

# THE CALL OF GOD

THE gospel of the Kingdom of God which is commanded to be preached in all the world is a divine invitation. The moment one's heart is opened to accept it an exciting experience takes place for good. It is the effect of this experience, which is a true conversion, that is the very essence of the call of God.

God Almighty created man upright and perfect, and placed him on the earth in order that man may worship and praise Him. But through disobedience man fell from his place of honour, and strayed from his Creator. The devil found this as his opportunity to make man's confusion worse confounded by arousing in him unwholesome desires and causing him to transgress the commandments of God. And so since sin entered the world the tribulations and woes of mankind have been manifold.

However, God in exercise of His loving-kindness – “for His mercy endureth for ever” – made a way out for man to retrace his steps and return to Him so as to enjoy divine privileges and be saved. To this end God sent His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, so that anyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3: 16) And Jesus Christ himself said: “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: *I am come that they (the sheep of God) might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*” –John 10: 10.

The Holy Bible makes it very clear that the will of God is that all should be saved but on the condition that they “come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2: 3,4) For this reason He is calling men everywhere irrespective of colour or race to come to Him through Jesus Christ to taste of His goodness. The Psalmist stated: “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.” (Psalm 34: 8; see also Psalm 86: 5) And St. Peter said: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” – Acts 10: 34, 35.

## Assurance

Whatever may be the degree of the sins of men, God has given firm assurance that He would pardon those who sincerely repent and that He would make them enjoy His blessings. As it is written: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”- Isaiah 1: 16-20.

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and men. No one can go to the Almighty Father without passing through him. Christ said: “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be

saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” (John 10: 9) Again he said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” – John 14: 6.

When Christ came to this world he made known the purpose of God to mankind and laboured hard to make men realise the need for them to pay heed to the call of God so as to worship Him in truth for their own good. He showed himself as the one whom the Most High has entrusted with the power and duty to save His sheep. And so with full confidence, Christ called on all men of goodwill to come to him to learn righteousness through which they would find relief from their worldly burdens. He declared: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11: 28-30.

The gospel, which is a message of peace and salvation, is a direct call or invitation from God through His servants to every person. In order that the call may reach all corners of the earth and avail everyone an opportunity to hear it, our Lord and Redeemer commanded his disciples to engage in a peripatetic duty-that is, the work of going from place to place -to teach all nations. And he said: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” – Matthew 24: 14.

From the foregoing we can understand that the message of salvation is not exclusive to the natural Jews but is extended to all the sheep of God the world over. Addressing the Jews, St. Paul in his days said: “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.” (Acts 13: 26) And when the Jews proved obdurate and resorted to arguing against the truth and to blaspheming, St. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared: “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” – Acts 13: 45-47.

### Water of Life

Today, many people spend much money, energy and time in fostering a cause which cannot lead them to salvation. Some out of ignorance give support to priests and prophets who see false visions and preach lies in the name of God for which they receive nothing of spiritual profit. But God is calling all such ones who thirst for righteousness to receive His word of truth, which, in a symbolic language, is termed water, wine, milk or bread. The Lord said: “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” – Isaiah. 55: 1-3.

The duty to proclaim the everlasting gospel and invite men to receive it did not end with Jesus Christ: he committed it to his apostles who are the anointed Christians-his close associates. And others who are blessed to accept and believe the truth are also duty-bound to invite other people. As it is written: "And the Spirit (Jesus Christ) and the bride (the saints) say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life (the saving truth) freely." – Revelation 22: 17.

It is on the strength of the foregoing and the understanding of the Lord's will that we of the GKS are undaunted and untiring in our endeavours to propagate the gospel either by spoken or written word or any other scripturally approved means. Whether we are rejected by men, we know we are not forsaken by God; despised, we have joy of the spirit; or whether we are persecuted, we have the help of God through His Spirit and so we glory in tribulation. But thanks be to God, that today there are very many people who are receiving the Lord's message with great cheer and encouraging us to carry on His work for the glorification of His name. – Matthew 5: 16; Romans 1: 16,17; 2 Corinthians 4: 1-11.

### Act of God

We are quite aware of the fact that our duty is to invite men to Christ and convince them of the truth but to convert by way of changing or opening their hearts to accept the truth is an act of God. The case of Lydia who was converted by the Lord at the preaching of St. Paul is a striking example. Concerning her, it is written: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." – Acts 16: 14.

Moreover, Jesus Christ said: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." – John 6: 44.

*Many people know and appreciate the fact that the God's Kingdom Society (GKS) is preaching the truth of God's word as contained in the Holy Bible, but certain worldly factors do combine to militate against their taking a decisive action or declaring their full stand on the Lord's side. The matter of salvation is so important that it should always take precedence over all other considerations. Once you are convinced of the truth, which Christ says will make us free (John 8: 32), you do not need to delay or postpone your response to the Lord's call. "Make hay while the sun shines", is a well known adage. And there is truth in the saying of Geoffrey Chaucer 1340-1400: "For tyme y-lost (time you lost) may not recovered be."*

What is more, the kernel of the point we are making for the benefit of seekers-after-truth was indited by Isaiah the prophet in a clearer light thus: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."- Isaiah 55: 6.

In the light of what has been stated, we counsel our readers and others who have been convinced and who have sincerely confessed that the GKS is preaching the truth NOT to delay but DECIDE TODAY to follow the TRUTH – that is, Jesus Christ – by JOINING his fold which the GKS is. Though unpopular the NARROW WAY, which is the way of truth and life, may be in this sin-ridden, decaying world, Christ admonished his disciples to enter. Said he: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: *because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” – Matthew 7: 13, 14.

### Converts

On the part of those who have already responded to the Lord’s call and taken their stand in His organisation, they are required to be steadfast and to live up to expectation as a show of appreciation for the Lord’s mercy and favour. To the Christians at Thessalonica, St. Paul wrote: “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” – 2 Thessalonians 2: 13-15.

Finally, we must remind the Lord’s sheep of St. Peter’s admonition when he warned against imitating the ungodly lest they be “led away with the error of the wicked” and falloff the path of salvation. (2 Peter 3: 17.) He advised converts as to what they should do in order to be the inheritors of God’s perfect Kingdom when he said: “...Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” – 2 Peter 1: 5-11.