

The Necessity of the Indwelling Christ

By Fred O. Blakley

The “riches of the glory” of the mystery of God’s eternal purpose in the Son is realized in the life that now is by the experience of the indwelling Christ (Col. 1:25-29). “Christ in you” is not only the “hope of glory”; His Presence there by the Holy Spirit is the foretaste of it. Without this personal fellowship with the risen Savior and King, we are unconfirmed as the children of God, and so without power and efficacy in His worship and service. Thus, we read from Paul: “It was the good pleasure of God ... to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles” (Gal. 1:15-16). Before the Apostle, David fully recognized the necessity of the Divine anointing in order to an effective ambassadorship for God. Anticipating the answer to his earnest plea for the Lord’s Presence and blessing, he declared, “Then will I teach transgressors Thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee” (Ps. 51:7-19).

The Present Requirement. It is precisely the same with us today who call upon the Name of God and seek to serve Him with our spirit in the gospel of His Son. Everything is dependent upon the rising of the Day-Star in our hearts, the forming of Christ therein by faith—the promised manifestation of Himself to our spirits (Jn. 14:21-23; Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:26; II Pet. 1:19). “Our lives as children of God are constituted by that. All that we are and all that we do rests upon that inward revelation which makes Christ central and supreme in us.” This is a spiritual law, and it cannot be ignored with impunity. None of us will ever serve the Lord vitally and effectively beyond the measure of our personal apprehension of His Person and our experience of His Presence in our hearts. That is a circumstance that is basic to all else in the Divine kingdom.

People who have a zeal for God, but not according to the knowledge and experience of which we speak, should be particularly admonished by this consideration. Remember the frustration of the Jews in their pursuit of righteousness (Rom. 9:30-33; 10:1-3). Effectiveness for God is conditioned not upon mere religion as such, nor upon your religious zeal; it is produced only by Christ dwelling in your heart by faith (Eph. 3:17). The glory of God, which is in the face of our Lord Jesus, is imparted to us thereby (II Cor. 3:17-18; 4:6). Just as Moses brought the Divine glory down from the mountain in his face (Exod. 34:29-35; II Cor. 3:7-8), so it is with the Savior in respect to us. He is “the effulgence” of the Father’s glory, and “the very Image of His substance” (Heb. 1:3), and as He takes up His abode within the faithful heart, it is truly transformed into “a habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22).

The Central Objective. “. . . That I might preach Him!” “It pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him!” That is Paul’s statement of the case. “Underline the word ‘Him.’ That goes to the heart of everything; that weighs up the value of everything. ‘Him!’ “ So very much of religious concern and activity is devoted to something else. The great bane of the modern church is that it does not hold fast to the Head (Col. 2:19), but has allowed other interests to divert it. The advancement of a movement, the propagation of a doctrine, the promotion of an institution, and the like—these engage its attention and consume its energies. But these are not the principal thing with God. The Apostle, exuding the Divine Spirit, was set to proclaim “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” and to “make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery” of His Indwelling (Eph. 3:8-9).

We must come to realize that with God the ministry of Christ is the one great work of His people. It is not an organization that we are to promote, though it might be called the church. As a matter of fact, the church has no recognition by God apart from its union with the reigning Christ. “The church is judged according to the measure in which the Son of God’s love is made manifest by it.” The work of the Lord is not a mere “witness” or “testimony,” by the common intent of those terms. That is, it is not the dissemination of a humanly-arranged form of teaching—a system-

atized theology. Neither is the Divine objective the extension of a denomination, nor an undenominational society. It is not “the work,” as that expression is ordinarily used by religionists. Many ardent sectarians are frequently heard to speak of “the work”—“how is the work getting on?” And it is not missionary enterprises as such. What travesties have been perpetrated in the name of missions!

Beloved, the great end of the Father in the life of the saints is none of these things. It is Christ. “. . . That I may preach Him!” If this central objective had been kept by professors of the faith, they should have been spared the many sorrows which have come upon them. “All the wretched mess that exists in the nominal church today would have been avoided. It is because something specific in itself—either a movement, a mission, a teaching, a testimony, a fellowship—has taken the place of Christ. People have gone out to further that, to project that, to establish that It would never be admitted, but it is true, that today it is not so much Christ as our work, our program.” An inward revelation of Christ—and that alone—is the cure for such departures from the faith. The existence of all the substitutes which men have set up in place of the Lord simply betoken His absence in their lives. If Christ the Son of God’s love is central and supreme in the heart, everything that would exalt itself above Him is put down. This is because, in His Nature, He is God, and there is really none else.

The Personal Obsession. When the individual truly renders the obedience of faith, and permits Christ into his heart, his whole life will be changed. All things, as the Apostle declares, will have veritably “become new” (II Cor. 5:17). Christ is then his Obsession. To make Him known, is the great aim of his life. It is, of course, the same with a congregation of believers, or a broader fellowship of them. “No assembly, no testimony, no fellowship is justified before God in its existence except as it proclaims His Son. All the force and weight and ingenuity of Hell are out against such proclamation. Hell is dead set against the revelation of Jesus Christ.” It will tolerate almost anything else in the name of religion. The making known of the exalted Jesus and the exceeding riches of His grace and power, however, it will unflinchingly oppose.

The obsession with Christ has a double expression, on both the personal and group level. It is reflected at once in life and in service. “What am I here for? Why do I hear the Name of Christ? What is the meaning of my relation to the Lord? What is the main point of my salvation in Him?” These are introspective questions concerning life. The answer to them is unequivocal. As the Lord’s temple, your mission is to “show forth” His praises by the revelation of His Son (I Pe. 2:9). It is not to find personal satisfaction, or gratification—not even salvation—though these benefits will accrue to your ministry as you permit Christ to live in and express Himself through you. With reference to your overt work, it is essentially the same—it should all be bent to the end of securing for the Lord Jesus the absolute centrality and supremacy. The endeavor is not to be for the establishment of a society, a denomination, or to win recognition for a doctrine or an interpretation, or a system of religion. In a word, the Indwelt life will not concern itself primarily with things, but with Him who is its vitality and glory, and who only is worthy to be worshipped and proclaimed, world without end. “Whatever else might be said, we shall never get past this: we both begin and end with Christ. He is the Beginning and the Ending—the Alpha and Omega (the A and Z). We must very earnestly seek new and increased apprehension of the glorified Christ.” It is the only way of deliverance from all unbecoming attachments with which the professing church has become cluttered, through its unbelief. It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” or the wretched certainty that there is not now, nor will there ever be, any of the Divine glory for you. May He who represents Himself as standing at the door of a lukewarm and alienated congregation be pleased to work in us to “will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13; Rev. 3:20). So shall He come into our hearts and sup with us and we with Him, to “the praise of the glory” of God’s grace. —*Reprinted from the April 1968 issue of The Banner of Truth*

The Great Need For Diligence

By Harold Lohse

In the daily spiritual life of the devout Christian, there is discernible a continuous urge for diligence. This is as it should be. Our Lord Jesus was diligent, and are not we to follow in His steps? An example of His diligence is found in Mk. 1:35. It is there recorded that the Savior rose early in the morning—"a great while before day"—to pray. Oh, to be diligent in prayer at this early hour! How sweet the communion can be—just you and God; no outside distraction, only sweet fellowship with Him! Another instance of the Master's industrious application to His mission occurs in His appearance in the temple at the age of twelve, as chronicled in Luke 2:42-49. After a three-day search, His mother and Joseph found Him "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." Among other things, He could well have been exhorting them to be diligent and to be humble in their worship and service of the Father. When Mary saw her Son, she was amazed, and questioned Him concerning His conduct. He replied, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Here we see the reason for Jesus' diligence: it was because the Father's business was important and required devoted perseverance. It seems certain to me that His Person and attitude must have had a profound effect upon the doctors with whom He conversed in the temple.

Many do not appear to want to be like our Lord in His diligence. As for me, I greatly desire to follow Him in this respect, as well as in all others. We are exhorted to set our minds and hearts to seek and know our God. This earnest quest is not to be just something that we read in the Scriptures—as the commandment, for example, in I Chron. 22:19—but a holy inquiry which we eagerly pursue with all our hearts. By God's grace, our search shall be rewarded, for saith He, "If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 4:29). Though grace is free, yet it is to be sought by those who would have it. God will abundantly compensate you for diligence and persistence in seeking Him by giving you of Himself (Ps. 37:4-6). Praise His Name!

Its Variety of Application in Believers. There are, of course, different areas and levels of diligence in the lives of God's people. You would not expect a weak brother to be diligent in public proclamation of the Word. He could, and should, however, be so in the study of the Scriptures, and could be alert and ready to give a cup of cold water to some weary and thirsty soul passing by. The brethren blessed with an abundance of this world's goods should be diligent in "communicating" unto him that preaches the Word, (Gal. 6:6) and in "distributing to the necessity of the saints" (Rom. 12:8, 13). We all can, and must, be always diligent and constant in keeping the commandments of our God. In Deuteronomy 6:17, it is written, "Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes, which He has commanded thee." The love of our Father that is manifested in His giving us His commandments is, indeed, thrilling to the soul. Though the obligations thus laid upon us appear hard to the flesh, as it is written, they really are easy and light (Mt. 11:28-30; I Jn. 5:3). God gives His dear children grace sufficient for their needs, so that through Christ the Savior they can do all that He requires (Phil. 4:13).

The great blessing that obedience to God brings certainly provides adequate incentive to enlist our enthusiasm and perseverance in doing His will. "If you will obey My commandments which command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul," was the promise given through Moses. "He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. And He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be full" (Deut. 11:13-15. RSV). Not merely tenfold, but a hundredfold, is the measure of the recompense which

our God metes out to those who truly love and obey Him with singleness and persistence of heart.

Another important sphere of diligence is the ministry of the Word. Those who are called of God to feed His sheep have special need of this virtue. No man should ever come before the Lord's elect, with a message hastily thrown together. God has privileged certain of His saints to preach the unsearchable riches of His dear Son. He has also given to them His Holy Spirit to counsel them in the Word. In His blessed providence, God will likewise permit them time to prepare a suitable message for His people. All that the preachers need to do is to seek the Lord in prayer, asking for His help, and they will unfailingly receive all that is required for the occasion. By the same token, God will not hold guiltless those who are negligent in the ministry of His word. Such passages as Jer. 23:1-2 and Ezek. 34:1-10 make this emphatically plain, and I urge that all preachers and teachers especially read and ponder well these pronouncements.

The case with the flock of God with reference to diligence is the same. We are not to be careless and indifferent in His worship and service. Our attendance at the assembly of the saints is to be regular. The early believers, it will be recalled, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Much is gained by attendance at the assembly. Some blessing that we may have been without for years might have been ours, had we been present when the Lord and the holy brethren met together. Remember Thomas' forfeiture by not being with the other disciples when the risen Christ first appeared to them in the upper room (Jn. 20:19-29). We are the losers by our absence from the assembly, and great may be our loss. We are encouraged not only to attend ourselves, but to exhort others to do the same, "and so much the more" as we "see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

Need I remind you, my dear brethren, that the day of the Lord's appearing is very near. I so desire—with all that is within my heart—that all be diligent in attendance upon Him, not fainting. Only in this way can we keep our garments, and so not be "ashamed before Him at His coming" (I Jn. 2:28; Rev. 16:15). Finally, I exhort you all to give careful attention to spiritual things. Your life and blessing from God depend upon it. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and cleave unto the Lord "with purpose of heart" (Mt. 6:33; Acts 11:23). —*Reprinted from the April 1968 issue of The Banner of Truth*

A Notice to our Subscribers

The Banner of Truth will end its Fortieth year with the January 2003 issue. It truly began as a labor of love by its founder and first editor Brother Fred O. Blakely and continues with Albert G. Stoner Jr. as editor for the last nine years. Brother Fred has since past on to his reward and has left us with this grand legacy. We are aware that we are stewards of this heritage. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). To continue many years in the future however it will depend on the proper management of the resources the Lord has provided.

Due to the rising costs involved in preparing, printing, and mailing The Banner of Truth, we are requesting a donation of fifteen dollars a year from each subscriber. (Some are already providing much more). Of course, if this proves to be a financial hardship, then continue at your present level of support. We also request that if any one receives the Banner, and does not read it, or have any use for it, to please notify us so we may remove your name from our mailing list. As a cost-saving measure we also will remove some names of people that we have not heard from for a period of time. If you stop receiving the paper and want to continue, then please notify us and we will gladly reinstate you to our mailing list. —*Dean Boelt Publication Manager and Correspondent*

The Desire of the Soul for God

By Dean Boelt

A Lord's Table Meditation

“As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God” (Ps. 42:1-2).

The hart panteth. The Psalmist expressed the desire of every devoted child of God. The allusion is to a deer that is distressed in a very dry and arid land, and is prey for hunters and predators. In its distress, the hart pants for brooks of water: cool, flowing, living, or life giving, waters. In our case, this is the time of our present distress in a very dry arid place here in this world. We have drunk of the living water that satisfies the soul. The soul that is born from above can not be satisfied with the stagnate, brackish waters of earth. It gives no life and is not pleasant to the taste of those that have entered the regeneration. That soul pants for living, flowing streams of water. The same can be said of the soul hungering after righteousness.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt. 5:6). To hunger and thirst after righteousness is the same as hungering and thirsting after God. God is our righteousness.

Those who have tasted of the heavenly gift and tasted of the good word of God cannot be satisfied with the paltry fare of earth. The body, which is of the earth, earthy, may subsist on this diet, but the soul of man, devoted to our Lord, can only be satisfied with the bread of heaven. As we come to the Lord's table we are, individually, as well as corporately, expressing our hunger and thirsting after the living God by eating of the bread of life and drinking the blood of the everlasting covenant.

The Indirectness of Spiritual Warfare

By Fred O. Blakley

Unquestionably, many of the spiritual back settings and defeats of the Lord's people are attributable more to ignorance in the art of the warfare in which they are engaged than to willful rebellion against God. They cannot, along with Paul, say with reference to Satan, “We are not ignorant of his devices” (II Cor. 2:11). Neither have they, as the Apostle desired for the Ephesians, come to know “the exceeding greatness” of God's power “to usward who believe,” and how to effectually wield it against the adversary of their souls (Eph. 1:15-23). As a result, such unlearned brethren seem to be “taken captive” by the Devil “at his will” (II Tim. 2:24-26), thus reproaching “the God of all grace” (I Pet. 5:10), by whom they ought to be always triumphing as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus (II Tim. 2:3-4). In view of this lamentable situation, any light that can be shed upon the technique of good warfare in Christ is in pressing demand, and can be used of God to the strengthening of His people in the Divine might, and so caused to redound to the praise of His glory.

The Essential Nature of the Case. Most important of this sort of enlightenment is that which concerns the fundamental nature of efficacious combat with Satan. This is precisely the point at which multitudes are misled, for since “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (II Cor. 10:4), they and their employment are clearly absurd to the natural mind and way (I Cor. 2:14). Accustomed to think and walk “as men” (I Cor. 3:3), the earthly-minded “babes in Christ” find it hard to conceive of—and much more difficult to adopt—the thoughts and ways of God (I Cor. 3:1). Having been thoroughly schooled by nature in “the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2), they

are slow to utterly renounce it and turn wholeheartedly to “the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 2:1), as they take up their new life in Him (Rom. 6:4). The tendency is rather to cleave to the procedure under law, seeking to fight and to achieve in one’s own strength, though the holy Scriptures, corroborated by millenniums of human experience, flatly and repeatedly proclaim the folly of the undertaking.

The great and precious secret of victorious spiritual conflict is the essential indirectness of its character. It is not by striving immediately against the Devil and sin that we can overcome. That is the way flesh would do battle, but it is not the manner of the Divine kingdom. The evil one is stronger and wiser than we, and it is against him, and his “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places,” that we are pitted (Eph. 6:12). Hence, if we are to triumph in the contest we must do so in a power that is superior to our own and Satan’s. That might belongs only to God. We are, accordingly, exhorted by Paul to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” It is only by donning “the whole armour of God” that we shall be able to “withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand” (Eph. 6:10-13). This being the case, the primary nature of our struggle in the clash with “that old serpent” is evident (Rev. 20:2). It is to be, like that of Jacob, a wrestling with God (Gen. 32:24-30)—as proclaimed by the Lord Jesus, a diligent labor for “that food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you” (Jn. 6:27). The “work of faith” is thus the bona fide “work of God,” and only they who persist in it may know the power and glory of the Divine reign (Jn. 6:28-29; I Th. 1:3).

The Unequivocal Doctrine of Scripture. That such indirectness of tactics is the rule of successful battle in the Lord’s army, Scripture makes abundantly plain. It is by being “stedfast in the faith,” proclaimed Peter, that we are to resist Satan (I Pet. 5:8-11). Our preservation unto the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” he apprised, is not by our own unaided efforts, but by “the power of God through faith” (I Pet. 1:3-5). Paul charged Timothy to “war the good warfare” by “the prophecies” which had “led the way” to him, that is, by the will and help of God, whose Spirit through the Prophets had set Timothy apart for his work at Ephesus. This he was to do, “holding faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning faith” (I Tim. 1:18-20, ASV). Further on in the same epistle, the Apostle reduced the whole matter of a victorious encounter with the Devil—the entire probationary experience in Christ—to the work of believing. “Fight the good fight of faith” he exhorted, “lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (I Tim. 6:12). In his second letter to his “son in the faith” (Phil. 2:19-23; I Tim. 1:2), Paul likewise gave faith the key position in the earthly conflict of the saint, as his own intrepid life for Christ passed in review before him. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” was his summary of the case (II Tim. 4:6-8). To the Galatians, he had made the same representation concerning the nature of the believer’s striving for the mastery. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16-18). The Romans were given the identical instructions. “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:12-14; cf. Heb. 9:14).

As we take up the previous pronouncements of Jesus Himself on the subject, it is readily apparent that He had laid the foundation of apostolic teaching at this point, as well as at all others. His chosen and empowered emissaries but echoed and elaborated what had begun “to be spoken by the Lord” (Heb. 2:3-4). “Without Me ye can do nothing,” He had forewarned (Jn. 15:5). However, “with God all things are possible,” He had declared (Mt. 19:26), and had gone on, in application of this verity, to assert, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk. 9:23; cf. Phil. 4:13). “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” the Savior was asked by the Jews. His answer was forthright and straight to the point. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (Jn. 6:28-29). That is to say, not only is faith in Jesus the spiritual means by which people come to God and so receive His salvation; it is also the essential method by which the Divine life is communicated to them, and so

works in and through them “that which is well-pleasing in His sight” (Jn. 20:30-31; Heb. 13:20-21).

The Resultant Strategy in Battle. In view of this kingdom economy, the proper strategy in our warfare with the Devil and the flesh is evident. We are to “stand fast in the faith,” cleaving unto the Lord “with purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23; I Cor. 16:13). The Godhead is our “strong tower from the enemy” (Ps. 61:3), and our “fortresses of rocks,” from which only we may invincibly engage him (Isa. 33:16, RSV). It was “through the eternal Spirit” that the Lord Jesus conquered in the days of His flesh (Heb. 9:14), and we follow in His steps. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I Jn. 5:4-5). If we are to prevail in battle, we must be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16-17). We must be given to know “the power of His resurrection” (Eph. 1:19-20; Phil. 3:10), and, as did the Apostle, experience its working in us “mightily” (Eph. 3:20; Col. 1:29). Only “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” can liberate us from “the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2-4; cf. Rev. 11:11), and give us the victory in our conflict. So it is not by our struggling directly against Satan and sin that we overcome. It is rather by seeking God and growing in His grace and knowledge. He that is in us will then do for us what we could not do for ourselves, putting to flight “the armies of the aliens,” and making us “more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37; Heb. 11:33-34).

Conclusion. The marvelous simplicity of this divinely-ordained technique of spiritual warfare seems to have obscured it from myriads. Its complete effectiveness is unimpeachably established, however, both by Scripture and in the laboratory of human experience. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is at once liberty and triumph (II Cor. 3:17-18; II Tim. 1:7). “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong” (Eccl. 9:11), but he who finds favor with God, he shall “divide the spoil” (Isa. 9:3; 53:12). “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,” and “do valiantly” in His might (Ps. 60:12; Isa. 40:28-31). Thus, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,” as saith the Scripture (Rom. 9:16).

Wonder of wonders are the ways of God! The only way to overcome the world and its prince is not by concentrating on it and him; it is by “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,” exhorteth the Lord; “for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:22; cf. Acts 4:12). In the Divine light, we not only are illuminated (Ps. 36:9), but the power of the Devil is brought to naught (I Cor. 1:28; Heb. 1:14-15; I Jn. 3:8). Let us, accordingly, seek “first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Mt. 6:33), and rout the evil one thereby. Such obliqueness of procedure is the only way we can confront him in power. —*Reprinted from the April 1968 issue of The Banner of Truth*

Banner Website is Under Construction

www.banner.org

The Banner of Truth Website <www.banner.org> is presently under construction. We will be reactivating *The Question and Answer Board* in the site, as well as *Letters to the Editor*. We will make ourselves available to answering questions related to the Scriptures and godly living. Several of our brethren will be assisting in this endeavor: Dean Boelt, Michael and Sharon Zaucha, William Parsons, Robert Cobb, and Lyn Wellsand.

In the coming months we also plan to update and expand the site to include a section for German and Russian speaking people. The editor has studied both the German and Russian languages and desires to use his abilities to minister the truth to people speaking those languages. We covet your prayers as we seek to shine the light of the glorious gospel of Christ in these regions of the globe where gross darkness is yet covering the people. —*Editor*

In Remembrance Till He Comes

By Dan Brueck

Psalm 8 begins “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!” After the psalmist considers the wondrous work of God in creation, he asks “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps. 8:4). “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (vs. 5). The psalmist continues on to describe the dominion of man over these earthly works of God’s hands. “Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the fields; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea” (vs. 6-8).

Years in time later, in “the fulness of time,” came a man spoken of by the writer of the book of Hebrews, promising that the earth would one day, in a full sense, be put under a man—the man Christ Jesus. “But now we see not yet all things put under Him” (Heb. 2:8). The time that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess has not yet come. Jesus, made in the form as a man, thus became for a little time lower than the angels. The difference in this man, which set Him apart from every other man, is noted in vs. 9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.” Christ purposed to die for men, that they might be lifted to heavenly places in Him (Eph. 2:6). He submitted Himself to the will of His Father, and thereby, to cruel and unjust men. Vs. 10 reveals this purpose, “For it became Him,” it was fitting and effective, “in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect,” complete, “through sufferings.” Christ is our Captain; the One who leads, originates, initiates and follows through. He is also spoken of in a like manner as the “Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). Not only does He provide for our eternity, but also there is immediate blessing as noted in vs. 11: “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Let us then, as brethren, thank Him for the privilege extended to us to be partakers of this table, to “eat this bread” and “drink this cup,” in remembrance until He comes. —*Brother Brueck serves as a deacon at First Christian Church*

Tapes and CD’s of this past Year’s Refreshing Waters Renewal. For those desiring tapes or CD’s of this year’s Refreshing Waters Renewal, you may contact: Aaron and Barbara Hutchcraft, 514 Arch St., Cartersville, MO 64835. Telephone: (417) 673-5933. Their e-mail address is: <heirstogether@mymailstation.com>. The theme of the Renewal for this year was “The Will of God.” Video recordings of the meetings are also available through Robert Cobb. You may contact him through Aaron and Barbara Hutchcraft at the address already given. —*Editor*

For all that God in mercy sends —
For health and children, home and friends;
For comforts in the time of need,
For every kindly word or deed,
For happy thoughts and holy talk,
For guidance in our daily walk —
In everything give thanks!

—*Author Unknown*

Christ Suffered Being Tempted For Us

By Michael Zaucha

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (Jn. 1:1-3). Scripture tells us little about the time before “in the beginning,” before “God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), before the heavens were stretched out, before the foundations of the earth were laid (Isa. 51:13). But from the John one text, we see that the Word was there, and He is God. We also see another person, the One that would later be revealed to us as the Father; He was there, and He is God. We are later shown another, the Holy Spirit, and He too was there, and He too is God. Together, they were all actively involved in bringing into being everything that came into being. They were together before “in the beginning.”

Something then, had occurred that changed this order; for we are told “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14), and “you shall call His name Jesus” (Mt. 1:21). God has since revealed to us it was because of His creation, man, that this had to happen, for man had sinned against God. But, thankfully, we are also told “I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you (back to Myself) with lovingkindness” (Jer. 31:3). However, in order for this to occur, our sin had to be put away. Angels could not do this for us, neither could the blood of bulls and goats, nor the death of any created thing. The required payment for the debt of our sin was the death of a righteous or sinless man, and none was able. And so, we learn, “although He (the Word) existed in the form of God, (He) did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:6-8). God Himself, the Word, in the person of Jesus Christ, took on the form of man in order to take away our sin and bring us back to the Father. We are told this had to happen in this manner; “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

As wonderful and glorious a truth as this is, there is much more to be seen here. The redemption of man was so costly to God, and His desire for us “to hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end” (Heb. 3:14), “He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’” (Heb.13:5). God would provide us with One that could help in our time of need; One that is able to come to the aide of those who are tempted. So, our Lord Jesus Christ had to suffer being tempted.

God Himself, the Word, in the person of Jesus Christ, suffered temptations in order to be “able to come to the aid of those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:18). The temptations that Jesus suffered were very real temptations. They were life and death temptations. Jesus choosing God’s way would lead to life for us; His choosing Satan’s way would lead to eternal death for us. But by the grace and strengthening of the Father, Jesus always and every time chose God’s way. In Matthew chapter four, “Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” After fasting for forty days and forty nights, He became hungry. His earthly body was crying out for sustenance; it needed nourishment to survive. “And the tempter came and said to Him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones become bread’” (Mt. 4:3). Jesus had to beat down the lust of His flesh in order to keep from sinning. And by the grace of God, He did that. Then, when Satan “showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me,’” Jesus, again, had to put His flesh into submission to God, to resist the devil, and He did. Our Lord literally felt the war of His “flesh

lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Gal. 5:17); like we do. Jesus had to depend on the Father’s grace and mercy to overcome His temptations; like we do. And He had to suffer them right up to the moment of His death; like we do. As Jesus hung dying on the cross, His body beaten and scourged, “His body marred more than any man” (Isa. 52:14), at the very weakest point of His earthly life, a final temptation to suffer, a final temptation to stop Christ from redeeming all of mankind: “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Mt. 27:40). But by the grace of God, Jesus endured the cross!

So exhort yourself, and all who will hear: “Let us consider Him who endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that we may not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb. 12:3).

Our Burden God’s Gift

Thy burden is God’s gift,
And it will make thee calm and strong.
Yet, lest it press too heavily and long,
He says: “Cast it on me,
And it shall easy be.”

And those who heed this voice
And seek to give it back in trustful prayer,
Have quiet hearts that never can despair,
And hope lights up the way,
Upon the darkest day.

Take thou thy burden thus
Into thy hands and lay it at His feet,
And whether it be sorrow or defeat
Or pain or sin or care,
Leave it calmly there.

It is the lonely load
That crushes out the light of Heaven;
But borne with Him, the soul, forgiven,
Sings out through all the days
Her joy and God’s high praise.

—*Frances Ridley Havergal*

In All Things and In All Points

In All Things Made Like unto His Brethren. “Wherefore IN ALL THINGS it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). Christ Jesus was *in everything made like us* and, as well, He was *in all points tempted*. Christ “had to be made like his brothers IN EVERY WAY” (NIV). Christ “had to be made like his brethren IN EVERY RESPECT” (RSV). Christ “had to become like his brothers and sisters IN EVERY RESPECT” (NRS). “It behoved” Christ “IN ALL THINGS to be made like unto his brethren” (DRA). “It was necessary for” Christ “to be made like his brothers IN EVERY WAY” (BBE). “He had to become like his brothers IN EVERY WAY” (NAB). “It was necessary for Jesus to be IN EVERY RESPECT LIKE US” (NLT). “It was essential that he should in this way be made COMPLETELY LIKE HIS BROTHERS” (NJB).

The Scripture again and again stresses the matter of Christ’s identification with us. Of old it

was prophesied that His blessed Name would be called “Emmanuel,” which being interpreted is, “God with us” (Mt. 1:23; cf. Isa. 7:14). Truly in former times, Jehovah was “with Israel,” so long as the chosen nation was “with Him” (II Chron. 15:2), to defend, protect, and aid. But when “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14), of a surety it could be said, from that point on, that “God” is “with us,” that is, *with our race* in a sense never before known by mortal men. He is “not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27), as the Apostle Paul declared to the Athenians on Mars’ Hill. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (v. 28).

This nearness of God to men can be seen particularly at the Cross, where “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:19). That is to say, “God was in Christ making peace between the world and Himself, not putting their sins to their account [not holding anyone’s faults against them (NJB)], and” has “given to us the preaching of this news of peace” (BBE). It only remains for men to believe the good news of “all manner of sin and blasphemy” (Mt. 12:31) being remitted by Him and thus being “forgiven unto men,” and earnestly take hold of it for themselves.

The blessed resultant effect of the putting away of sins by Christ can be seen in the following declarations found in the Revelation. Speaking of the vast multitude of redeemed personalities, it was declared unto John by the angel, “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (Rev. 7:15). And again, later it is affirmed, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

In All Points Tempted Like as We Are. As the consideration of the extent to which the Savior was tempted “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 8:15) has been a point where men have sometimes strayed in their thinking, let us affirm here that we are always standing on a solid foundation when we are able to express Bible things with the very words of the Scripture. Wherever men seek to improve upon the words of Scripture with their own words, or with the words of other men, this introduces a very precarious situation. Whatever comments men make upon Scripture, they must be able to seamlessly express and affirm using the very words of Scripture, otherwise it is open to question whether what they are saying ought even to be said, much less, listened to.

Instead of attempting to “say it better than Scripture,” let us simply devote ourselves to getting the very words of Scripture inside of us. The Holy Spirit will then enlarge these words to our minds and hearts, when they are believed. “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Christ “has been TEMPTED IN EVERY WAY, just as we are—yet was without sin” (NIV, NIB). He “IN EVERY RESPECT HAS BEEN TEMPTED as we are, yet without sin” (RSV). He “has been TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS as we are, yet without sin” (NASB). He “has similarly (to us) been TESTED IN EVERY WAY, yet without sin” (NAB). If men’s theology ever forces them to take the position that Christ was not tempted in every way, and in all things, then let such ones have the honesty to acknowledge that they are fighting against the words of the Scripture.

With regard to the matter at hand, that is, of Christ being “in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin,” let us also say that considerations such as this, as well as many others, must become more than a mere viewpoint of Scripture to us, else they will not bolster us up in the warfare of faith. If we are *not* receiving the Divinely-afforded succor and support in our times of temptation and trial, we simply have not believed that Christ was “tempted in every way, yet without sin” (NAB). If men fail to see the preciousness of the connection between our temptations and His temptation, they are either dull of hearing, or unbelieving, or both. We are tempted in all points, but so was Christ. We are tempted in every way, but so was the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. We are tempted in every respect, but, more importantly, the Savior was

too. We are tested in every way, but so was our Forerunner, who has now entered into Heaven itself to make intercession for us. —*Editor*

Walk About Zion

“Walk about Zion, and go around her; count her towers; consider her ramparts; go through her palaces [her citadels, NIV]; that you may tell it to the next generation” (Ps. 48:12-13, NASB). “How blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; In whose heart are the highways to Zion!” (Ps. 84:5, NASB). “They [see v. 5] go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion” (v. 7, ASV). “The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah” (Ps. 87:2-3, KJV). “You (that are in Christ) have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22, NASB).

In the minds and hearts of redeemed personalities the name *Zion* strikes at a very tender cord. Zion, the city of the living God, is their eternal home, the place to which they are presently sojourning as they live and walk by faith. Even now to such individuals, Zion is the impregnable citadel of refuge to which we may “continually resort” (cf. Ps. 71:3). The thoughtful consideration of the palaces of Zion, along with her towers and ramparts, by the people of God, reminds them anew that the eternal God is their Refuge, and that underneath are the everlasting arms (cf. Deut. 33:27).

As the people of God regularly meet together to edify one another and to speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, they are assisting one another, in mind and heart, to take a walk about Zion, and to consider the mighty towers, the ramparts, and the citadels, with which God is shielding them in the salvation which is Christ Jesus. Such individuals know all the thoroughfares to Zion, and by faith they frequently resort thither, traversing these blessed highways in mind and heart. The due consideration of Zion enables even weak and vacillating souls to become strong once again, yea, even to go “from strength to strength” (cf. Ps. 84:7). What a glorious city Zion is to the people of God! How greatly to be envied are those individuals who are “born there” (Ps. 87:5-6), who can call the living God their heavenly Father, and Heaven their home! —*Editor*

About Following Christ

“Matthew, look up; you are called! City man, you are called! Partner, you are called! Cashier, you are called! Don’t you hear? Called! Answer to the call. Business men, Christ walks into business, and calls men by His grace while sitting at the seat of custom. He is instant in season, and out of season. Now, the 28th verse: ‘And Matthew left all, rose up, and followed Him.’ My hearers, I have told you often from this pulpit unless God had spoken in this Book I had no message to men. My whole stock-in-trade is just to repeat what He has said. This only is the witchcraft I have used. Look at it. ‘And he left all, rose up, and followed Jesus.’ If that entry has not been made in your spiritual biography and diary, your life has not been worth living up till now. I dare to repeat it, and look into your face. With all your abilities, your years, honors, successes, unless that red-letter entry can be put beside your name, your life is a wretched failure up to now. ‘He left all, rose up, and followed Christ.’ Then he began to live; never till then. The life received meaning and purpose.” —*McNeill, from The Sage Digital Library*

Refreshing Waters Renewal 2003

Theme: The Grace of God

Clermont Christian Church, Indianapolis

The dates for the next Refreshing Waters Renewal are July 29-31, 2003. The church address is: Clermont

Christian Church, 9204 Crawfordsville Road,
Indianapolis, IN 46234

The theme for the upcoming Renewal is "The Grace Of God." The following are sermon topics to be ministered in the Clermont meetings:

1. Continuing in the Grace of God — (Acts 13:43)
2. Recommended to the Grace of God — (Acts 14:26; 15:40)
3. The Gospel of the Grace of God — (Acts 20:24)
4. The Grace of God Has Abounded Much More — (Rom. 5:15)
5. The Grace of God Makes Us What We are in Christ — (I Cor. 15:10)
6. Receive Not the Grace of God in Vain — (II Cor. 6:1)
7. I Do Not Frustrate the Grace of God — (Gal. 2:21)
8. The Grace of God Brings Salvation — (Tit. 2:11)
9. The Grace of God Effectively Teaches — (Tit. 2:12-13)
10. Jesus Tasted Death For Every Man by the Grace of God — (Heb. 2:9)
11. Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God — (I Pet. 4:10)
12. Standing in the True Grace of God — (I Pet. 5:12)
13. Believing Through Grace — (Acts 18:27)
14. Everlasting Consolation and Good Hope Through Grace — (II Th. 2:16)
15. Salvation by Grace Through Faith — (Eph. 2:8)
16. It is By Faith That it Might be by Grace — (Rom. 4:16)
17. The Word of His Grace — (Acts 14:3; 20:32)
18. Justified Freely by His Grace — (Rom. 3:24)
19. Grace is Exceeding Abundant With Faith and Love — (I Tim. 1:14)
20. The Exceeding Riches of His Grace — (Eph. 2:7)
21. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ — (II Cor. 9:8)

We will have more information regarding this year's Renewal in the coming issues, as it becomes available to us. —*Editor*

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