me (Lk 22:19)

This was spoken by the Lord Jesus when He established the Holy Communion on the evening He was to be sold. As He was soon to shed His blood on the cross, He specially established the Holy Commu-

nion in order that His disciples would be able to appreciate the significance of His death and the reasons for remembering it. At that time He took an unleavened bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you". After the disciples had taken the bread, in the same way the Lord Jesus took the cup, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk 22:19,20). Since the Lord had shed His blood and had instructed us to administer the Holy Communion in order to remember Him, it is the duty of every believer to do so as a means of thanking His grace. Paul had said, "Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Such a great grace as dying and redeeming the sins of men should never be forgotten by believers. Moreover, during the Holy Communion, we are able to eat and drink the Lord's flesh and blood, which is indeed a rich grace. For He said, "he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6:54). After partaking the Holy Communion, one's soul can be preserved eternally because His flesh has been given to us so that we may receive life (Jn 6:50). He said, "he who eats my flesh will live because of me" (Jn 6:57).

It is indeed an enormous grace that after partaking the Holy Communion, one's soul

now lives because of the Lord and that one's body is resurrected because of Him at the last day. Thus, the church has to follow the Lord's example and administer the Holy Communion sacrament constantly. The church has to use only one unleavened bread and grape juice. After having given thanks in prayers, all partake it solemnly in memory of the Lord's death on the one hand, and on the other hand, in partaking the Lord's body and blood, we are able to be united with Him. At the same time, all the believers are united into that one bread and one body (the church) till the day of the coming of the Lord.

V. **Keep the Commandments (Mt 19:17)**

The commandments which the Lord Jesus referred to are the Ten Commandments which had been inscribed personally by God and handed to Moses for the Israelites to obey from one generation to another. The Commandments cannot be abolished (Mt 5:17,18) because they are the basic laws of morality for man. If they are abolished then man's morality will also be abolished, and the result will be that man will be like beasts.

Man is the wisest creature of all things created because he has moral concepts and responsibilities. God is the highest law-maker and all things have their rules and regulations. Man also has his

morality laws; otherwise the world will be in confusion and chaos. The Lord Jesus placed importance on God's Commandments. He had clearly stated, "If you would enter life, keep the Commandments". Thus, one who is to receive eternal life would not contravene the Commandments; he would have to fulfil the requirements of the Commandments. If a person does not keep the Commandments and has turned into a rebel in morality, how can he be fit to receive eternal life and enter the heavenly kingdom? Therefore, a Christian should do his duty to keep the Commandments (Eccles 12:13). The first four Commandments concern loving God, the last six Commandments concern loving man. Thus, on love hang all the laws. Love does not go against God and does not harm others. Love, therefore, fulfils the laws (Rom 12:10). Although Christians are justified by faith (Rom 5:1) and are saved through grace (Acts 15:11), they still must have love to fulfil the laws, i.e. to keep the Ten Commandments. In this way, the truth will be in them (1 Jn 2:4). One has to keep all the Ten Commandments because one will be guilty of all the Ten Commandments even if he fails in only one (Jas 2:10). Keeping the Sabbath day (Saturday) is contained in the fourth Commandment and it concerns the duty of man in loving God. Every believer who is to be saved must keep this Com-

mandment. Therefore, it is wrong for anyone not to observe the Sabbath day.

The above were spoken by the Lord Jesus and were taken from each of the four gospel books and also from the Acts of the Apostles. They are teachings of extreme importance and

can be regarded as the five principles to salvation which all Christians should keep. Nevertheless, there are many other teachings of the Lord Jesus. Every one of them must also be kept. The Lord Jesus said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples" (Jn 8:31).

You must be Perfect as the Heavenly Father is Perfect (Mt 5:48)

I. WHY SHOULD WE PURSUE PERFECTION?

1. *It is God's instruction.*
2. *It is the goal of spiritual sanctification (2 Cor 13:9,11; 1 Thess 5:23).*
3. *Only a perfect person can see God at peace (2 Pet 3:14; Heb 12:14).*

II. WE SHOULD BE PERFECT AS THE HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT

1. *The words are to be perfect (Ps 12:6; 119:40).*
2. *Love is to be perfect (1 Jn 4:8; Jn 3:16).*
3. *Pursue the perfect holiness (Lev 19:2; 1 Jn 1:5).*

III. THE METHODS TO REACH PERFECTION

1. *Follow the Words of God (Ps 119:9; Jn 17:17).*
2. *Rely on the Spirit of God (Ezek 36:27; Rom 15:16).*
3. *Guard your ways and your tongue (Ps 39:1; Phil 2:12).*

THE PROSPECT OF THE PENTECOSTAL CAMPAIGN

To Christians, the word "*Pentecost*" is the descent of the Holy Spirit with great power on the Lord's disciples. The "Pentecostal Campaign" is an effort by Christians to restore the true church through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Towards the latter part of the apostolic period, the church had become infiltrated with heresies. During the past centuries, there were those Christians who revered Jesus Christ and who believed in the teachings of the Bible. They had struggled in their attempts to maintain the truth by reforming the church. Amongst them were Martin Luther, John Calvin, Wesley, and others. Their determination and efforts are indeed admirable, and they had made quite an impact then. However, reformed protestants had not attained the anticipated ideals. Instead, they had divided into so many denominations. Their doctrines and morality were worse and were even more deviated from the discarded old beliefs. There were also some who, by their conscientiousness, began to realise that only by the Holy Spirit can the church survive and be restored from the bad condition (Zech 4:6). Since the descent of the Holy Spirit in the beginning of the 20th Century, the "Pente-

costal Campaign" began. Its purpose is to restore the very nature of the Apostolic Church. It maintains the concept that every believer should receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by speaking in new tongues, be given the spiritual blessings, and be confirmed in the messages by signs and wonders (Mk 16:17-20).

The conviction and pursuit are correct, because baptism of the Holy Spirit is a promise (Acts 11:6). It is the pledge of being the children of God and the guarantee of inheritance of the kingdom of God (Rom 8:15,16; Eph 1:13,14). The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of the truth. Only through His guidance can we understand the truth, be sanctified (1 Pet 1:2), and become one body (1 Cor 12:13). According to the prophecies and prefigurations in the Scriptures, God will rebuild the fallen tabernacle to restore the True Church of the Spirit (Amos 9:11). At the descent of the Holy Spirit of the latter rain (Zech 10:1), the "Pentecostal Campaign" initiated by God's will, aims at restoring the church of Christianity.

In seeking the Holy Spirit, some churches are unable to discern the spirits and as such, have permitted evil spirits to set in (1 Jn 4:1); some do not obey

the Holy Spirit to keep out leaven in their teachings (Mt 16:12); and some do not have the charity to remain united in faith in the Holy Spirit which results in division in the church. Hence, the "Pentecostal Campaign" will have to overcome hind-

rance and difficulties. It has to come into unity in preaching together the gospel relying on the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the campaign will become a great "river" (Ezek 47:5). The expectation of the restoration is at hand.

The power of Prayer for others (1 Tim 2:1)

I. MOSES PRAYED FOR THE NATION (ISRAEL)

- 1. The nation would have had calamities for betraying God (Num 14:11,12).*
- 2. But Moses pleaded for the nation and their sins were pardoned by God (Num 14:13-20; Ps 106:23).*

II. THE MAN OF GOD PRAYED FOR JEROBOAM

- 1. The king was punished and his hand dried up and could not be drawn back for he burned the incense arbitrarily (1 Kings 13:4).*
- 2. The king's hand was restored after he pleaded to the man of God to pray for him (1 Kings 13:6).*

III. THE LORD PRAYED FOR PETER

- 1. Satan demanded to have him (Lk 22:31,33,34, 56-60).*
- 2. After the Lord's prayer for him, Peter did not fail when he*
 - turned again (Lk 22:32,61,62).*

IV. THE CHURCH PRAYED FOR PETER

- 1. Peter was jailed for proclaiming the Truth and was waiting for execution (Acts 12:1-4).*
- 2. The earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church; thus, He sent the angel to rescue Peter from the prison (Acts 12:5-12).*
 - Pray constantly for the Holy work (Col 4:3), believers (Eph 6:18), and your children (Lk 23:28; 1 Sam 12:23).*

THE MYSTICAL NATURE AND SYMBOLISM OF THE SACRAMENT OF WATER BAPTISM

One of the three sacraments observed by the True Jesus Church is water baptism. In water baptism three important things must be enforced: It must be performed in the name of Jesus Christ, with full immersion, and in the living water.

A. IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS

The reason why many denominations perform water baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is because they take the Lord's word, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). However, the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is "Jesus" (Jn 17:6,11,12,26). The word "name" in Mt 28 verse 19 is in the singular number denoting only one name and not three. Why then do other denominations baptise their converts in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit? This is due to their different understanding in the concept of God head. They believe in Trinity while we believe in one God. The Son or the Holy Spirit is the very same God, manifesting Himself as Sonship or the Spirit in a special historical sense. More-

over, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one in the Spirit. Having understood what Jesus actually meant, the apostles baptised converts in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 10:48) or in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5) and **not** "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". When baptising the converts in the name of the Lord Jesus, the grace of the remission of sin results from the Lord's crucifixion. The Bible also states that "everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sin through His name" (Acts 10:43) and in the second chapter of the First Letter of John, verse 12 says, "your sins are forgiven for His sake" (cf: Mt 1:21; Acts 22:16; 4:12).

B. BY FULL IMMERSION

The word "baptise" in the original text denotes "immerse" or "dip" rather than "sprinkling" or "pouring". That is why baptism should be carried out by immersion. The Lord Jesus Himself was baptised in the River Jordan by immersion (Mk 1:9-10). John the Baptist also performed baptism by immersion (Jn 3:23). Philip baptised the eunuch of Ethiopia in the same way, for the Bible says, "..... they both went down into

the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him. And they came up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39).

C. IN LIVING WATERS

Not only should water baptism be performed by full immersion, it should also be carried out in living waters. In Greek, "living water" is non-stagnant water (Jn 4:10), it denotes the water which flows from a spring or in a river. Therefore, springs (Zech 13:1), rivers, and the seas (Mic 7:19) are all living waters. Waters in man-made pools or ponds are not living waters and therefore must not be used for water baptism.

THE SYMBOLISM OF WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism not only manifests the effective cleansing power of the Lord's precious blood, but also has a symbolic meaning which conveys the interrelationship of the baptised convert with the Lord Jesus during the moment of baptism. The sacrament of water baptism is a symbolic act of dying with the Lord, being buried and raised with the Lord.

1. When a candidate is baptised, he faces downwards. This signifies that he symbolically dies in the likeness of the Lord's death. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, He bowed His head (Jn 19:30). This is the reason why Paul remarks in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been united with Him in a death

like His" During baptism one's old self is crucified with the Lord: the sinful body is destroyed, and he will no longer be enslaved by sin (Rom 6:6).

When the baptised faces downwards in water, he will certainly "be united with the Lord Jesus in a resurrection like His", and his spirit is thus revived and resurrected after the act of baptism. He is a newly created being, made righteous, and the Edenic innocency is restored to him (Eph 4:24; Gal 3:27).

2. Fully immersed in water during baptism, the baptismal candidate is being buried with Christ, and so his sinful self and his old nature cease to exist. A person who has received water baptism should put off his old nature and repudiate his former bad and vile practices (Eph 4:17-22; Col 3:5-9).

3. The baptismal candidate coming up from the water signifies that his spirit was dead in sin and is now resurrected as a new man. Humanity is controlled and inflicted by two kinds of sins — the original sin deriving from the sins of our first parent Adam (Rom 5:12-19; Ps 51:5, 58:3) and personal sins which one commits in his own life (1 Jn 5:17; Jas 4:17; Ex 20:3-17; 1 Jn 3:4; Jas 2:10-11). Thus sin dominates the world and every man or woman is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13) and is separated from God (Lk 15:24). In baptism the convert is reconciled to God

and his spirit is resurrected (Rom 5:1, 10-11; Eph 2:13-18; 1 Jn 1:3). As a new person he assumes a new nature i.e., the divine nature of Christ. Just as the Bible says, "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27), the baptised is now clothed with the garments of salvation (Is 61:10), and becomes one of the imitators of Jesus Christ (Mt 11:29; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6-7). For this reason, those who have been baptised must behave like new born persons (Rom 6:4, 11-14; Eph 4:23-24; Col 3:10).

THE MYSTICAL NATURE OF BAPTISM

The following explains the mystical nature and spiritual efficacy of water baptism:

Few Christian denominations acknowledge that water baptism has the power to forgive sins rather than merely an act of ceremony. But it is written in the Bible that the primary purpose of water baptism is to forgive sins. Peter said to the people on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins," (Acts 2:38) and Acts chapter 22 verse 16 says, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on his name." Yet, unfortunately many denominations today have deviated from the Truth and have misinterpreted the words of God. What exactly does water bap-

tism have to do with the remission of sins? When baptism is administered in the name of the Lord Jesus by a qualified person, the precious blood of Christ present will cleanse the baptismal candidate of sins. The Bible says, "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb 9:22) and in 1 Peter 1:18-19 we are told: "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Ephesians 1:7 also states, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses"; and Revelation 1:5 testifies, "to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood." But today, why can we still claim that the blood of Jesus Christ is present in the water where baptism is carried out, even though the crucifixion of Jesus took place in Golgotha more than one thousand, nine hundred years ago? This is where the mystery lies!

Our church members have seen signs on many occasions that water is changed to blood during baptism. This is indeed a wonderful testimony to the mystery of the sacrament.

The Bible records that after Jesus had given up His spirit on the cross, "one of the soldiers pierced his sides with a

spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (Jn 19:34). Usually a dead person will not bleed, but blood and water flow from Jesus side though he was already dead. Bible experts have failed to scientifically explain this unique phenomenon. Some told that the heart of our Lord burst open and issued water and blood in bitter agony and unbearable pain, while others say that blood and water (the essence of the blood) ooze out of the heart of the dying person when pierced immediately after he is dead. Such explanations are not correct. There can be no better explanation than that it is a miracle. The Apostle, John, who witnessed the incident with his own eyes, recorded in utter amazement, "He (referring to himself) who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth — that you also may believe" (Jn 19:35). The fact that John stressed his testimony as true shows what he had witnessed was no ordinary matter. There must be some mysteries hidden in the incident. Later John wrote to explain the mystery involved in water baptism, the mystery which he discovered in the cross. He wrote, "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these

three agree" (1 Jn 5:6-8). In this passage Bible scholars have two different explanations:

* The first one, the water here refers to the Lord's baptism in the River Jordan, and the blood refers to the Lord's shedding of blood during His crucifixion.

* The other explanation says that the water refers to water baptism whereas the blood refers to the Eucharist.

But these explanations are groundless. If we read John chapter 19 verse 34, the meaning in these three verses becomes much clearer, for they are related verses. 1 Jn chapter 5 verses 6 to 8 is about the essential water and blood for water baptism while John chapter 19 verse 34 tells us about the source which supplies these two essentials. What a wonderful revelation of the mystery! In 1 John chapter 5 verse 6, "not **with** the water only but **with** the water and the blood". Hence, during water baptism, the baptismal candidate is not only fully immersed in the water but also immersed in the blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of the truth bears the witness. The fact that the baptised is able to receive the Holy Spirit after baptism is a proof that his sins have been forgiven (Acts 2:38). 1 John chapter 5 verse 8 says, "There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree". This means that these three are present in water baptism. Through the

power of the Holy Spirit, the water in which baptism is performed is changed into the precious blood of the Lord. Water baptism must be performed with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is most essential that the person performing the baptism must have the Holy Spirit so that the sacrament will have the spiritual efficacy to forgive sins (Jn 21:22,23).

The effect of water baptism for remission of sins is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 11 says of the water baptism, "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God". Another scripture also points out that, "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). "For by one Spirit we were all baptised" refers to the water baptism, while "to drink of one Spirit" refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the receiving of the Holy Spirit). The water baptism performed by our Church is not mere ceremony but has true spiritual efficacies. The

evidence of this can be seen in the healing of the sick after baptism, the reformation of a sinner and the visions of water transforming into blood seen by members. The Apostle John continued saying, "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has borne witness to his son" (1 Jn 5:9).

As discussed earlier, water baptism symbolizes to die with Jesus, to be buried with Him and to resurrect with Him as a new born person. It is not only symbolical in this sense, it has the efficacy to forgive sins and also to bring about regeneration. That is why water baptism is known as 'washing of regeneration' (Tit 3:5). With such efficacy, anyone who has undergone water baptism will be saved and granted the kingdom of heaven (Jn 3:3-5; Mk 16:16). It is our hope that those who have not received the correct mode of water baptism will come to the True Jesus Church to learn more about Christ. Accept Jesus as Saviour, repent and be baptised, so that we may share this wonderful grace of salvation.

The whole life of the Lord was filled with prayers. His prayers in the morning or at night, on the hills or at sea, in the wilderness or in the Holy Temple, had left us many good examples to follow. Among these, the most fully recorded and the most touching prayer was made in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night that He was to be betrayed. He prayed not only for His own requirements, He also prayed for the salvation of all mankind.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

IN

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

1. A prayer of faith

"Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee" (Mk 14:36).

How much faith is shown in this statement!

Prayer is the method whereby God's children ask God for power and for grace. Faith is the necessary condition for prayers to be heard by God and to be pleasing to Him. Thus, the Bible says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that

he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb 11:6). The Lord also taught us: "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and it will be yours" (Mk 11:24). The following are some examples: And a leper came to him beseeching him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean" (these are words of com-

plete faith) Jesus was moved and He stretched forth His hand to the leper and said, "I will, be clean" (Mk 1:40-42). Two blind men followed Jesus and called: "Have mercy on us, Son of David". Jesus entered the house and the blind men came to Him. Jesus said, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said, "Yes, Lord." So Jesus touched their eyes

saying "According to your faith, be it done unto you". And their eyes were opened (Mt 9:27-30).

Thus, when we ask anything from God we must do it in faith, without any doubt. Because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. Such a man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord (Jas 1:6,7).

2. A prayer of obedience

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt 26:39).

How obedient Jesus was!

The Bible says, "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" (1 Sam 15:22).

When Jesus was in the flesh He also had His weaknesses. Thus, He said, "If it be possible, let this cup (burden of the cross) be passed from me." But in all things He obeyed the will of the Father, not daring to consider His own will of more important than the Father's. "And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted

him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:8,9).

The Bible also says, "And this is the confidence which we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us" (1 Jn 5:14). However, sometimes we cannot demand too much from God. As Paul himself testified, "And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me" (2 Cor 7:8). Only in this way can we become obedient children of God.

3. An earnest prayer

"And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Lk 22:44).

How moving and how fervent this prayer is!

'Fervency' in prayer is an important condition for the prayer to be heard. Thus, the Lord taught us to ask directly with sincerity, and importunity (Lk 11:5-13). Elijah was of the same nature as us. He prayed earnestly for rain to stop and the rain did not fall upon the earth for 3 years and 6 months. He prayed again, and the heavens poured down rain and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jas 5:17,18). The blind Bartimaeus was healed because of his earnest prayer. The Bible has recorded that: "And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart;

rise, he is calling you." And throwing off his mantle he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way" (Mk 10:46-52).

The King of Judah, Hezekiah, was sick and was dying. When Hezekiah learned from the prophet Isaiah that he would soon die, he turned his face towards the wall, and wept bitterly and prayed to the Lord. God heard his prayer and prolonged his life for fifteen more years. God said, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears" (Is 38:1-5). This is the effect of Hezekiah's prayer.

The Bible says, "In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear" (Heb 5:7). This is an example of an earnest prayer which the Lord has left behind for us to follow.

4. A persistent prayer

*"He prayed for the third time,
saying the same words"
(Mt 26:44).*

This shows His persistency in prayers.

The Bible often exhorts us to be persistent in prayer (cf: Rom 12:12; Col 4:2; Acts 1:14). This is the key to the fulfillment of prayers. The Canaanite woman pleaded earnestly with the Lord to heal her sick daughter. Although her prayers were not answered immediately she was not disheartened. The Lord finally had mercy on her and cured her daughter's illness (Mt 15:22-28). Prophet Elijah prayed earnestly to the Lord to pour rain upon the earth. Only after praying for seven times was his prayers answered (1 Kings 18:42-45). These are all good examples of persistent prayers.

Jesus spoke of a parable desiring that men shall pray often and never be disheartened. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterwards he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear

God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:1-8). Persistent and earnest supplications shall eventually reach God's ears.

His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane are good examples which our Lord Jesus has left behind for us. May all believers follow the Lord's prayers and may God hear our prayers of faith, obedience, earnestness and persistency. "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" (Phil 4:6-7). Let us all be mutually exhorted by the above.

“Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit”

Bible Text: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zech 4:6).

The success of all types of worldly undertakings depends on the ability of man. In this unrighteous society, certain enterprises can hardly materialize without authoritative influence. However, when Zerubbabel led the chosen ones out of Babylon to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild God's temple, he was directed by God to depend solely on His Spirit. Now the Latter Rain has poured down to revive the spiritual temple i.e. the True Jesus Church, throughout the world (cf: Joel 2:23, 28-32; Amos 9: 11). But in the last days, men will be lovers of money, proud, arrogant, unholy ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim 3:1-5). If we do not depend fully on His mighty power, the gospel will not be spread far and wide and the growth of the church will also be hindered (cf: Ps 60:11, 12). The following examples will throw further light on the work done by the Holy Spirit in the early churches. It is earnestly hoped that all of us who are of Christ will be encouraged to depend entirely on Him so as to carry out the redemptive mis-

sion entrusted upon us by the Lord Jesus in the last days.

1. The Holy Spirit moves man to believe in Lord Jesus (1 Cor 12:3).
 - a. Peter was moved to know that Jesus is the Christ (Mt 16:15-17).
 - b. Lydia believed in Christ and was baptized after being moved (Acts 16: 12-15).
 - c. Three thousand Jews, moved to believe in Christ, repented and were baptized (Acts 2: 37,41).
2. The Holy Spirit leads man to Lord Jesus (Jn 6:44).
 - a. The Spirit led an Ethiopian eunuch to Him (Acts 8:26-39).
 - b. The Spirit led Cornelius to Him (Acts 10:1-48).
 - c. The Spirit led the Macedonians to Him (Acts 16: 6-34).
3. The Holy Spirit enables man to perform miracles (1 Cor 12:9,10).
 - a. The Holy Spirit, through the apostles, had performed miracles to lead more people to believe in Him (Acts 5:12-16).
 - b. The Holy Spirit, through Philip, performed miracles, leading the people of Samaria to believe in Him (Acts 8:4-13).

- c. The Holy Spirit, through the mouth of Paul, performed miracles to convince a proconsul to believe in Him (Acts 13: 6-12).
4. The Holy Spirit enables man to witness for Him zealously (Acts 1:8).
 - a. After the day of Pentecost, Peter became bold to witness for Christ (Acts 4:18-20).
 - b. Philip, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, preached zealously for Christ (Acts 6:5; 8:4,5).
 - c. Paul, with the Spirit provoking within him, preached the gospel to the Athenians (Acts 17: 16,17).
 5. The Holy Spirit enables man to overcome evil (Rom 7: 24,25).
 - a. Only by the Holy Spirit can the deeds of the body be put to death (Rom 8:13).
 - b. Only by the Holy Spirit can one be sanctified (Rom 15:16).
 - c. Only by the Holy Spirit can His likeness be shown (2 Cor 3:17,18).
 6. The Holy Spirit enables man to be united (Eph 4:2,3).
 - a. After the day of Pentecost, about three thousand disciples were together day after day (Acts 2:46).
 - b. Though the number of disciples increased, the disciples could still be of one heart and soul (Acts 4:4,32).
 - c. The church members of Philippi who were filled with the Holy Spirit had from the first day worked in unity to flourish the gospel (Phil 1:5,6).
 7. The Holy Spirit moves man to give offerings and surrender himself to God.
 - a. The disciples who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were willing to offer their possessions and goods (Acts 2:44,45).
 - b. The disciples who were filled with the Holy Spirit offered their possessions and had everything in common (Acts 4:31-35).
 - c. Barnabas who was full of the Holy Spirit, sold his field, offered the money and surrendered himself to serve Jesus Christ (Acts 11:24; 4:36, 37; 13:2).
- The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and is also the Spirit of God because Lord Jesus and the Father are one (Rom 8:9; Jn 10:30). Lord Jesus had promised to give the Holy Spirit to His disciples (Jn 14:16,17). Therefore we ought to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit who lives in us will bear witness that we are the children of God (Rom 8:16). When we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, we will speak in tongues (Acts 10:44-46; 19:6,7), thus enabling us to have the guarantee of our in-

heritance to His kingdom (Eph 1:13,14). Besides, we ought to depend on the Holy Spirit in preaching the good news (1 Pet 1:12) and in tending His sheep (1 Cor 3:6,7) for Jesus Christ had said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Therefore, it is imperative for us not to use man's wisdom in

our planning but to pray in one accord (Acts 1:14), just as the disciples did before the day of Pentecost, so that we will receive the same mighty power of the Holy Spirit as in the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8). By doing this, all our undertakings will definitely be accomplished.

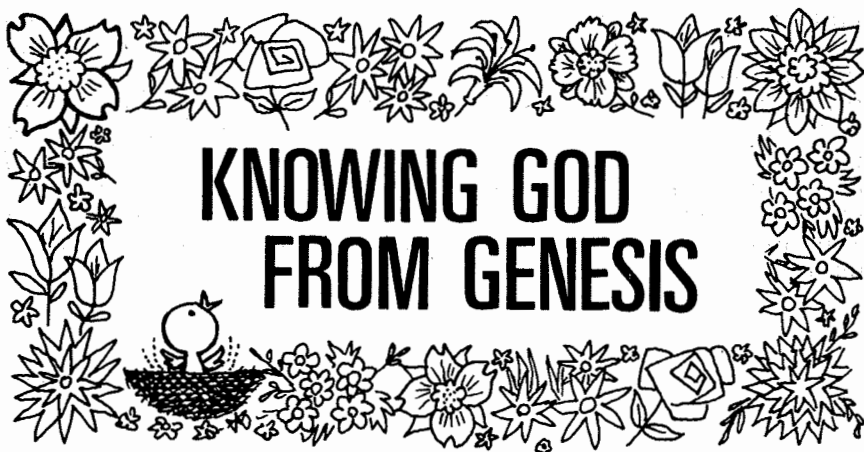
THE POTTER AND THE VESSELS

"Will what is moulded say to its moulder, 'Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" (Rom 9:20,21)

A potter has the right to make out of a lump of clay a vessel for noble use, to be admired and used on special occasions; he also has the right to make out of the same lump of clay another vessel which is disdained by people and left in an obscure corner. God, too, has such absolute freedom to make us either a noble person to be highly respected by others or a lowly person, despised by others.

All the vessels made by the potter, irrespective of whether they are of noble or menial status, reflect the ingenuity of the potter and his intentions. The vessels for menial use may not be highly looked upon by the people, but they have their own usefulness. In fact, in some ways, these vessels may be indispensable. So each and every one of us, being vessels of God, should have the following open-minded attitude: 'If we are of noble status, we must not be proud, if we are of lowly status, we must not blame God'.

A potter makes the vessels according to their uses. So the true value of a vessel is not in its outward appearance or its usage, but rather in whether it can perform its duty or not. Although you may be an ignoble vessel, shining forth a dim light and doing little work, you would find life meaningful if you accept this truth as guide to your daily living and would be esteemed by God.



KNOWING GOD FROM GENESIS

There are many hidden truth in "Genesis", the first book of the Scripture. Being a spiritual treasure chest it warrants our detailed study and reading. Here, we would like to bring out the many matters regarding God as recorded in the book of "Genesis" for our study, so that we would have an accurate knowledge of the existence of God.

I. **The Creator — God**

Biblical Text: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).

Genesis tells us that there is only one God and that it is He who had created the heavens, the earth and all things. Firstly, God created light and then the firmament. Following that He created the earth, the seas; He then created vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruits trees, etc. After that He created the sun, the moon and the stars so that they would give off light in the sky to shine onto the

earth. He also created the fish and the birds. Then, He created all other living creatures on earth — cattle, insects, worms, beasts, etc., according to their kinds. Finally, He created the first man out of dust from the ground, according to His own image (Gen 1).

All creatures in the heavens and on earth have been created by this God. Hence, He is also called "Maker of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:19). This God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is

He served by human hands, as though He needed anything. He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, for "in him we live and have our being". Since we are His creation, we must not carve out an idol to represent Him and worship it (Acts 17:24-29). We must worship the real and living God in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).

II. The Almighty God

Biblical Text: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless' (Gen 17:1).

Genesis tells us that God, who created the heavens and the earth, is also the "Almighty God". From nothing He created all things. By the word of God the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood forth (Ps 33:6,9; Heb 11:3).

This Almighty God enabled an old couple, aged about a hundred years old, who had long lost their reproduction ability to give birth to a son (Gen 21:2-5). Therefore, the Bible says: "God in whom Abraham believed gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Abraham was not weak-

ened in faith when he considered his own body as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. He was fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised" (Rom 4:17-21). As He was the Almighty God, nothing was too difficult for Him (Gen 18:14). Let us worship and trust this Almighty God, and not trust idols — man-made gods which cannot do anything at all (Ps 115:4-8).

III. The Everlasting God

Biblical Text: "Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God" (Gen 21:33).

The God referred to in Genesis is omnipotent and is everlasting. Only He alone is immortal (1 Tim 6:16), and everlasting (Is 40:28), who is and who was and who will be the Eternal Almighty God (Rev 11:16,17).

Since this God will exist eternally, if we believe in Him and worship Him, He will give us eternal life (1 Tim 6:12), eternal comfort (2 Thess 2:16), and eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17).

This everlasting God, who came in flesh into the world, is the Son of man, Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1,14,18). "For God so loved the world that He gave

His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Hence the Bible says, "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jn 17:3). May all worship this everlasting God so that in time to come, He would give us eternal life.

IV. God of seeing

Biblical Text: "So Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, 'Thou art a God of seeing', for she said, "Have I even here seen after Him who sees me?" (Gen 16:13).

This God in Genesis is a God of seeing. He looked after the maid, Hagar, who was driven away into the wilderness by her mistress (Gen 16:6-13); He looked after Jacob who had fled from his home to a strange land and who after having married returned to his homeland safely (Gen 28:20-22; 33:18). He protected Joseph who had been sold to Egypt as a slave by his elder brothers; God made Joseph prosper and he received the trust of Pharaoh who later made him a ruler of Egypt (Gen 39; 41:39-45).

Being a God of seeing, God looks after the poor, the neglected, the sick, those in danger, the orphans, and widows (Ps 10:14; 146:9); He looks after those who are humble and contrite in spirit and

those who ask for help from Him (Ps 138:6; Is 66:2). We should pray to this God of seeing for He would shower His grace, love and truth upon us.

V. God who leads us throughout our life

Biblical Text: "And he blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day" (Gen 48:15).

The above text tells about the blessing of Joseph by his father, Jacob, who had lived for one hundred and forty seven years. Those words were spoken through Jacob's life-long experiences. Jacob left his own home at a very young age to wander around in strange lands. God watched over him and provided him with sufficient food and clothings. At his old age, although there was a great famine in the land, God pre-arranged his son, Joseph, to become a ruler in Egypt, and thereby saved Jacob and his whole household (Gen 47:12). Therefore, at his death bed, he specially mentioned the "God who has led me all my life long", to his sons so that they would trust God.

The Apostle, Paul, said, "We bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14: 15-17). All living things rely on God for their needs. Therefore, we must love and draw near to this God who leads us throughout our life. Fear the Lord, for those who fear Him have no want. The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing (Ps 34:9,10).



VI. God who listens to prayers

Biblical Text: "And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife, conceived" (Gen 25:21).

This God in Genesis listens to prayers. He answered the prayer of Isaac and his wife

conceived and gave birth to twins (Gen 25:21-26). God granted the requests of Abraham to save his nephew Lot and his family from destruction in the city of Sodom (Gen 19: 29). Abimelech, the King of Gerar, wanted to get near to Sarah, Abraham's wife. As such, God made all the women in the household of Abimelech barren. Abraham prayed to God for mercy and God granted his request and the women in the household of Abimelech were able to give birth again (Gen 20). God listened to the prayers of Abraham's servant; He let him have the opportunity to meet a good girl and safely bring her back to his master as his daughter-in-law (Gen 24). God listened to the prayers of Jacob. He protected him during his trip to the house of his uncle, Laban, and later let him safely back to his own home (Gen 28:20-22; 32:9-12; 33). There are many other recordings in Genesis regarding prayers which had been answered by God.

Since God had listened to the prayers of others, He will also listen to our prayers. Therefore, let us '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' (Phil 4:6,7).



VII. God, the Judge of all the earth

Biblical Text: "Then Abraham drew near and said, "Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?.....Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen 18:23,25).

This God in Genesis not only looks after man and leads them, but He is also the Judge of the earth. He was kind to Abraham and He brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans; He covenanted with him and promised to give him and his descendants the beautiful land of Canaan. For Abraham was faithful before God (Neh 9:7,8); he loved God above all others (Gen 22:12-18). God did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness with seven other persons, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomor-

rah to ashes and condemned them to extinction and made them an example to those who were to be ungodly; He rescued the righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the wicked (for what that righteous man saw and heard as he lived among them, he was vexed in his righteous soul day after day with their lawless deeds) (2 Pet 2:4-8).

God not only judged the ancient world, He would also judge the world on the last day. He will render to every man according to his works: to those whom by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, He will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury; for God shows no partiality (Rom 2:6-11). Since we know that God judges the world, we would lead lives of holiness and godliness, and wait earnestly for the coming of God, which He promised, we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet 3:11-13).

From the above study, we know that the God whom we are worshipping is the Creator of heavens and earth. He is Almighty. He is everlasting. He looks after man. He shepherds them. He listens to man's prayers, and above all He is the Judge of all the earth.

Reflections on the Book of Daniel

Recently, after reading several times the Book of Daniel which is also known as 'The Revelation of the Old Testament', I gained some fresh impressions. Four points are discussed below for the mutual study by fellow believers. It is hoped that our spiritual brethren will pay particular attention to the prophecy that has great concern for the saints of the last days — the Book of Daniel. Let us also pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us, so that we may understand the real meaning of the Book correctly and clearly (2 Pet 1: 19; Dan 12:4).

I. God dominates the history of the world

Man's life and death, fortunes and adversities are all in the hands of God (1 Sam 2:6,7; Ps 31:15), and the development and changes in the history of the world are no exception. That was why God was able to let the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, see the vision of the 'Great Image' and thus revealed the development since the Babylonian Kingdom to the time when Christ shall come again and realise the Kingdom of God. History has proved the authenticity of this revelation: Media and Persia (the silver breast and arms) succeeded Babylon, the Golden head;

Greece, the brass belly and thighs, succeeded Media and Persia; later Rome, the iron legs, swallowed Greece. The world at this stage is of the partly iron and partly clay feet, a period when harmony is impossible and the great disaster of destruction and consumation shall soon occur. Then, Christ shall come again executing the great judgement and all nations of the world shall be destroyed forever; at the same time the everlasting, peaceful, and glorious Kingdom of God shall appear (Dan 2:31-45; Mt 24:21, 22,29-31; 2 Pet 3:8-14).

II. God rules in the midst of nations of men

God again gave a dream to King Nebuchadnezzar, so that he saw the vision of the 'huge tree'. All the magicians, astrologers and soothsayers of the Kingdom could not explain the dream. Finally, Daniel, relying on God's spirit, interpreted the dream. The aim of this dream was to let the King and people of the world know that "The Most High rules the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whom he will" (Dan 4:17,25,32). Because King Nebuchadnezzar had received special grace from God, his Kingdom was built as great as the huge tree, high up in the sky, and all can see that

it was a great kingdom. But he would not acknowledge God's grace and in his pride and egoism, he said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan 4:30). Thus God, acting according to the revelation of the "huge tree", made him a lunatic for seven periods (most are of the opinion that this was seven years). When the days were fulfilled he lifted up his head and looked towards the sky and knew that God rules in the kingdom of men, that glory should be given to God, and that the kingship was again returned to him (Dan 4:19-37). Let us hope that all the kings, rulers and presidents on this earth will understand that the power to establish kings, to overthrow kings is from God, that all glory should be given to this Lord who controls your life and breath in His hands, who governs all your actions, so that His grace will not go unrequited and that we do not incur punishment (Dan 2:20,21; 5:23-29).

III. Little Horn — Image of the anti-Christ

The "little horn" in Daniel chapter 7 & 8 and the King from the North of Chapter 11 hold the same meaning. He shall boast to God and also attack the Prince of princes. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself, denying the God of gods (Dan 7:8; 8:25; 11:36,37). He

shall cause fearful destruction (Dan 8:24), he shall abolish the daily sacrifice to the Lord (Dan 8:11; 11:31), profane the sanctuary and set up the abomination that shall desolate (Dan 8:11; 11:31). He shall change the laws of God, casting the truth to the ground (Dan 7:25; 8:12) and persecute the Holy Nation of God (Dan 7:25; 8:10,24). His actions shall be practised smoothly and He shall prosper (Dan 8:12,24; 11:36), but in the end he shall be destroyed, though not by the hands of men (Dan 8:25; 11:45). This "little horn" — enemy of God, had made its appearance in history before (only a shadow) for this vision is related to the period of the last days (Dan 8:17,18). The Lord had already borne testimony that the "abomination of desolation" which Daniel spoke of shall appear in the last days (Mt 24:15-22). We should see clearly that it had already made its appearance, and has commenced its work of desolation, taking away peace, also persecuting saints in various places (cf: Rev 13:1-18; 6:3,4).

IV. The four brave ones in the midst of the great tribulations.

King Nebuchadnezzar had thrown into the furnace of burning fire those who refused to bow down to the golden image he had made. The King of Medes had decreed that those who made petition to any god or man except to the king,

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The End of Mankind is at Hand!

Bible verse: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end to all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an Ark of gopher wood.....to keep them alive'" (Gen 6:11-20).

About more than 4000 years ago, this world of ours was devastated when God sent a continual downpour of rain upon it for 40 days and nights. It had long been told by Jesus Himself that this incident would take place and archaeologists had confirmed this to be true. The Lord said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man." "They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them

all" (Luke 17:26,27). The Lord has made known to us this terrible disaster. The purpose of this is to remind us that these are only a shadow of what is to happen before the Lord's Second Coming.

With reference to the above-mentioned bible verses, we can understand the main reason for the destruction of mankind during Noah's time. "The earth was corrupt in God's sight" and so, "mankind was destroyed together with the earth". But God is Love, so before He sent this calamity upon the earth, He

commanded Noah to build an ark, and to go forth to proclaim the Word, so that those who believed in God and turned from evil ways were allowed to enter the ark and to stay alive (cf: 2 Pet 2:5; 1 Pet 3:19,20). This major incident was an event of the past. The question now is, 'Is the existence of mankind coming to an end?' What will happen to us? Will God prepare a sanctuary for the people of the world as He did for Noah? These are the problems we must envisage.

I. IS THE END OF MANKIND AT HAND?

This question is directly relative to the escalating degree of wickedness in this modern era. Mankind, since the generation of Noah's three sons, has now enumerated to an estimated 3.6 billions and is having many different ideologies, each trying to promote prosperity, happiness and peace in the society. But from God's point of view, the world of today is no different from that of the ancient Babylon, which became a dwelling place of demons and foul spirits. Their sins were heaped high as heaven and their ways were corrupted.

Basing on a few examples of human transgressions recorded in Revelation 9:20-21, we realize that indeed the end of mankind is at hand (Rev 18:1-5).

a. **Idol-worshipping and working of witchcraft.**

Worshipping of idols means worshipping of the demons (1 Cor 10:19-20). Those who practise witchcraft are an instrument of the evil spirit. They entice the people of the world to come under the control of the devil (Acts 8:9-11). In doing so, they have willingly made themselves the 'teeth' of the devil, opposing God (Jer 10:14,15; Acts 13:6-10). The world today is mad over idol-worshipping. Man, whether rich or poor, kneels down before them. For their act, they will not be forgiven (Jer 50:38; Is 2:8,9). The Bible records, "Behold, the days are coming, I (God) will punish the images of Babylon, her whole land shall be put to shame, all her slain shall fall in the midst of her" (Jer 51:47,52). Again, it says, "for the nation and kingdom that will not serve you (God) shall perish, those nations shall be utterly laid waste" (Is 60:12). Therefore it is clear that idol-worshippers will definitely end up in destruction.

b. **Murderous deeds.**

The prophecies in the Bible mention that people of the last days will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive (2 Tim 3:1-3).

Take a look at the present world. Even the relationship between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, owing to trivial matters, end up in unpleasant disputes or even tragedies. For example, a man will easily turn to violence if his lustful needs

are not met with. People suddenly find themselves victims of violence and death. Worst of all, the manufacture of deadly weapons has been taken as a form of competition. Should any one come up with an invention of the most powerful weapon, he will promptly become a great and respectable person, benefactor to the country. He will also receive the highest glory and reward. The Bible says, "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they do not know" (Rom 3:15-17). Where then in this world of violence we can find peace? (Is 33:8)

c. Immorality.

It is clearly stated in the Ten Commandments that 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Ex 20:14). The immoral and adulterous will be punished (Heb 13:4).

When the Israelites were dwelling in Shittim, they committed sins with the daughters of the Moabs, and as a result, there were plagues and twenty-four thousand people lost their lives. Similarly in the days of Noah, the children of God (believers) married the daughters of men as they wished, thus provoking God and bringing calamities upon themselves (Gen 6:2,3,5-7).

In this present era, the morality of the society has declined steeply to such an extent that men have eyes on adultery and women delight in exposing

their bodies (2 Pet 2:14). Both sexes freely gratify the desires of the flesh that this becomes a common phenomenon. How frightening and abominable is the heart of man! During the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, because of the immorality and perversion of the people, they suffered the punishment of extermination by fire. So how can this world of ever-declining morality escape the judgement of God? (Jude 7).

d. Robbing and Stealing.

Stealing refers not only to theft without the owner's knowledge but also to illegal possessions. For example, a trader may dishonestly present imitation or fraud goods to his customers or on the pretext of refunding the money and declaring the winding of the business. Such actions are even worse, compared to those who steal in fear (Prov 20:10; 21:6). Covetous civil servants, for the sake of personal gains, send up false reports or take bribes at every possible opportunity. Such activities are not different from robbery! (Is 1:23) Though severe penalties have been imposed by the governments in many parts of the world and countless number of offenders have been punished, the morality of the society keeps on declining tremendously. The Bible says, "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men" (Micah 7:2,3). Since the world has become the den of thieves, God

will destroy it totally (Zech 5: 1-4; Is 28:22).

II. **WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE OF MANKIND?**

The reason why we can foresee that the end of mankind is at hand is not only because of the increasing wickedness of this world but also because of the predicted great tribulation which is drawing nearer and nearer, before our Lord's Second Coming. We shall now discuss the future of mankind, touching only on the scene after the great tribulation and not further than the scene of the Last Day. The world thirsts for peace but sin deprives her of it (Is 48:22). Instead there will be great tribulation, such as has not been experienced from the beginning of the world (Mt 24:21,29,30). According to the Bible, this great tribulation refers to swords, famine, evil beasts, plagues and earthquakes etc (cf: Ezek 14:21; Rev 16:18,19). Therefore this great tribulation which Jesus Christ mentioned was referring to the 'great battle' which will take place, followed by famine, plagues etc. This 'great battle' as being prophesied in the book of Revelation is the 'Battle of Armageddon' (Rev 16:12-16).

The outbreak of this great battle is actually the result of the 'desolating sacrilege', as mentioned by our Lord (Mt 24: 15-21). This 'desolating sacrilege' shall exalt and magnify himself and shall blaspheme against God, persecute the

church and deny the existence of God (Dan 11:36,37; Rev 20: 7,8; Ezek 38:1-3; 39:1,2). Satan will give 'him' the authority and allow 'him' to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It will enslave every tribe and people and tongue and nation (Rev 13:2,7).

This world of ours will turn into a desolated wilderness when this great tribulation breaks out (Joel 2:2,3). "All peoples of the nations will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burnt in the fire" (Is 33:12). "Those slain by the Lord on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground" (Jer 25:32,33). Mankind, through destruction, will become even rarer than fine gold (Is 13: 11,12). The Lord said that if those days are not shortened, no human being would be saved (Mt 24:22). This will result when nations rise up against nations with atomic and nuclear weapons. This unbelieving, adulterous and wicked world is predestined for this tragic destruction.

III. **DOES GOD PREPARE A SANCTUARY FOR MANKIND?**

God is Love, so before He carries out this terrible judgement, He will prepare a way out for mankind, just as He had prepared an ark for the people of

Noah's era. Those who believed and entered the ark were not condemned (Gen 6:14-20). During the last days, before the outbreak of the great tribulation, God had also prepared a sanctuary for mankind. The Bible says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal 4:5,6). This great and terrible day is the day of our Lord's Second Coming and judgement. Elijah was the prophet who caused the rain to cease for 3½ years. This prefigures that the True Church will appear in the last days, directing the people of the world to turn back to the true God and to receive the Holy Spirit, if they believe and accept Him as their Saviour.

In the book of Revelation chapter 7 verses 2 and 3, it is clearly stated: "Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth and the sea, or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads". 'The seal of God' refers to the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13). This is the prophecy that before the great tribulation comes, the

church of the Holy Spirit will appear in the east. According to the prophecy, this true church will be a shade from the heat, and a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain (Is 4:5,6). Not only will God give them eternal life, He will also keep them from the hour of trial, which is coming upon the whole world to try those who dwell in it, if they patiently keep God's word of endurance (Rev 3:10). The Bible has clearly stated that disasters will only harm those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev 9:4).

The True Jesus Church, basing on the prophecy that she will appear in the east, is the ark of the last days. She builds herself upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the corner stone. Just like Noah, she does everything according to God's commandment (Eph 2:20; Gen 6:22). The Lord Jesus grants the baptism of the Holy Spirit and miracles and wonders to all those who believe. He testifies that the truth she preaches is truly the Gospel of Salvation (Eph 1: 13,14; Acts 2:38; Mk 16:20; Acts 14:3). Therefore he who believes in the Lord Jesus and has entered the true church will be saved, and he who does not believe will be condemned; because he does not believe that the true church, established by God, will bring salvation to mankind (Jn 20:21-23; Lk 10:16; Mt 18:17,18).

IV. WHAT THEN MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

The great tribulation and the subsequent Last Day are drawing closer and closer. Yet many people, whose hearts and minds are geared towards heaping up wealth and treasure, are ignorant that death is crouching in wait for them (Jas 5:1-5). But there are some who live in fear, being aware of what is befalling upon the world (Lk 21:26). There are yet others who indulge in drinking, eating and entertainments, giving up all hope. Having envisaged this, then what must we do to receive the divine approval, to escape the wrath of God and to receive eternal Salvation?

1. BELIEVE IN THE SAVIOUR, LORD JESUS (ACTS 16:30,31).

We must completely reject idolism and atheism, and wholeheartedly believe that Christ Jesus is the only Saviour (Acts 4:12). We should also believe that, in accordance with the prophecies in the Bible, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ was conceived by a virgin called Mary; that He died for us on the cross for the remission of our sins, was resurrected on the 3rd day and after 40 days, ascended to heaven; and now, through His church, He wants to bring salvation to those who believe in Him; that very soon, He will descend again to bring judgement upon all mankind, after which the

evildoers and the non-believers will go away into eternal punishment, while the righteous into eternal life (Mt 1:18-23; 1 Cor 15:3,4; Acts 1:3,9; Mt 25:31-46).

2. BE BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT (JN 3:5).

Even after believing and accepting the Lord, we must repent and be baptised by full immersion in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk 16:16); and must pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (we will speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit dwells in us) (Acts 10:44-46; 19:6; 2:4; 1 Cor 14:2). Only then will we have life in the Lord Jesus (Ezek 37:14; Rev 22:17; 1 Jn 5:11,12) and the seal of salvation (Eph 1:13,14; Rom 8:9,16). According to the scriptures, 'He saved us not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit' (Tit 3:5).

3. STRIVE FOR HOLINESS (HEB 12:14).

Without holiness, no one can see the Lord. Therefore, by our Lord's grace, we must keep our spirit, soul and body sound and blameless after we have received the baptism of water and the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 5:23). To achieve this, we must not neglect to attend church (Heb 12:25). We must be diligent in scripture reading and in listening to the word of

God (1 Pet 2:2). We must continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to be with us, and discontinue our old way of life, we strive to be blameless and without blemish so that we can be at peace when we meet the Lord (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Sam 10:6; 2 Pet 3:14).

4. **BE ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD (1 COR 15:58).**

For the love for God and fellow mankind, every Christian ought to be concerned over our Lord's divine work of salvation (2 Cor 5:14,15; Jn 21:15-17), especially during this period of the last days when the true gospel has been perverted. We must 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). We should preach the sound

gospel of salvation to those Christians who are zealous in seeking eternal life but who actually have not attained it (Gal 1:6-9; Rom 10:1-3). At the same time we should preach the gospel to staunch idol-worshippers and non-believers (Acts 17:22,23; Rev 14:6,7).

For this great divine work, we, the chosen people and children of God, should fully utilize the gifts given to us according to the grace by offering our wealth, talent, time, body and mind. Only in this way can the True Church of the last days accomplish this great life-saving commission, to meet our Saviour when He comes again and be able to share the everlasting glory in the Heavenly Kingdom (Rev 7:2,3; 2 Tim 4:7,8).

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would be thrown into the den of lions. These were fore-shadows that the Church would suffer great persecution during the period of tribulation (Dan 3:4-6; 6:6-9; Rev 13:11-18). The lives of Shadrach and his two friends in the first instance, and later that of Daniel, were threatened. But they did not submit themselves to the Kings' commands. They resolved to be strong in the face of the problem before them, even braving

death (Dan 3:14-18; 6:10). These actions of faith, strictly upholding the word of the faith, and not valuing life, are the best methods to overcome Satan (Rev 12:11). The anti-Christ has appeared already. We should therefore give careful attention to the Lord's instructions (Mt 24:15-20), also practising the spiritual attitudes of the four brave men, suffering for the truth's sake.

CHRISTIANS

and

the CROSS

Though the cross was one of the most cruel and vindictive instruments of punishment during the Roman Empire, it has now become the most beautiful symbol for Christians. Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross to bear the sins of mankind; thenceforth, that cruel and vindictive instrument of punishment — the cross — became the symbol of victory.

At the present day, where there is a cross, there are Christians; where there is a cross, there is the love of Christ; where there is a cross, there is the salvation of Jesus; where there is a cross, there, you find peace and joy. In other words, Christians and the cross are inseparable.

The truth of the cross is a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those Christians who were called, it is God's power and

wisdom (1 Cor 1:23-24). The cross is the only instrument of salvation, the only trust of the believers, and is our power, our happiness and hope. Since Christians and the cross have such a relationship, Christians must have a correct attitude towards the cross.

1. **Believe in the Cross:**

In ancient times, while the people of Israel walked in the wilderness, there were fiery serpents among the people and many died on being bitten. Because of this, Moses prayed to God, Who then commanded Moses to make a serpent of bronze and set it on a pole. Wherever a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live (Num 21:4-9). The bronze serpent being lifted up prefigures that

the Lord Jesus would be crucified on the cross (Jn 3:14,15). The method of salvation which God had prepared for man is by the cross. Only by crucifixion, sufferings and the shedding of His blood could the sins of mankind be remitted (Heb 10:10-18).

Though the serpent of bronze could nullify the effects of the poison, nevertheless, those who had not looked at it did not live. Likewise, Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross unto which we also have to look so that our sins would be remitted (Rom 3:23-26; Heb 12:2).

In these last days, many heresies have arisen to confuse the truth. Some believe that salvation is through good deeds. They do not believe the miracles performed by Jésus, and also do not believe the "cross" method of salvation. Moreover, they do not even long for the salvation of the cross. We must take heed because it is the device of the Devil to lead the disciples astray, losing their faith and hence dragging them into the abyss.

2. Crucify on the Cross:

The scripture says, "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 freed from sin" (Rom 6:5-7). The

cross is the only instrument used to crucify a sinner. If we crucify our old self on the cross with the Lord, we believe that we shall also live with Him, that this new man is created in the likeness of God; with righteousness and sanctification, that we too might walk in the newness of life. The baptism of every Christian manifests the truth of being baptized into His death, and buried with and raised up from death.

But the Christian who has been born anew through baptism should always strive holiness (Heb 12:14), and refrain from lusts, or from worldly temptations. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20); and further said, "By the cross the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14); and further said, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24). If we want to strive for holiness and emit the fragrance of a Christian we must crucify the world, our flesh, and lusts upon the cross. Because only when we are found by the Lord to be without spot and blemish then shall we be at peace when we are at His sight (2 Pet 3:14).

3. Bear the Cross:

Jesus said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciples" (Lk 14:27). Those who want to be the disciples of

the Lord should bear their own cross, lest they are not worth to be called the disciples of the Lord.

The cross means tribulations, persecutions, hardships, derision, reviling and so on, suffering for the Lord. Paul said, "..... in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor 11:23-30). This is to bear the cross.

The scripture says, "for to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1 Pet 2:21). The Lord Jesus called us that we should bear the cross to follow His steps and we should bear the cross daily and happily (Lk 9:23). For we know that if we have the will to suffer together with the Lord, we shall also be glorified together with Him (cf: Mt 5:10-12; 2 Cor 4:17,18).

4. To preach the Cross:

Paul said, "Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified ..." (1 Cor 1:22,23). The most urgent need of the present church is not sign, nor good knowledge of the theology, but the Christ of the cross. What is to be preached by a preacher is Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.

Paul further said, "when I came

to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom, for I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:1-2). This is the method for preaching the gospel. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the essential truth to save souls, but lofty words and wisdom may not bring others to God. Unfortunately, a few preachers among the present day churches add to their sermons certain vivid news, mystery fables, jesting frequently to please the listeners so that they may receive the applause from them. This sort of work, though it might achieve a little success, is basically of passions; hence the result thereof is corruption. We must understand that the preaching of jesting stories with lofty words and wisdom cannot bring those lost souls to God. It can only be accomplished through confession, repentance, and accepting the salvation of Christ through the preaching of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.

Not only preachers have to preach the cross but also every Christian who is saved, i.e., receiving the salvation without pay and giving without pay (Mt 10:8). Do not proclaim with lofty words and wisdom, but preach Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.

5. To Glory in the Cross:

Paul said, "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ..."

(Gal 6:14). Generally, everyone glorifies his own promotion and wealth, accomplishment of his undertaking, good knowledge, good capability, and having outstanding children. But for a Christian, he must imitate Paul to glorify only the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the world worth to be glorified. The Bible says, "thus says the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practise steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in this thing I delight, said the Lord" (Jer 9:23-24). Wisdom, might and wealth are from God (Jas 1:17), which are not worthy of glorifying. The greatest glory

is the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion.

Conclusion

Because Jesus Christ loves us, He came down and took the form of a man, to bear the sins of mankind. He died on the cross to accomplish the salvation of God. The cruel and vindictive instrument of punishment—the cross—has thus become the beautiful symbol for the Christians of today. How long, wide, high and deep is the love of Christ! For this we must give thanks to God, longing for the cross, so that we shall receive more grace from Him and crucify the lusts and passion of the old self on the cross. We should be determined to bear the cross and follow the Lord, and to preach and glorify the cross everywhere. Lastly, let us sing Hymn 77, to exalt the cross:

*On the Hill Calvary, Jesus died on the Cross,
An emblem of glory, not shame;
Jesus, dear Son of God, gave His life on the Cross,
'Tis the dearest and best you can claim.*

*O I love to lift up Jesus' Cross,
Till before Him my trophies lay down.
I will carry and take up the Cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

THE BENEFITS OF SUFFERINGS TO MAN

In the world today, scientific advancement has raised the living standard of man, and the progress of mankind has increased man's forms of enjoyment. The spirit of hardwork, sincerity, endurance, and frugality, as in olden times, are gradually vanishing amongst men these days. Christians of today do not suffer as much as the believers in the olden times. In fact, they enjoy more pleasures. As a result, most men have the habit of loving enjoyment and hating sufferings. Spiritually they are as childish as babies who only like "sweetness"; they have neglected the moral in the saying — "good medicine is bitter in taste". We should understand the benefits of sufferings to man, so that we will no longer fear sufferings or fall off in faith due to sufferings.

I. **Through sufferings one draws near to God**

When an unbeliever leads a smooth and peaceful life, he would not think of seeking somebody to trust. He would most probably be obsessed by the human concept of "the omnipotent hands" and that "man is mightier than the heaven". However, once he is faced with disaster, illness or grief, he may readily be led to believe in Jesus because he would ex-

perience the help of the Lord of grace towards him. If God gives a Christian riches, health and peace, he would probably become proud and despise the grace of the Lord, thereby drawing away from God. On the contrary, poverty, illness and failure would lead man to think of the Lord's love and so he would draw near to God and worship Him with zeal.

In olden times, Joseph's whole household moved to Egypt because of famine in their own homeland. The Israelites multiplied in number and became a strong nation. Then Pharaoh became afraid and began to ill-treat them. He ordered them to be engaged in hard labour so that they would experience difficulties in life. In their sufferings, the Israelites plead to God for help. Thus God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from their sufferings and to lead them to the beautiful land of Canaan. Through their sufferings, the Israelites had revived their faith in God, David once said, "The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Ps 34:18,19). Therefore, it can be seen that during sufferings we would seek God's help and with His help we would

draw near to God.

II. Through sufferings one sees the world as refuse

Man is afraid to die because he loves the world dearly. Probably, he desires rich food, fashionable clothings, a beautiful bungalow, a big car and other luxuries which he has yet to possess. However, once disaster befalls upon him, he would certainly regard the world as refuse.

The sufferings of Job were indeed great. Within a day all his ten children were killed and all his properties were destroyed; moreover, he was afflicted with sores all over his body. The sufferings were indeed unbearable. The sufferings made him curse the day of his birth and hate his own life (Job 3:1, 11, 12, 20-22). In his sufferings, he began to see the world as refuse and he looked forward towards eternal life. He said, "And after my skin has been destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:26). Therefore, as Christians, we should serve our Lord diligently and looked forward towards the heavenly blessings. We should never crave for things of the flesh and forget about God. God said, "And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not; for behold I am bringing evil upon all flesh" (Jer 45:5). The will of God is often revealed through sufferings. They teach us not to love the world but to remember the Lord, our Creator, instead.

III. Through sufferings one develops faith and virtues

A person would mock at and despise another who suffers, probably because he himself has not undergone such sufferings. If he has suffered before, he would certainly have sympathy for the victim of the sufferings. A person's faith may not be revealed when he is leading a peaceful life. However, sufferings can certainly reveal the degree of a man's faith. If he is not discouraged by the sufferings, his faith will progress.

Job said, "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). He also said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee" (Job 42:5). Job's sufferings made him knew more about God and strengthened his faith in God.

At the age of forty, Moses did according to his flesh and killed the Egyptian who ill-treated an Israelite. As such he had to flee to the wilderness to suffer there for forty years. During those forty years of sufferings God refined him into a man perfect in virtues, his character changed completely. The Bible says: "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3). Therefore, it can be seen that a person who has faith and virtues is indeed a good servant of God and also a good example amongst the believers. Suffer-

mandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 13:34; 15:12-13). The love of Jesus Christ is a good criterion of the new commandment 'To Love One Another'.

In the Bible it says: "Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man — though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us" (Rom 5:7,8). Paul also testified how Lord Jesus loved him by saying: "He loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Lord Jesus suffered for our sins and died on the cross for us. His love is sacrificing and subliming. The Bible says: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn 3:16). 'To love one another', we must be able to love and sacrifice ourselves for others.

4. The Effect Of The New Commandment

If we obey the new commandment 'To Love one another', the following will be its effect:

- a) To enable man to recognise us as His disciples

Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). 'Love' is the symbol of a Christian. If all the members of a family have love for one another, others will acknowledge that it

is a Christian family. In society if we practise the new commandment, people will know that we are Christians. If we can manifest the love of Christ in our daily life, then others will recognise us as His disciples because of our love.

- b) To enable Lord Jesus to have His glory

The Bible says: "Every one who is called by my name whom I created for my glory" (Is 43:7). God created man so that the latter would glorify Him. If we practise the commandment 'To love one another', others will not only recognise us as His disciples but also give glory to God.

Many non-believers like to disparage Christians at will because they have not heard the Truth. However, if we were to treat them with love, they will give glory to the True God in heaven because of our good deeds (cf: 1 Pet 2:12).

5. Conclusion

'To love one another' is the commandment given by Lord Jesus. Since the disciples had encouraged one another to obey it, it is imperative that we really put it into practice in the last days. The Bible says: "The end of all things is at hand above all hold unfailing your love for one another" (1 Pet 4:7-8). Let us hope that we may abound in love to one another and to all men (1 Thess 3:12) so that at any time and at any place, we can do man good and glorify God.

PUT AWAY LEAVEN

In the Old Testament when the Israelites were about to leave Egypt, God instructed them through Moses, to observe the fourteenth day of the first month, to put away leaven out of their houses and to eat unleavened bread for seven days (Ex 12:15-20).

The New Testament tells us that leaven signifies:

1. Heresy (Mt 16:12; Gal 5:9)
2. Hypocrisy (Lk 12:1)
3. Malice and Evil (1Cor 5:8)

From this we understand why God commanded them to put away leaven. He desired them to:

1. Reject heresy and hold fast to the truth;
2. Renounce hypocrisy and seek sincerity;
3. Remove malice and evil, and keep holiness.

These three ideas are now expanded further.

1. Reject heresy.
 - a. Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt 16:12).
 - b. Jude directed the believers, "to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).
 - c. Paul rebuked those demanding circumcision of Christians (Gal 5:1-12).
 - d. Paul also advised believers to avoid godless gossip, knowing that it was

upsetting some people's faith (2Tim 2:17-18).

2. Renounce hypocrisy.

The following examples show God's desire for us to be honest.

- a. Saul disobeyed God's command, and when he was admonished by the prophet, passed the blame onto his people. Although he later acknowledged the transgression of the commandment, he was not forgiven for his dishonesty (1Sam 15).
 - b. David committed a sin as serious as that of Saul, but he was forgiven for his honest repentance (2 Sam 12:3).
 - c. Ananias and his wife Sapphira died for lying to the Holy Spirit about their offering (Acts 5:1-11).
 - d. Jesus denounced the Pharisees, seven times with "woe to you", because of their hypocrisy (Mt 23:13-36).
3. Remove malice and evil.

Our Lord is a jealous God, who dislikes evil.

 - a. Phinehas hated evil in the same way God hates evil. Before the Israelites, he killed the Israelite man and the Midianite woman who had committed adultery. Thus, he calmed the anger of God and the plague was immediately withdrawn (Num 25:6-13).

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OUR SERVICE TO THE LORD

I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom 12:1)

THE REASONS FOR SERVING GOD

A. To show gratitude for the grace of God

1. God loves our body.
 - a. God gives us everything to enjoy (Acts 14:15-17; Mt 5:45).
 - b. God protects us so that we may have a quiet and peaceful life (Ps 121:3-8).
 - c. God keeps us alive (Jas 4:15; 1 Sam 2:6).
2. God loves our soul.
 - a. God gave His only Son to us (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 3:16).
 - b. God freely forgives our sins (Rom 3:23-25; Acts 2:38).
 - c. God promises that we will enter His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim 4:18; Eph 1:13-14).
3. It is only right to worship the Lord because:-
 - a. He died for us (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 5:14).
 - b. We should live for the Lord (2 Cor 5:15; Rom 14:7-8).
 - c. We should not accept the grace of God in vain (2 Cor 6:1-2).

B. To perform our duties

1. The duties have been entrusted to us.
 - a. Jesus said, "Freely you receive, freely you give" (Mt 10:5-8).
 - b. We are chosen by God to declare His wonderful deeds (1 Pet 2:9).
 - c. Paul said, "If it is not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission" (1 Cor 9:17).
2. Woe betides us if we do not preach the gospel.
 - a. Paul said: "If I do this, I have a reward, but if not, woe to me" (1 Cor 9:16-17).
 - b. If we do not save other men we shall die in our iniquity (Ezek 3:17-18).
 - c. Those who do not make use of the gifts of the Lord will be punished (Mt 25:14-30).

3. To know our duties and serve the Lord faithfully.
 - a. Moses gave up everything and was faithful in God's house (Heb 11:24-26; 3:2).
 - b. Esther saved her people by risking her life (Esther 4:13-16).
 - c. Nehemiah gave up his high rank and returned to his own country to rebuild Jerusalem (Neh 1:1-11; 2:1-8).

WAYS TO SERVE THE LORD

I To offer all we have

All things come from God and have been entrusted to us by God. We are but his stewards (1 Chron 29:12-14; Lk 16:1-2; 12:48). Therefore we should offer all things to the Lord.

A. To offer our ability.

1. Ability is given by God.
 - a. God gave Joshua leadership (Deut 34:9; Num 27:18-20).
 - b. God gave Bezalel wisdom and skills (Ex 31:1-5).
 - c. God gave Solomon ability and wisdom (1 Kings 3:10-23).
 - d. God gave Daniel surpassing wisdom (Dan 1:17-20).
2. To devote in service.
 - a. Moses did not make use of his ability for Egypt but for God and His people (Acts 7:22-35; Heb 11:24-26).
 - b. Bezalel was willing to utilise his spiritual wisdom and gifts in making the tent of God (Ex 35:30-35).
 - c. Daniel made good use of the ability and the opportunity given by God to be a prophet of God in the palace (Mt 24:15; Dan 2:31-49; 4:5; 6).
3. To give glory to God.
 - As ability is given by God, the glory of success should be attributed to God (Ps 115:1).
 - a. Joseph glorified God for giving him the ability to interpret dreams (Gen 41:25-39).
 - b. Peter glorified the Lord for the ability to perform signs (Acts 3:11-16).
 - c. King Nebuchadnezzar was punished for not giving glory to God (Dan 4:28-32).
 - d. King Herod did not give glory to God and died as a result (Acts 12:21-23).

B. To offer our wealth.

1. Wealth is given by God.
 - a. God gives us the power to get wealth (Deut 8:11-18).
 - b. God makes man rich and also exalts man (1 Sam 2:7).
 - c. Both riches and honor come from God (1 Chron 29:12).
 - d. God made King Solomon the richest of all men (1 Kings 3:13; 10:14,15,21,27).
2. To serve God with wealth (Lk 8:1-3).
 - a. To help in the work of God by giving tithes (Num 18:21-24; Lev 27:30; Mal 3:8-10; Mt 23:23).
 - b. To offer our best for the building of the church (Ex 25:1-7; 1 Chron 29:1-9).
 - c. To offer willingly to the poor (Gal 2:10; 1 Jn 3:16-17).
 - d. To offer all our possessions for God's work when necessary (Mt 19:21; Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37).
3. Not to be an unrighteous steward:-
 - a. By keeping for ourselves what belongs to God (Mal 3:8-10; Mt 22:21).
 - b. By storing up our treasures on earth instead of in heaven (Mt 6:19-21; Lk 12:16-21).
 - c. By making use of our wealth from God for our own pleasure and luxury instead of helping the needy (Lk 16:19-20).

C. To offer ourselves.

1. The body is made by God.
 - a. Thy hands fashioned and made me (Job 10:8).
 - b. My inward parts are made by God (Ps 139:13-15).
 - c. We are God's offspring (Acts 17:28-29).
2. The body is redeemed.
 - a. We are bought by God with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - b. Our body is no longer our own (1 Cor 6:19-20).
 - c. Do not become slaves of men (1 Cor 7:23).
3. Life is given by God.
 - a. In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).
 - b. God keeps us from death (Ps 68:20).
 - c. God keeps us alive (Deut 32:39).
4. To live for the Lord.
 - a. Jesus died for us and we should live for Him (2 Cor 5:14-15).
 - b. We live for the Lord and die for the Lord (Rom 14:7-8).
 - c. To live for the Lord means that whatever we do, e.g. to study, to make money, to get married, to hold a position

- and to bring up our children etc., we should do it for the Lord (Rom 12:1, Lk 2:49; 1 Cor 9:22-23).
5. To work according to the will of God.
 - a. Jesus said, "I have come to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10:5-7).
 - b. Jesus disregarded His own will and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross (Mt 26:39-43; Phil 2:5-8).
 - c. Moses obeyed God's will. He left the comfortable life in the Palace to devote his entire life to God and His people (Heb 11:23-26).
 6. Whatever we do, we should give glory to God.
 - a. God creates and redeems us for His glory (Is 43:7; 1 Cor 6:19-20).
 - b. Jesus glorified God on earth for everything (Jn 17:4; Heb 1:3).
 - c. To glorify God in our study, career, words and deeds (Dan 1:17-20; Mt 5:16).

D. To offer our children.

1. Children are given by God.
 - a. Children are a heritage from the Lord (Ps 127:3).
 - b. Rebekah was barren. So the Lord answered her prayer and gave her Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:21-24).
 - c. Hannah prayed for a son and the Lord answered her prayer and gave her Samuel (1 Sam 1:10-20).
2. To bring the children up according to the Lord's teachings
 - a. To fear God and pray to Him constantly (Ex 20:3; Phil 4:6).
 - b. To obey the words of God and follow His way (Deut 17:18-20; 1 Kings 2:1-3).
 - c. To honour our parents and love our children (Ex 20:12; Prov 17:17).
 - d. To be honest and treat others kindly (Prov 3:3-4; Mt 5:45-48).
 - e. To be gentle and lowly in heart. To be righteous and holy (Mt 11:29; Mic 6:8; 1 Pet 1:14-15).
 - f. To be diligent in divine work, in return for Christ's love for us (Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 5:14-15).
3. To educate our children as early as possible.
 - a. Before Joseph was seventeen years old he already had faith in the Lord (Gen 37:1-3; 39:1-12).
 - b. Daniel and three of his friends understood (even when they were still young) the truth (Dan 1:3-13).
 - c. Timothy had been acquainted with the bible since childhood (2 Tim 3:15; 1:4-5).

- a. To communicate with God through prayers (1 Cor 14:2,4; Jude 20).
- b. To communicate with God in meditation (Ps 104:34; 77:12).
3. To request from God.
 - a. The Lord permits us to request from Him (Mt 7:7; Phil 4:6-7).
 - b. To get help in the services by prayers (2 Cor 1:11).

B. To get help in divine work through prayers.

- Moses helped Joshua to overcome the enemy by prayers (Ex 17:8-13).
1. To request the Lord to send more workers who would dedicate their entire life to the divine service (Mt 9:37-38).
 2. To request the Lord to open the gospel door in every country (Col 4:3-4; 2 Thess 3:1).
 3. To request the Lord to work signs and miracles to lead people to Him (Acts 4:23-31).
 4. To request the Lord to increase the membership in order to bring progress to His church (Is 26:15).
 5. To request the Lord to make the believer and their families whole; to give them faith and to serve Him fervently (Col 4:12; Eph 6:18; Lk 22:31-34).
 6. To request the Lord to keep our country in peace and prosperity so that the gospel can be freely preached (Jer 29:7; 1 Tim 2:1-5).
 7. To request the Lord to take care of the Christians in countries where there is no freedom. Request the Lord to help the courageous Christians to preach the gospel (2 Tim 2:9).
 8. To request the Lord to give us more strength to preach the gospel to the whole world and to wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus (Mt 24:14; Rev 19:7).

C. Effective prayers:-

1. Prayers offered through faith (Mt 21:22; Mk 5:25-34).
2. Prayers offered in truth and sincerity (Jn 4:24; 2 Chron 16:9).
3. Prayers offered in humility (Jas 4:6; 2 Chron 33:10-13).
4. Prayers offered in love (1 Jn 3:22-23; Acts 9:36-41).
5. Prayers offered in unity (Mt 18:19; Acts 1:14).
6. Prayers offered by a righteous man (Jas 5:16; Prov 15:8 & 29).
7. Fervent prayers (Lk 18:1-8; 1 Kings 18:42-45).
8. Praying constantly (1 Thess 5:17; Ps 71:8).
9. Prayers offered in tears (Heb 5:7; Is 38:1-8).
10. Prayers with fasting (Mt 17:19-21; Ezra 8:21-23).

THE GOOD OF OFFERING

If everyone is fervent in serving the Lord, the number of workers will increase, there will be sufficient money to meet expenses, the Holy Spirit will be with them and consequently the scope for divine work will surely expand. To worship the Lord is everyone's duty and the Lord will give him various blessings.

A. To him who offers wealth:

1. God will bestow His heavenly blessings on him (Mal 3:10-12).
2. God will provide him with everything he needs (2 Cor 9:8; Prov 3:9-10).
3. When Jesus comes again, they will be received into the eternal abode (Lk 16:9).

B. To him who dedicates his whole life to serve the Lord:

1. He will receive a hundred fold in the present life and in the life to come i.e. eternal life (Mk 10:28-30).
2. There is laid up for him the crown of glory (2 Tim 4:7-8).
3. Hannah presented her only son to God and in return God gave her five (1 Sam 1:26-28; 2:21).

C. To him who offers prayers:

1. He is edified in spirit (Lk 2:36-38; 1 Cor 14:4).
2. He has a part in the divine work (2 Cor 1:11; Ex 17:11).
3. He will enjoy the same rewards as the preacher (1 Sam 30:24; Acts 6:4).

D. Those who do not serve the Lord:

1. Will be poor (Prov 11:24).
2. Will be cursed by God (Mal 3:8-9).
3. Will be punished (Mt 25:24-30).

Conclusion:-

We must strive to do our best as good servants of the Lord and look forward to the day of His second coming when He shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master" (Mt 25:21).

STRIVE TO MAINTAIN UNITY

The Bible says: "With all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:2,3). The True Church is a spiritual body established by the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). She does not belong to the world; nor does she belong to any individual or any group of people as a personal property. The Church has Christ as the head and as the highest authority to manage her by means of the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Heb 3:6). Therefore, every believer should possess the unity of Spirit which is the most important factor in promoting the progress and growth of the Church.

But this spirit of unity given by the Holy Spirit must be eagerly maintained by us, otherwise we may lose it or it may be destroyed. This would not only result in a severance of relation between one and the Church, it would also make one become a stumbling block to the unity and progress of the Church.

Therefore, how should one maintain the unity of the Spirit? One should lead a life with all "lowliness, and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, in the bond of peace". Only with these spiritual virtues can one be moved

by the Holy Spirit to enjoy fellowship and communion with the other believers; and before long, we would have the same mind, the same loving, be in full accord and of one mind (Phil 2:1,2). In this way, we can maintain true unity in the Church.

The spirit of unity especially a unity through the Holy Spirit must be cultivated into every believer's heart. Therefore, "sameness" of the "Spirit" is also the basic factor of unity. In other words, the Spirit of truth cannot unite with the Spirit of error. As apostle John says, "We are of God, whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error" (1 Jn 4:6). Those who receive the same Spirit would be able to recognize and listen to one another, naturally coming into unity. However, if the Spirit received is not the same, then unity cannot be achieved at all, not even by force. We should understand that this is a spiritual mystery.

Although we have received the same Spirit of truth, sometimes we still quarrel and do not agree with one another. This is due to the confusion created by the devil through our carnal desires and our own personal will. During such times, we should be awoken and be subject to the Holy Spirit in our strife to overcome these carnal

To be continued on Pg. 64

Witnessing



THE CURING OF TUBERCULOSIS THROUGH THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Hallelujah in the name of the Lord Jesus I bear witness.

Forty eight years ago I was working in Chiayi, Taiwan. All my friends then, were friends in revel and I indulged in wining, gambling, and womanizing. As a result, I was plagued with various diseases. I suffered from asthma and later, tuberculosis I vomitted blood. Despite constant medical treatment, my condition deteriorated and I reached the most serious state of tuberculosis three years later. No western or Chinese medicine could cure me. I was financially exhausted and was heavily in debt. I resorted to supernatural aid, consulting spirit-mediums and burning incense paper, but none could be of any help.

Three months before I received the grace of the Lord, I was unable to get up from bed. I lost my appetite completely and had insomnia, I was abnormally thin. I was in a hopeless

state at the time when the Lord extended His merciful hand and showed me His grace and great love. A member of the True Jesus Church preached to my wife, saying, "God is with the True Jesus Church and has bestowed the church with the power of healing sicknesses and casting out demons. No matter what incurable sickness, it will definitely be cured if only the patient would pray with faith". After hearing this my wife came home and persuaded me to accept Christ. At first I was very stubborn and refused to accept, but seeing that my wife was physically exhausted by the burden of taking care of me, day and night, I promised her that I would. Happily she went to contact the members of the Church to come and pray for me.

In the evening of 2nd December 1931, about eight members of the Church came to my house to pray for me. They taught me

to pray: "Hallelujah, praise our Lord Jesus". I prayed in this manner and after praying twice I felt much relieved and was able to sleep peacefully that night. In the middle of the night while I was half awake, two dark and hairy hands of a devil appeared, one pressing my back and the other pressing my chest. I heard a voice saying, "I have warned you not to believe in Jesus and yet you disobeyed". This happened three times and I was so weakened that I could not move my body at all. But finally, I managed to shout, "Hallelujah" and the two hands disappeared. When I woke up I was perspiring heavily and I thought to myself: "I am just beginning to have faith in Jesus and the devil has already tried to prevent me from believing. What I have believed in must be the Truth". My faith was thus strengthened and the Church members continued to come to my house for prayer service every night. My sickness improved and after a week, I was able to get out of bed.

On the tenth night, I asked an elderly member by the name of Kuo Yu: "Why is it that every time you pray, you start to shake and make funny noises?" He answered, "This is because I have received the Holy Spirit and am speaking in tongue. When the Lord Jesus was preaching in the world, He promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him. Speaking in tongue is the evidence of receiving the pro-

mised Holy Spirit" (Jn 7:38,39; Acts 10:44-46). I asked again, "Can I also receive the Holy Spirit?" He said, "If you pray earnestly and persistently you will also receive the Holy Spirit. But if you will let those who are filled with the Holy Spirit to lay hands on you, you may be able to receive the Holy Spirit faster" (Acts 8:17,18). I thought to myself: "It is better for me to pray by myself". I heard that this Brother Kuo had great power. By laying his hands on somebody's head he could cause the person to vibrate. I thought if I received the Holy Spirit because he laid hands upon me, I might instead become doubtful about the Holy Spirit. I came to the conclusion that God is fair and just, and I should be able to receive the Holy Spirit by asking for it myself. When Bro. Kuo knew of my intention he encouraged me to pray earnestly and persistently. That night, as an old lady who was suffering from asthma had requested them to pray for her, they left my house soon after the service. After they had gone, I told my wife, "Tonight I am going to pray for the Holy Spirit. Should anything strange happen, do not get alarmed nor disturb me. All that you have to do is to assist me in my prayer for the Holy Spirit by praying beside my bed". As I was still very weak then, I was not able to kneel up straight. So I could only pray by sitting on my heels.

At first my voice was rather

soft, but after ten minutes my prayer became louder and I felt that I was gaining strength. About twenty minutes later I was perspiring heavily and suddenly I felt some force like a flow of current descending upon my head and right down to my feet. Then my feet began to tremble; I could feel a warm stream flowing out of my belly like living water and I began to speak in tongue. My whole body then vibrated uncontrollably. I began to kneel up straight and leapt about 4 to 5 inches above the floor. This continued for more than twenty minutes. A few days earlier my wife heard a rumour that the believers of the True Jesus Church would become insane after they had joined the Church for some time. Hence when she saw me in that state, she was frightened, mistaking me for becoming insane. As I had told her not to stop me, she could only pray beside my bed. I was perspiring so heavily that the two sweaters and the jacket which I was wearing were all wet through. So I thought to myself: "How nice it would be if I can stop for a while so that I can change before I continue to pray". At that thought, my body stopped vibrating. This is because our Lord knows the heart of man. While I was resting, I was so overjoyed that without changing my wet clothes or waiting for the Church members to return, I ran straight out of my house to tell them that I had received

the Holy Spirit. This frightened my wife evenmore for she thought that I had really gone mad. She ran after me. When I was on the road I met the Church members returning from the old lady's house. I immediately told them of my receipt of the Holy Spirit. They rejoiced and praised the Lord. When we were back in my house, we prayed together and they confirmed that I had received the Holy Spirit. After this incident, we had family services every night in my house.

One month later, on 9th January 1932, I was baptised and I joined the True Jesus Church in Ta-lin. Thanks to the precious blood of the Lord Jesus all my sins were cleansed. My sickness was also completely cured and I was feeling much better physically day after day. Not only that, I was able to give up all the vices which I had before. This indeed is a fulfilment of what the Lord Jesus had said, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

Financially exhausted and heavily in debt on account of my illness, I was poverty-stricken and physically very weak. I was rather worried that I might not live long in this world. So one day I prayed to the Lord to lengthen my life-span to 50 (I was 30 years old then. I thought that in my condition, I would not last for another five years), so that I could bear witness for Him. Thanks to the wonderful

love of Lord Jesus for answer my prayer and bestowing upon me peace that surpasses all things (Phil 4:6,7). I am now 75 years old, that is, the Lord had extended my life-span for 45 years. My health is even better now than when I was younger. The Lord had manifested such wonderful deeds to me, showing His great love and abundant grace and I cannot find words to express my praise and gratitude to Him. I cannot help reminding myself of what King David said in one of his psalms: "Blessed the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless

his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Ps 103:1-5). May all glory, thanks and praises be given to the Lord Jesus forever. Amen.

Elder Chien I-Chen
Taiwan, 1976

I DON'T NEED ANY INJECTION I WANT THE LORD

Hallelujah! In the name of Lord Jesus I bear witness to a miraculous happening that speaks of God's grace, mercy and love. On Sunday, 1st August 1976, three families, two of my sisters' and mine set out on a two-day holiday at Cameron Highlands. We stayed in a large bungalow sited on a very lonely hill hemmed in on all three sides by higher hills. That evening after hill climbing and fruit picking the children came back for their bath. One after another they had their bath because there was only one bathroom available upstairs. A gas heater provided warm water for the cold weather. My niece named Chin Lai Ngoh, aged 12, went into the bathroom when

her turn came, shut the window louvers and locked the bathroom door from within. Fifteen minutes after she had gone in, my daughter, Lai Ming, waiting outside impatiently for her turn, banged on the door. Lai Ngoh, who is normally a very obedient child, did not answer. Other children who waited outside also banged furiously. My daughter even kicked at the door. Yet there was no answer from Lai Ngoh from within. What went wrong? Nobody knew what really happened inside. We supposed the flame in the heater went out and the gas leaked from the cylinders, making her unconscious.

My elder brother-in-law who was resting in a nearby room

came out to see what the noise was about. He nearly panicked when Lai Ngoh did not answer his call. In an attempt to break open the door, he used his whole might but to no avail because the door lock was made of solid metal not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick. My husband who was outside the house, climbed up to the window of the bathroom and tried to break open the window but he failed. Lai Ngoh's parents panicked and were paralysed with fear. The mother loudly cried out "Oh Lord, Oh Lord, save my child." Fortunately, with God's help, a teenage Indian boy came to help us. He should have left for home at 4 o'clock but stayed on because he felt that he had something else he hadn't done. It seemed that this was planned by the Lord. If he had gone home no one would have known how to open the door of the bathroom. And as the child's mother called out to God, she saw flash of light in front of her. As if pushed by some invisible force, she turned to face an opened door. The Indian boy did manage to open the door with a metal strip.

The child suffocated and was gased into unconsciousness. She then inexplicably fell into a kneeling position next to a long bath tub already overflowing with running water. My elder sister who has always been a coward at emergencies, was given courage and strength by the Almighty to carry the

child from the bathroom to a bed. She was pale and motionless. Her eyes were stony still, her mouth began to foam. Tinges of blood were visible. To any beholder it was a moment of life or death. The first thought that came to me was that if the Great Heavenly Doctor did not save the child, no other doctor could. We three sisters fell on our knees and prayed loudly, asking for forgiveness and fervently pleaded to the Lord to spare the child's life.

The mother loudly pleaded to the Lord to show her husband and children He is really the True and Living God. In my prayers, words came pouring out, "Lord, Lord, I want to bear witness for you." The child's father who was not baptised then knelt down too and prayed. Miraculously, some unseen forces pushed a lump of phlegm out from the child's mouth. In her still unconscious state she effortlessly vomited. Three times she vomited as we continued our prayers. By then she had regained her consciousness slightly. Thanks to the merciful Lord. But she still had not spoken a single word.

Meanwhile my husband and my elder brother-in-law set out for Tanah Rata, through five winding miles to summon a doctor. Theirs was a frightful ordeal. It was as if planned by the Lord to delay them. That day being a Sunday, no clinics were opened. After more than

an hour, they managed to bring a doctor home. The doctor tested her reflexes and asked whether the child had spoken anything. He wanted to give her an injection but in spite of all efforts to hold her he failed. At the third attempt to inject, the child cried out loudly, "I don't want the injection. It is painful." On hearing her voices for the first time after almost one and a half hours of agony, I praised and thanked the Lord in my prayers in the next room. The doctor, convinced that the child was alright, asked for a fee of \$40/- and left. Three of us sat near the child, who after speaking the words, fell into a

slumber. As I was still praising the Lord in my prayers, she called out to vomit again. We taught her to say "Hallelujah. Praise be to the Lord Jesus!" Although she was not baptised then she obediently did so. She sat up and walked off to comb her hair. The father on seeing this spoke out, "God has spared my child's life. I want to be baptised."

To them who believe, with God nothing is impossible. Praise and glory be to God forever. Hallelujah! Amen.

By: Mrs WEE TEE JONG
Malaysia 1976

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b. When Achan alone sinned, transgressing the Lord's covenant, God's anger was kindled against all Israel and as such they were defeated by their enemies (Josh 7:1-25). However, as soon as Achan was destroyed, Israel captured the city of Ai easily, and destroyed their enemies (Josh 7:25-8:29).

In order to defend the truth, we must reject heresies and hold fast the faith. To stand firmly before the Lord, we have to renounce hypocrisy and pursue integrity. To destroy the fortress of the devil, we must remove malice and evil and keep holiness. Let us remember the teaching. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9).

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desires. We should also strengthen our bond of peace and forbearance towards one another

in love. In this way, unity can be maintained for the progress and growth of the Church.