

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

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INTRODUCTION.

Some may ask, "What has the temptation of Christ got to do with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of spiritual gifts?" A simple examination of the Scripture gives the answer, the temptation of Christ followed immediately upon His 30 years of preparation for His mission, and His baptism in water and the Spirit at Jordan. The temptation of Christ shows the connection between spiritual preparation, temptation, spiritual maturity and a mighty baptism in the Spirit. Before God can give great power to a Christian, or give them a great ministry gift, there has to be a time of preparation, and a development of character by facing the difficulties of life with God. God will not give the power to shake a country to young Christians, or Christians who are not spiritually mature. Eph.4v11. Heb.5v14. Lk.6v40. ("perfect" means "mature" or "full-grown.")

Paul warns against a novice taking office in the Church. 1Tim.3v6. The Lord said to one prophet, "You cannot teach Pentecostal babes supernatural things, it will only result in carnal impersonations." Some experience and maturity is essential before a person can be entrusted with the great ministry gifts of Christ. Moses had 80 years of preparation for his tremendous task. David had about 15 bitter years after his anointing, to prepare him for the throne of Israel. Other leaders of God's people had less preparation, but preparation they certainly had, the greater the task, the more difficult and intensive will be the preparation. In the case of Christ Jesus, who had the supreme task to accomplish, there were 30 years of preparation in the School of life and the school of God, and what tremendous trials and difficulties He had to overcome.

I am not saying that a Christian has to have many years of preparation, or be mature, before they can expect to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the "greater gifts," for a Christian can receive a very blessed baptism in the Spirit soon after their conversion. However, to be greatly used of God in the mightier "powers of the age to come," demands some maturity of character, or disaster is inevitable, the Scripture tells us of many cases of spiritual shipwreck, when mature servants of God began to live carelessly. 2Tim.4v10. Heb.6v5. God will not give unlimited spiritual dynamite to spiritual babes, He will give them a measure of power and blessing which is precious and wonderful, but mighty workings of the Holy Spirit will be wisely given to those, who because of their maturity of character, are better able to stand the perils of great power. The Spirit gives His gifts "severally as He wills," and this giving is based on His wisdom. Apostolic, prophetic, teaching, or great evangelistic ministries are not given to those who are young in the faith, these ministries demand a real maturity. This maturity does not mean the ability to preach or take a lead in the administrative work of the Church, and the failure to realise this has been disastrous for the Church. Many "leaders" in the work of God are good administrators, but they are less spiritually minded than the flocks they "guide," and so they are totally unable to lead their charges into an experience of spiritual gifts and the deep things of God.

Some may ask, "How long does a person have to be a Christian before they can be considered spiritually mature?" This depends entirely upon a Christian's consecration; some Christians mature more in two years than others do in twenty. **The apostles matured quickly under the wonderful guidance, inspiration and example of our dear Lord Jesus,** and converts who have spiritual supervision of a high spiritual character can also develop quickly in the "powers of the age to come." Christian fellowship is still almost certainly the greatest influence upon Christian growth, for better or for worse. Growth in Pentecostal experience, and in this I include Christian Character, can only be fully achieved in a Holy Ghost guided and inspired fellowship. A Holy Ghost ministry demands a Holy Ghost fellowship. There are many pretenders today, but a truly New Testament church will have the characteristics of Christ's New Testament Church.

In saying that a Christian must be mature before they can expect to have the greater ministries of 1Cor.12v28. and Eph.4v11., I am not saying that only the mature Christian can expect manifestations of the greater gifts. A comparatively young person or young convert can have really blessed words of wisdom and knowledge that can warn or instruct themselves or the local church, however, the ministry of these gifts will be more defensive than offensive. Pentecostal babes, like human babes, take a while to grow, and they have to be trained by their Heavenly Father in the use of their spiritual gifts. We should remember that it is an iniquitous thing to place upon a young Christian a burden of responsibility in God's work for which they are not ready and have not got the spiritual resources to meet.

Though the Lord does not give great ministries like those of Elijah or Moses to young converts or immature Christians, these Christians have a vital part to play in the spiritual life of the church, they can have a powerful prayer- life. Through prevailing prayer, both in their own tongue and the gift of tongues, they can cause the whole atmosphere of a church to be changed, and the greater ministries of the Church to operate effectively. Paul asked the Christians at Ephesus to pray for him so that he could preach and minister as God intended. Eph.6v18,19,20. Paul knew that a mighty ministry of the Spirit and the Word of God depended on the less prominent members of the body of Christ praying him through. I have known the whole atmosphere of a church to be changed by one Christian exercising the ministry of prayer. Those of you who feel that you have not much to contribute to the church in preaching and teaching, etc., exercise this greatest of ministries and pray the church through into victory. Do not make the fatal mistake of thinking that your prayers are merely a little talent to be buried and forgotten, "Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon their knees." Pray that God will bring and keep the greater ministries in His Church. Let us all pray, the victory of the Church depends upon our intercessions. Remember that when Finney received his baptism in the Spirit immediately after his conversion, it moved the whole area around. He did not manifest the great powers of the New Testament ministries through the gifts of power or revelation, but he did bring a spirit of revival by his prayer and consecration. Let us all take up this challenge and pray and pray again until Christ's Church is revived, the

young and old in the faith have all got a vital part to play.

Another lesson that the temptation of Christ teaches us, is that whether we be a young convert, or a mature Christian, Satan will come against us to rob us of our experience, even as he tried to rob Christ of His experience. There will always be a conflict with the powers of darkness when we try to attain the experiences promised to us by God, and once we have received the promises of God we will find that we have to fight to keep what God has given to us. The conflict that we will have will vary greatly in its intensity, but conflict there is sure to be. We have to walk with God and abide under the shadow of the Almighty to defeat Satan. Ps.91v1.

Let us now consider the life of Christ from His birth to His temptation and see how His Father prepared Him for His task. It will enlighten and encourage us and show us many important spiritual principles.

1. The Life of Jesus at Nazareth.

Nazareth was a place of no account in history, it is not mentioned in the Old Testament, or by the Talmud or Josephus. In the New Testament it is only spoken of in contempt, "Can there come any good thing out of Nazareth?" Jn.1v46. This was spoken by Nathanael, whose judgement was so pure and just, that he received what is probably the most remarkable commendation that Christ ever gave to anyone, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Jn.1v47. Nazareth was part of Galilee and Galilee was called "Galilee of the Gentiles" because of its mixed population of Jewish and foreign nations. All of Galilee was looked down upon by the Jews of Judea, and there was certainly some reason for it, for the Scripture itself speaks of it as a place of gross spiritual darkness. Is.9v1. with Mt.4v13-16. In this obscure and in many peoples eyes, contemptible place, Christ spent the vast majority of His life, and triumphed over the gross sin and great spiritual darkness, and lived a perfect sinless life.

Christ had the problem of managing the family business for several years at Nazareth, for it appears that Mary's husband, Joseph, had died and we can see that Christ was called the carpenter of the village. Mt.13v53-58. Mk.6v1-6. (The Greek word "tekton" was used of stone-masons and workers in metal as well as those who worked as carpenters.) The fact that Christ was the carpenter squashes the theory that Christ was the youngest son of Joseph, and the only son of Mary, and that all the other children of Joseph were born by a previous marriage. The oldest son, not the youngest, was the natural successor to his Father's title and trade. The fair and obvious interpretation of Mt.13v53-58. and Mk.6v1-6., is that the local people looked upon James, Joses, Simon and Jude, and at least three sisters, (notice "all" not "both"), as the sons and daughters of both Joseph and Mary. In spite of the demands placed upon Christ's time and energy by the family business, He prepared for the mission that His Father had sent Him to do, which in itself was a most tremendous feat and victory.

Christ also triumphed gloriously over the contemptuous familiarity and unbelief that His towns-folk and family felt over His mission. It is clearly shown in the Bible. that after a few years of great expectation in the home of the Lord Jesus and among His relatives that He was the Messiah, there was a complete and dramatic slump in their faith. Many probably felt that Mary had made up a story to cover up her sin when things did not go as they expected. This was certainly the explanation of the people at Nazareth, an explanation which the Pharisees were glad to find and throw in the face of Christ, they said, "We are not born of fornication." Jn.8v41. The Lord Jesus had to live the whole of His life under this cloud. The only person to keep a measure of faith in Christ was Mary, for she knew that Christ's birth was miraculous, the New Testament Scriptures show the unbelief of the rest of the family over the claims of Christ.

a. In Lk.2v43. we read that the Lord Jesus stopped behind in Jerusalem when His parents left. The 12 year old Christ knew the anxiety and sorrow that this would cause, but He had to have some Scriptural answers to His problems from the theologians at the Temple, it was vitally important to His mission. The Lord Jesus either asked His parents for a talk with the doctors of theology at the "Bible School" at the Temple and was refused, or His Heavenly Father told Christ that the only thing that He could do was to take this desperate measure. The way that Christ had to act was certainly a desperate measure, it shows that His parents were totally out of touch with the mission of Christ and that their faith in the prophecies given to them had failed.

Their faith in Christ's mission and their appreciation of His ministry was so weak, or even non-existent, that when Christ spoke about His Father's business in v49, the Scriptures state that "they understood not the sayings which He spake unto them." v50. One can feel the tremendous sense of frustration and heartbreak in the words of Christ, "How is it that ye sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" After all that God had told them, their faith had failed. They would certainly have understood what the Lord Jesus meant if their faith in the mission of Christ had still been in existence. The Scripture says, to Mary's credit, that she "treasured all these things in her heart," however, this shows that the family were no longer talking about, or believing in, any of their former expectations of Christ Jesus.

b. In Jn.7v5. we read that "neither did His brethren believe in Him," and this is confirmed by Ps.69v8,9,20,21., a Messianic psalm that tells us how the coming Christ was "a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." Verses 20 and 21 of the same psalm show the anguish of heart that this loneliness of spirit and lack of comfort brought to Christ. Though these verses are connected with the cleaning of the Temple, Jn.2v20., and the crucifixion, Jn.19v28., they also show a deep unbelief in the family of Christ. v10-12,

c. Perhaps the most striking Scripture to show this blatant unbelief is in Mk.3v21-35., Christ's mother and brothers set out from home to seize Him and to take Him home saying that He was mad. It seems that this was the result of angering the Pharisees. Mk.3v6,22. The Lord tells them plainly that the thing that God required, is a determination to do the will of God. The Lord strongly implies that His family had not been doing the will of God, and that He had suffered for many years as a result of this and their unbelief.

d. The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus went to Nazareth twice during His ministry, and on both occasions He was slighted, slandered, abused and rejected. On the first occasion they even tried to kill Him, and the second time they were offended and full of unbelief. Lk.4v16-30. Mk.6v1-6. N.B. v4. The Lord said a striking thing, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country and among his own relatives, and in his own home."

The reason for the failure of Mary and Joseph to understand Christ's mission.

The Lord Jesus was without doubt helped by the godly lives of Joseph and Mary, but they fell into rank unbelief over the mission of Christ, and the reasons for this seem to be as follows.

a. The time lapse from the prophecies they had received to their fulfilment. When the powerful spiritual anointing that comes with such revelations has gone, we have to continue to believe in what God has told us even in circumstances that seem to deny His Word. To believe that God had sent His Son to live in obscurity took some believing, and when the years went by and nothing seemed to happen, the promises that had been given to them looked like a tantalising but unreal mirage, and by the time the Lord was twelve they could not understand or believe in Christ's mission.

b. We are told in Is.53v1., that the character and humiliation of Christ was going to stumble nearly everybody, and that He was going to be despised and rejected of men. Almost everybody had the wrong idea of the Christ; they expected a mighty warrior, a liberator from Rome's power, but they got a meek and lowly Jesus, they rightly expected "the mighty God," but forgot that He was the Price of peace. Is.9v6. They did not get a warrior or leader like Moses or David, and it caused their faith to fail. The character, ministry and humiliation of Christ, not only stumbled His family, it also stumbled John Baptist and his disciples, Christ's own disciples, and in fact nearly everybody. Simeon and Mary of Bethany were perhaps the only two who realised that the Lord Jesus had to die. Lk.2v28-34. Jn.12v2-8. Even after the resurrection Christ's disciples were expecting Him to take up arms against the Romans, so ingrained were their wrong expectations of the Christ. Acts.1v6,7.

c. Jesus was a holy man, not a soldier. He did not delight in the things that everybody else delighted in; war against the Romans, the pride of life, self-will, etc. Jesus did not revile when He was reviled, in fact He turned the other cheek, there was none of the self-assertiveness of an Antichrist, and the people were looking for that kind of man. Jn.5v24,43. People today think that you are mad if you don't seek your own ends, and human nature has always been the same. Christ was completely unselfish, He had no sin and lived a perfect life, this beautiful life was a constant rebuke to the lives of those around Him, and brought either the displeasure and hatred of men, or their scorn. Ps.69v10-12. Christ's character was the very opposite to what almost everybody expected of the Messiah. Gentleness, love and forgiveness were not the attributes most Israelites expected or desired in their Messiah, they wanted a victorious soldier not a holy man. The wonderful thing is that the Lord Jesus triumphed gloriously over the depressing spiritual standards of Nazareth, and the unbelief of His family and the rest of the Israelites, we can only say with heartfelt thanks and praise, "Hallelujah, what a Saviour."

Christ's Preparation and Training by His Father for His Mission.

Why did the Lord Jesus never sin? Why did He have such a wonderful ministry? If we say that it was because He was the Son of God and was incapable of failure, we rob Him of His glory and make His trials and temptations a farce. The Scriptures clearly tell us that the Lord Jesus on many occasions found it very difficult to do the will of His Father. When the Lord Jesus "emptied Himself," Phil.2v7. Greek, "ekenosen," and became flesh, He laid Himself open to all the difficulties, trials and temptations that come to man. Jn.1v14. Heb.2v14,18. 4v15. Rom.1v3. The Lord Jesus was not bound to grow up pure and perfect, Christ could not be prayerless, or neglect the Scriptures, or live carelessly in any way and escape the consequences. He led a diligent, spiritual and careful life, He fulfilled the beatitudes at Nazareth before He preached them at the sermon on the mount. The Lord Jesus knew that to live right you had to feed on and live every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God the Father. The growth of Christ's character was not automatic, He responded to the grace of God. Lk.2v40,52. Christ's temptation in the wilderness and His agony in the garden of Gethsemane were no pretence or sham, Christ was not play-acting, He was having the most dreadful, agonising, greasy pole fights of faith. The Lord Jesus had the most awful conflicts with evil powers of darkness, and His glory is, that though He felt the limitations, trials and temptations of the flesh, He went through in victory for our sakes. The Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of man again and again, this was doubtless a hint to His hearers that He was the great personage of Dan.7v13,14., but it is also an indication of how our Lord felt the limitations of the flesh. Christ had to prepare for His ministry and the tremendous task of redemption, let us see how He did it.

a. The Lord Jesus prepared for His mission by meditation in the Scriptures.

To become flesh the Lord Jesus had to empty Himself of all His wisdom and knowledge, and so he had to learn again the truth that He had known in heaven. Lk.2v40,52. The Lord Jesus would first learn about His mission from what His mother and relatives told Him. He would hear about the angels that visited Mary and Joseph, Zachariah, and the shepherds, and how Simeon and Anna recognised Him as the Messiah, and without a doubt Zachariah and Elizabeth were a tremendous help to the young Saviour. Lk.1 and2.

There must also have come to the young Christ a similar revelation to the one that the young Samuel experienced long before. It was probably the Father that revealed Himself to the Son in His younger years and tell Him His identity and His mission more explicitly, for one cannot believe that the child Samuel would have a greater spiritual experience as a child than the Lord Jesus. 1Sam.3v1-21. Christ's communion and fellowship with the Father was perfect, complete and unique, for there was no shadow of sin between them. Jn.10v14,15,37,38.

Though the Lord Jesus learned a great deal by supernatural revelation from His Father, He also learned a lot about His mission from the Scriptures. He said to His disciples, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Lk.24v25., and he said to His enemies, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Mt.22v29. Mk.12v24,27. The Lord Jesus loved the Scriptures and during the 30 years at Nazareth He was continually meditating on them, and planning His life around them. Our Lord was living a life that was devoted to the task that lay ahead of Him, and by prayer and meditation He prepared Himself for it. We are told in Is.49v1-7., that the Father prepared His Son in secret for the task that lay ahead of Him. "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword," speaks of wisdom, Christ was an able exponent of the Scriptures, He was able to discern between good and evil. Heb.4v12,13. "A polished shaft," speaks of obedience, the Lord Jesus went where His Father aimed Him, there was no flaw in His character, no spiritual weakness, no ignorance or lack of wisdom and knowledge that would cause any deviation from the target.

In Is.50v3-5. we again see the Creator and Controller of the universe in the position of the pupil, being taught by the Father the things that he needed to know. In Lk.2v40,52. we read that the Lord Jesus "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him," and "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." The Lord Jesus grew in spiritual strength and knowledge until at 30 He was "full of grace and truth," He had a beautiful and gracious disposition and a mind that was full of truth," Jn.1v14.

b. The Lord Jesus prepared for His task by a victorious prayer life.

The disciples were impressed by Christ's prayer life and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Lk.11v1-13. They saw the blessed results of His intercessions, they saw the wondrous communion that Christ the only begotten Son had with His Father, and the disciples longed to have this same blessed experience and ministry. This mighty praying and blessed communion were the results of many years of spiritual discipline.

Christ's early morning prayer times and nights of prayer were means of grace that the Lord Jesus used at Nazareth, they were the habit of years of devoted praying. Have you thought how difficult it must have been for the Lord Jesus to have had a time of prayer and meditation? He would doubtless pray and meditate as He worked, but He would also need those times of private prayer and meditation which are essential for a close walk with God. To get these times of private prayer Christ would have to get up early or stay up late, for the family business would keep Him occupied during the day. Those who have tried late nights of prayer or whole nights of prayer, or even early morning prayer times, know what a strain this can be on one's health, and we must use our common- sense and not do too much, or we can weaken our bodies and become ill, and this is not glorifying to God.

As He prayed the Lord Jesus thought of the task that lay ahead of Him, the cross was always in His mind, and as He meditated and prayed He became increasingly aware of its implications. The one thought on His mind was "I must not fail, my Father is relying on me, for the sake of those who will be saved through me I must go through with the task of redemption." What a tremendous task lay before Him, but He was utterly devoted to our salvation and well-being, even at Nazareth Christ was feeling the burden of our sins and the enormous responsibility of our salvation.

Christ won through because He absolutely depended on His Father, there was no self-reliance. Prayer is really an expression for our helplessness and our need of the help of God. Christ said, "As the living Father has sent me, and as I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even shall he live by me." Jn.6v57. Christ said that He lived by faith in the Father and by the life of the Father, and He said that we are to depend on Him as He depended on the Father. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal.2v20. The Lord Jesus won through because of His great humility, He realised the limitations of the flesh, and so entirely depended on and trusted in the grace of His Father. Very often, the trouble with ourselves is that we feel that we can manage with just a little of God's help, and then we lean on the arm of the flesh, however, the Lord Jesus relied on His Father all the time and not on Himself. Jn.5v30. 7v17. 12v49,50. 14v24.

Dependence on God is absolutely necessary or pride comes in, especially in relation to Pentecostal experience. If we try to do anything in our own strength, pride comes in and the result very often is a wretched and dry spiritual experience that is very humbling. It is easier for a nobody to depend on God alone than a very naturally talented person. A very able person finds it difficult not to rely on those abilities, and though these abilities may be greatly blessed of God when a person walks humbly with the Lord, when pride comes in and the blessing of the Lord is missing there inevitably is a barrenness. Natural talent or ability cannot make up for the blessing of God, and we are never in a more dangerous position than when we feel that we can make it on our own. 1Cor.1v26-31. 2v13-16. 2Cor.11v22-30. 12v6-12. The Lord Jesus never felt self-sufficient, He never went

His own way, He always sought the guidance and blessing of His Father in prayer, and by the Word of God and supernatural revelation and visions His Father guided Him and informed Him of His desires. The Lord Jesus waited for the vision to be fulfilled and then did what His Father had shown Him in the vision. Jn.2v4. 4v3-5. 5v19-21,30. 7v8. 11v6. 13v1.

There is an inseparable link between a life of prayer and the will of God, it is only those who commune with God that can find and do His will. Christ prepared for His mission by doing the will of God at Nazareth. Christ did no miracles at Nazareth, but He did have words of wisdom and knowledge, and He got used to the operation of spiritual gifts of revelation at Nazareth. Mary must have seen real answers to prayer at Nazareth to say with such assurance, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Jn.2v5. Christ must have been a blessing to many at Nazareth even while working at the family business, and God can use us and prepare us for even greater things in God's will through our work life, home life and devotional life, as well as our church life. To prepare for his ministry John Baptist had many years of separation in the wilderness from life's pressures, but our dear Lord Jesus prepared for His mission and lived a perfect life in the pressures of business life, home life and the low standards of Nazareth. Hallelujah, what a wonderful Saviour!

We see that the Lord Jesus was prepared for His task by His Father. The Lord Jesus filled His mind with the Scriptures, and the Holy Spirit made those Holy Scriptures live to the Saviour. Christ, God the Word, had received these Scriptures from the Father and given them to the prophets of old. Christ at Nazareth meditated in those Scriptures, like the Psalmist of old He could say of His Father's Word, "Oh how I love Thy Law, it is my meditation all the day," and again, "The Law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold or silver." Ps.119v97,72. The Lord also learned to pray, and pray, and pray, and walk and live in communion with His Father. So real was His walk with His Father that he could say that His walk on earth was also a walk in heaven at the same time. Jn.3v13. Christ could say to His Father, "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee." Ps.42v1. The Lord knew the limitations of the flesh and the need to have implicit and unwavering trust in His Father's grace and goodness: He said from the true humility of His heart, I can of myself do nothing; as I hear I judge; and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Jn.5v30. Christ had loved to do His Father's will for the whole of His 30 years at Nazareth, and He could truly say, "I delight to do Thy will O my God: yea, thy Law is within My heart." Ps.40v7,8. Heb.10v5-9.

The importance of spiritual preparation in the work of God cannot be over-stressed, for spiritual preparation comes before any great power from God, and walking with God before any great work for God. The Church can never replace spiritual preparation, spiritual qualifications, and God's power, with human and intellectual qualifications and still remain a force for God. Social or political influence can never take the place of God's power. How often do we fail to put spiritual preparation, growth of character, and victory over temptation in their proper place in the work of God. However, again and again in His Word God shows us the necessity of all these things, and never more than in the case of His Son, Jesus Christ. We try so often to do great things for God without any spiritual preparation, and end up both defeated and powerless, and without accomplishing any real good in our Christian work. The complete dedication and spiritual preparation as illustrated by the life of Christ is the only way to the great victories that we see in the ministry of Christ and His early Church. Luther said that it took three things to make a Christian minister, prayer, meditation and temptation, and our dear Lord Jesus experienced all three of these in great measure before He started on His mission. We come now to our next main point.

2. TEMPTATION AND SPIRITUAL CONFLICT ARE INEVITABLE AFTER THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The temptation of Christ took place after His baptism in the Spirit at Jordan, and we can certainly expect a similar blast from the Wicked One after our baptism in the Spirit. Lk.3v21,22. 4v18,19. Jn.2v11. When the Lord Jesus received His baptism in the Spirit at Jordan, He was led by the Holy Spirit to taste six weeks of the most shattering, nerve-racking, soul-destroying temptation from the evil one. To be baptised in the Holy Spirit does not mean that life will be nothing but joy and gladness, in fact it almost always means that there will be new areas of conflict in the life. The baptism in the Spirit does bring joy and strength into the soul, but it also results in conflict with the powers of darkness. There will be an attack on our prayer life and our communion with God, and on occasions the conflict with Satan in prayer has to be experienced to be appreciated. The Lord Jesus spent the whole of these 40 days in prayer, yet they were a time of intense spiritual conflict, and sometimes when we set ourselves to pray and seek God we can experience a great battle with the powers of darkness, and we can have a real fight of faith and struggle to keep on believing and trusting God. Though we have these times of spiritual conflict, it does not mean that we lose God's presence during these conflicts. It is our communion with God that will take us through these times of conflict.

We can be sure that the Lord Jesus was praying about all the things that His future ministry would entail. Where to start His ministry, who would help Him in His ministry and be His disciples. We can also be sure that during this time the Father gave the Lord Jesus supernatural revelation and vision to direct Him on His path, and show Him the next steps to take after the temptation, for Christ never went ahead without this guidance from His Father. Jn.5v19,20,30. Sometimes in situations like these, and in times of spiritual conflict we may find it necessary to fast, as well as pray, to get the victory. However, we should remember that the Scripture says, "fast and pray," not "fast and work," the modern pressures of life can be a real strain on one's health without undermining it further by fasting and working. For the same reason long fasts are not desirable, however, the

semi-fast of Dan.1v7-18. and 10v1-7. can be a blessing on occasions. We should remember that it is God's desire that we should look after our bodies and keep them strong and well so that we can serve Him efficiently. Many Christians have lost many months, and even years of useful service for God through neglecting their health and over-straining their bodies, and the writer has unfortunately been one of them.

We shall find, as the Lord Jesus did, that when we receive great power and a ministry from God, burdens, responsibilities, and temptations will come upon us in a measure corresponding to the power we have received. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able, but we can expect some measure of Satanic opposition. 1Cor.10v12,13. God has always put His saints into the hands of the Devil, and they have always been sorely tried by the world, the flesh and the Devil, because spiritual conflict is very necessary for spiritual growth. Job.1 and 2. Lk.22v31,32. However, it is not enough for us to know that temptation and spiritual conflict is necessary, we should know why it is necessary, so let us see why it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to be tempted and we will see from some of the reasons why it is necessary for us to be tempted.

1. Christ's temptation proved that He was ready for His mission.

Temptation shows us whether we are ready for God's service, for temptation shows whether we can be trusted with spiritual power. Power has great perils and dangers, and until we have been in the school of temptation and come out with flying colours, God can hardly trust us with great spiritual power. The temptation was the final exam of the 30 years of preparation that Christ had gone through. The Lord Jesus and Satan had many conflicts in the previous 30 years, but this was Satan's all-out attack on the Saviour. God was allowing the teaching, experiences, character and life of the Lord Jesus to be put in the fiery furnace of temptation. Any selfish motives, hidden pride, love of admiration, unwillingness to suffer for others, and lack of faith in God would have shown themselves in this furnace of temptation, but the Saviour's character was proved to be pure gold without any alloy. To use another metaphor, Christ was put through Satan's sieve, but no chaff could be found.

Woe betide us if when the day of temptation comes, we are not steeped in the Word of God and are without any spiritual preparation, and we have a powerful foe and we need a real and deep spiritual experience to defeat the wiles of the Devil. If in the pride of our hearts we think that we can attack the kingdom of Satan without any spiritual preparation, we shall be like the house that is built on the sand that had no foundation, and great will be our fall. Even the Lord Jesus did not face this Satanic attack without any preparation, He put on the whole armour of God, and we must do the same if we are to stand in the evil day and not be utterly defeated. Eph.6v10-20. The Lord Jesus warns us in the parable of the sower that the shallow hearted person will "fall away" in time of temptation, due to a lack of a deep work of grace in the heart. The heart has got to have preparation and cultivation if we are to be spiritually safe. Lk.8v6,13. Prov.4v20-23. Mt.13v6,21. By the grace of God we can overcome the wiles of the Devil. 1Jn.2v13,14. Rev.12v10,11. 21v7.

In the wilderness Christ had to face the temptations that He was going to face in His ministry. We have our times of greatest trial and temptation before we do something for God, and God allows this to happen in order to prepare us and strengthen us for the future. To fail in this hour of preparation and temptation means that we can miss God's perfect way and will for our lives. A wishy washy Christian life and spiritual experience will mean spiritual disaster and a great fall in the hour of temptation. God will allow us to be tempted, as He did in the case of Peter, in order to reveal the flaws in our character, so that by His grace these flaws can be removed. Satan's desire and aim in temptation is to turn us aside from being blessed and a blessing to others, and so He will give us the full blast of temptation at the start of a deliverance ministry, and at our baptism in the Holy Spirit. This spiritual conflict tries your heart, and you find your motives being examined and cleaned up. We find out what our heart is like, whether we are in God's work for personal prestige or profit, or pure devotion to God and mankind. Peter got an awful shock when Satan showed what he was really made of, and sometimes we can also weep bitter tears of repentance, shame and sorrow, when the true condition of our heart is revealed. Lk.22v55-62. 5v4-11. The Lord tries our hearts, and uses Satan and circumstances to show what is there. Rev.2v23. If we become spiritually arrogant we will find that we will fall, the humble receive God's grace. 1Cor.10v11-13. James.4v6. 1Pet.5v5.

It needs real effort, courage and determination to enter and stay in our spiritual Canaan of a Pentecostal fullness. A Christian can experience great conflict and great temptation, for the Evil One will try to turn us aside from what God has for us. Satan will try to turn us aside by throwing scorn on God's love, care, provision and will, and by offering us worldly and religious prestige in exchange for the honour and blessing which God alone can give. We have to resist these lies and seductions of Satan if we are to have a ministry that is anointed by the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual exam times will surely come to us, so let us be spiritually prepared for them.

2. Temptation is essential for spiritual growth and sympathetic Christian service.

Paul tells us in Rom.5v3-5., that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Temptation and trial improve our character and Christian work if we approach them with the right attitude. Very often we need trial and temptation to be a help to some people, 2Cor.1v3-7., they are a sure way to strength of soul and sympathy. Temptation is a sure and essential way to spiritual growth, the tempted soul becomes strong by resisting evil. 1Pet.1v6,7. James.1v12. Through conflict with evil we realise the horror of sin and really learn to hate it; it is necessary for us not only to love that which is good, but also to hate that which is evil, and temptation is the only thing which can bring this about in us.

Even the Lord Jesus had to grow in wisdom, knowledge, and strength of soul and spirit, He "waxed strong in spirit." Lk.2v40,52. The Scriptures tell us that the Lord Jesus partook of human nature and laid Himself open to temptation so "that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb.2v14-18. We know that our dear Lord Jesus appreciates our struggles and is touched with and sympathises with us in our feelings of infirmity and weakness, for He Himself has felt the trials and weakness of the flesh, being "tempted and tried in all points like we are, yet without sin." Heb.4v15. The only person who has the right to condemn us, is full of sympathy towards us and is praying for us. Rom.8v31-34. Every second of every day God's people are upheld by the sympathetic and loving ministry of our Great High Priest. The Lord does not use His unspotted purity and perfect holiness to condemn us, instead He justifies us by it, and assures us that nothing can separate us from His blessing, or the ministrations of His love. If we walk in the light nothing in this sinful world can separate us from His sympathy and love.

So we can see from Heb.2v14-18., that the Father was not only preparing our Saviour for His earthly ministry through the various temptations that He faced, the Father was also preparing Christ for His Heavenly ministries as well. Our Father wants us to have an abundant entrance into that Heavenly kingdom, and if we defeat the evil powers that oppose us we shall be entrusted with the rule of that kingdom. It is as we win our victories for Christ here, that we shall receive our crowns there. Those that rule with Christ have not won that position by bloodless victories. Mt.20v20-38. N.B. v22. Those who desire to reign with Christ must also share His fiery baptism of suffering and opposition. Let us so live for our Lord Jesus that at His coming we shall be filled with joy and not with shame. 2Pet.1v2-11. 1Jn.2v28. Eph.1v9-12. We need to keep our eyes on the eternal riches of Christ and realise that He has called us to reign with Him in glory, and be joint heirs with Him of the riches of heaven. Let us not sell our Heavenly inheritance in exchange for the things of the earth, for victory over the world, flesh and Devil brings eternal blessedness. Rom.8v17. Heb.12v15-17.

There is no short cut to real spiritual power and great manifestations of spiritual gifts. To deliver the captives of Satan, we first have to have victory over him in our lives, we have to bind the strong man before we can spoil his goods. We have to overcome Satan by answering every lying temptation with the truth, we have to put on ALL the armour of God. Mt.12v18-30. Mk.3v22-30. Eph.6v10-20. We can only defeat Satan if we wear all our Christian armour. It is as follows: -

The belt of truth. A right knowledge of God's Word and Christian Doctrine.

The breastplate of righteousness. God's Word of truth is applied to the life and it results in a practical holy life, the heart is kept pure, there is integrity of purpose, truthfulness, sincerity, genuine love and faithfulness.

The feet shod with the Gospel. An evangelistic fervour; a desire to extend God's kingdom and preach God's good news of forgiveness and peace.

The shield of faith. The 4 feet by 2 feet Roman type shield is spoken of here. A complete trust in God and His word at all times, can quench all Satan's flaming darts.

The helmet of salvation. A disciplined and pure thought-life. We think what God thinks, and weigh everything up in the light of God's Word and our salvation. False doctrines, impure thoughts, and worldliness are banished from the Christian mind.

All is looked upon and judged in the light of an eternal future.

The sword of the Spirit. The ability to use God's Word against Satan and his children. This presupposes a knowledge of the Scriptures and essential Christian truth.

Prayer. The spear, or bow and arrow? A vigilant, intelligent and persevering prayer life, for all the saints and the ministries that God has set in the Church. 1Cor.12v28. Rom.12v6-8. Eph.4v8-11.

The life of Jesus had been so well pleasing to God that God could entrust Him with unlimited spiritual power, so God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him. Jn.3v24. In the wilderness we see the Lord Jesus fighting to keep that power and blessing, and striving to keep from being side-tracked into paths that were not the will of God. We have similar temptations from the Devil, and to keep the power of God we have to refuse to listen to anything that Satan tries to tempt us with. Many Christians are blessed by God and receive a measure of power, but they fail in the hour of temptation and instead of coming out of their wilderness temptation full of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did, they come out defeated and spiritually powerless. We can receive a Pentecostal experience and yet fail to be the blessing that God desires if we are living a defeated and powerless Christian life.

The Lord Jesus overcame Satan in the isolation and loneliness of the wilderness, we have the comfort and assistance of Christian fellowship to assist us in our conflict with evil. What awful solitude the Lord Jesus had to endure. Ps.69v20. How many have broken down and gone under in the hour of trial and temptation because of loneliness and lack of help and encouragement. This is why Heb.3v13. tells us to "encourage one another daily." Elijah ran away to Horeb because of physical exhaustion and loneliness, he said, "I even I only am left." One cannot help but feel that the seven thousand faithful believers in Israel were much to blame for Elijah's failure,

they had failed to openly take their stand with Elijah at Carmel, or to encourage him in his task. 1Kings.19v1-18. Some spiritual battles we may well have to face alone, but where it is at all possible we should find spiritual Christian friends who are able to help us through. We should seek those who are not only able to give wise counsel but also minister spiritual blessing and comfort as well. Fellowship with some worldly Christians may do anything but help us, they can lead us into further temptation and spiritual danger, and so the Scripture tells us to avoid their company. Phil.3v17-20. 2Thes.3v6,7. Titus.1v16. 2Tim.3v5,7.

The only company that the Lord Jesus had was the presence of the wild beasts, for Mt.4v11. tells us that it was not until Christ had overcome Satan, that good angels came and ministered to His weary battle-scared soul and body. The Saviour, who felt His need of the companionship of Peter, James and John in Gethsemane, must have felt His need of companionship here, but there was no human help, and it is to the eternal glory of our Saviour, that He triumphed over Satan and all the fiery darts that the Evil One could hurl at Him.

Our dear Lord Jesus came out of the wilderness ready for His mission, and brought into being the New Testament dispensation and the gracious revival peculiar to this dispensation. Revival is a time when the Church has prevailed in prayer and prevailed over the Devil and has come from the wilderness victorious. **The state of spiritual victory and great spiritual power should be the normal condition of the Church, revival occurs when God's people repent of their backsliding and get right with God.** The only way out of the present deplorable condition of much of Christ's Church, is for God's people to wait upon God and prevail in prayer. The sad truth is that many Christians don't really want a revival, for they know that this would mean sacrifice, demanding service, and conflict with evil. Phil.2v21. Like the Israelites of old, many Christians are quite content to stop in the wilderness of spiritual unfruitfulness and barrenness, rather than fight the powers of darkness in their spiritual Canaan. 1Cor.10v1-15. Heb.3v6 to 4v16. If we really want a revival we will be led into a life of sacrificial service, we will have to take up our cross and follow our dear Lord Jesus.

3. It is not a sin to be tempted.

Temptation is inevitable to a free will creature, Satan was tempted in heaven with no evil being to tempt him. Temptation cannot be avoided by a free will creature, the choice is always there between the path of love or the path of selfishness, i.e. between good and evil. The time finally comes when temptation causes a fixation of purpose either in good or evil. To the righteous, temptation is a blessing, for resisting temptation makes them love righteousness and hate evil; the temptation may cause much anguish, pain and sorrow and suffering, but the end is blessedness. Rom.8v14-18,28-39. James.1v2-4. 1Pet.1v3-9. To the wicked, temptation is a curse for it causes them to hate righteousness and love evil; even if they have everything that the heart could desire, they are to be pitied, for their end is Hades and Gehenna. Rev.20v11-15. The selfish soul by continually resisting the Gospel and giving way to temptation, finally reaches a fixation of purpose in evil, and so solitary confinement in Hell is the only possible end of such souls. They have to be confined to preserve the peace and happiness of God's kingdom. (N.B. my notes on eternal punishment in my book on the Revelation, and my book on the deity of Christ.) the loving soul by embracing the Gospel and resisting temptation, finally reaches a fixation of purpose in righteousness and because of this God can and will safely trust them with His eternal riches and mighty powers in the ages to come, knowing they will only use them to be a blessing to others. It is love and God, Father, Son, and Spirit, that will make Heaven, Heaven.

Our dear Lord Jesus was "holy, harmless, and undefiled," and yet He suffered more vicious temptation than anyone has suffered. He was attacked with bitter hatred and malice by Satan for 40 days in the wilderness and on many other occasions too. So we can see that it does not mean that we are evil if we are tempted, the soul of Christ was tempted even though He was perfectly pure. We cannot avoid being tempted, though we can be led away from paths that lead to temptation and sin by living a prayerful life. By living close to God we can avoid many spiritual dangers, that come to those who live carelessly. It is certainly wrong for us to invite temptation, and if it is at all possible we should avoid circumstances that lead to temptation. However, sometimes God does lead us into black looking circumstances and conflicts with evil, as He did with the Lord Jesus. The wilderness temptation of the Lord Jesus was the will of God the Father, and if God leads us into circumstances that are very difficult, we can trust Him to take care of us and lead us out of them, if we are faithful, and continue to trust our Heavenly Father.

3. THE DEITY OF JESUS IS MANIFESTED IN HIS TRUE HUMANITY.

1. Jesus is "the Son of Man."

The title, "the Son of Man" was used by Christ to claim that He was the majestic person referred to in Dan.7v13,14.. cf. Mk.14v62. Mt.24v27. 26v64. 10v23 . Lk.22v28,29. The title "Son of Man" is found seventy times in the Gospels; it was the name Christ chose to call Himself most by before men. It is obviously a claim to the Messiahship, but it is also obvious that by it Christ was expressing the limitations that He felt through His humanity. Christ suffered exhaustion, hunger, thirst, temptation, grief, indeed all the trials of man but the taint of sin. Christ was truly human as well as truly Divine. He had to learn like every human child, and suffered the normal physical limitations of the body. Mt.8v24. Mk.2v16. 11v12. Lk.2v42-52. 4v2. Jn.4v6. 19v28. 1Tim.2v5. Heb.2v14. 4v15. The glory of Christ is that He victoriously conquered the World, the flesh and the Devil, in a human body and against enormous odds accomplished our salvation. Hallelujah.

2. In Phil.2v7. Paul said Jesus "emptied Himself," "heauton ekenosen," to become man.

We read in Phil.2v5-8., that Jesus was eternally existing ("huparchon," the present active participle of

"huparcho") in the nature and form of God, "en morpheu theou;" He possessed all the exclusive and essential attributes of God, and was worshipped as God by all in Heaven, and at His birth the Father commanded all the angels of God to continue to worship Jesus. Heb.1v6. with Deut.32v43. Sept. Jesus thought it not robbery to be one with the Father and equal to the Father; He already existed in the essential form of God. Jesus claimed this equality with the Father even in His humanity, and His claim so infuriated the Jews that they tried to kill Him because of it. Jn.5v18. Jesus did not use His equality with the Father as a means to self-enrichment, or self-exaltation, but for our sakes emptied Himself, "heauton ekenose." Praise His wonderful Name!

A.T. Robinson gives the following helpful comments on Christ's emptying: "Phil.2v6.---'Emptied Himself' (heauton ekenosen). First aorist active indicative of 'kenoo,' old verb from 'kenos,' empty. "Of what did Christ empty Himself? Not of His divine nature. That was impossible. He continued to be the Son of God. There has risen great controversy on this word, a 'Kenosis' doctrine. Undoubtedly Christ gave up his environment of glory. He took upon himself the limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man. It is here that men should show restraint and modesty, though it is hard to believe that Jesus limited himself by error of knowledge and certainly not by error of conduct. He was without sin, though tempted as we are. 'He stripped himself of the insignia of majesty' (Lightfoot).

v7. 'The form of a servant' ('morphen doulou'). He took the characteristic attributes ('morphen' as in v6) of a slave. His humanity was as real as his deity. 'In the likeness of men' (en homoiomati anthropon). It was a likeness, but a real likeness (Kennedy), no mere phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics held. Note the difference in tense between 'huparcho' (eternal existence in the 'morphe' of God) and 'genomenos' (second aorist middle participle of 'ginomai,' becoming, definite entrance in time upon his humanity)." **End of quote.**

Paul refutes the Docetic Gnostic theory that Jesus had no human body and the Cerinthian Gnostic teaching that the aeon Christ came upon and used the man Jesus, and that they were two separate beings. John states that the denial of the humanity of Jesus by the Gnostics was the spirit of antichrist. 1Jn.4v1-6. N.B. v3. Jesus had a real humanity as well as a true deity.

3. In Rom.8v3. Paul states Christ's victory over the flesh.

Paul rejoices in Christ's glorious victory over the trials and temptations of true humanity. It is a most glorious and wonderful fact, that out of pure love for us, God the Word became flesh "sarx," and suffered and overcame the trials and temptations of true humanity. Jn.1v14. 1Jn.4v2,3. 2Jn.v7. 1Tim.3v16. Rom.1v4,5. 8v3. Heb.2v17,18. 4v15. 5v7. 10v5. Christ was manifest in flesh, "sarx;" but He never allowed the flesh to dominate Him. In Rom.8v3. Paul states that Jesus was, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "en homoiomati sarkos hamartias," just as Phil.2v7., "in the likeness of men," "en homoiomati anthropon," the likeness is real, Jesus had a real humanity, not a false or phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics taught. ("Homoioma," occurs in Rom.1v23. 5v14. 6v5. 8v3. Phil.2v7. Rev.9v7.)

Alford writes on Rom.8v3.: "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh 'whose attribute and character was sin). The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."---He had a nature 'like sinful human nature'- but had not Himself 'a sinful nature,' Compare Heb.4v15. --- He was able to be tempted, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of pain, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not." End of quote.

The flesh that had contaminated and led all mankind into sin was conquered by Jesus. His victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Rom.8v4.

The Expositor's Greek Testament states on Rom.8v3., "But the emphasis in "homoioma" is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; "flesh of sin" is one idea to the Apostle, and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "form" rather than "likeness" is what "homoioma" signifies) in which Christ appeared amongst men. It does not prejudice Christ's sinlessness, which is a fixed point with the Apostle 'ab initio' ("from the beginning"); and if anyone says it involves a contradiction to maintain that Christ was sinless, and that He came in a nature which with us is identified with sin, it may be pointed out that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and that the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is one with us-short of sin. The likeness and the limitation of it (though the former is the point here urged) are equally essential in the Redeemer." **End of quote.**

Christ partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh, His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over the flesh. In Heb.2v16-18. we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and necessity ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," "to be obligated"), for Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and suffer the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. To be tempted in all points like we are, He had to be made in all points like as we are. Heb.2v17. with 4v15. From the level of our humanity our Lord Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil; praise His wonderful Name!

4. Our Lord said that during His human life the Father was greater than Him. Jn.14v28.

When Jesus said in Jn.14v28., "My Father is greater than I," He was speaking as a human being in His state of

humiliation due to His incarnation. We read in Phil.2v5-8. that when Jesus was in Heaven, before His incarnation, He was existing in the essential form of God, and possessed equality with God the Father in glory and power. It was because He emptied Himself of this coequal glory and power, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became man for the work of redemption, that Christ said that His Father was greater than He. Jesus prayed that this pre-incarnation glory should be restored to Him, and that He should again share the coequal glory that He had before the world began; "Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Jn.17v5. Christ prayed for the glory which belongs to Jehovah alone to be restored to Him, Is.42v8.; and after His resurrection He stated that this glory, power and authority had been given back to Him again; He had received all power in Heaven and in Earth. Mt.28v18-20. The Lord Jesus now has His full former glory, for we read that He is "the Word of God," and "the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." Rev.19v13-16.

The Jews understood that even as a man Jesus claimed equality with God the Father. Jn.5v18. 10v33. Phil.2v6. Only deity can be equal to deity. Is.46v5. Christ had laid aside His infinite power and knowledge for the work of redemption, and took upon Him the form of a servant, but He had equality with the Father in the essential Divine nature; they were one; Christ was in the Father and the father in Christ. Jn.10v30,38. Christ was "sent" as a "servant," yet was equal to the Father in essential deity.

5. In His humanity the Father was Christ's God.

When Christ speaks in Jn.20v17. of the Father being His Father and His God, He still speaks, though risen and glorified, as the incarnate Son and perfect man, who became a servant for the work of redemption. In the same way Paul and Peter speak of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Cor.11v31. Eph.1v33. 1Pet.1v3. Christ is "Lord," and yet in His work as Redeemer and Mediator, God the Father is His God. When Christ spoke to Mary He was the Great High Priest of the Church, having shed His precious blood for our redemption, He became the mediator and intercessor between God the Father and mankind, "the man Christ Jesus." 1Tim.2v5.

N.B. 1. We will also mention here 1Cor.8v4,6., which some false teachers have used to deny the deity of Christ, saying that these verses teach that there is only one God, the Father.

Bloomfield ably sums up 1Cor.8v6.: "As to the Socinian perversion, founded on the distinction here recognised between the Father and the Son, the Apostle, by thus calling the Father the one God, does not exclude Jesus Christ from being the God of Christians, any more than he excludes the Father from being Lord by calling Christ 'the one Lord.' In short, as Dr Pye Smith (Script. Test. vol. 3. p.332) proves, 'the deity of Christ can no more be denied because the Father is here called 'one God,' than the dominion of the Father can be denied because the Son is called 'one Lord.'" By this mode of expression it is intimated that the Father and Son are one God and one Lord in the unity of the Godhead." End of quote.

A.T. Robertson comments on 1Cor.8v4., on "No God but one." "This Christians held as firmly as Jews. The worship of Jesus as God's Son and the Holy Spirit does not recognise three Gods, but one God in three Persons. --- The cosmos, the ordered universe, can only be ruled by one God. Rom.1v20." End of quote.

Paul could hardly be denying the statements he made elsewhere that Jesus is God, Rom.9v5. Titus.2v13. Col.2v9. Acts.20v28.; indeed, Paul here states that Jesus is the Great Creator of all things.

N.B.2. When our Lord replied to the rich young ruler in Mt.19v17., "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God:" Jesus was certainly not denying His deity. The Lord Jesus certainly did not say that He was not good, for He was sinless and perfect. Heb.7v26. The Lord did not reject the title "good master" because it was not applicable to Him, but rather because the rich young ruler had only applied it to Him as a mere man. The young ruler had complimented Christ, but he was blind to His deity, mission and kingdom, and Christ desired to open his eyes to them all. I pray that this book will open many people's eyes to the glory, majesty, and absolute deity of God the Son.

6. Christ's subjection to the Father in 1Cor.15v28. completes His work of redemption.

Paul tells us in 1Cor.15v28., that Jesus subjects Himself and His kingdom to the Father at the end of the millennium, "that God might be all in all." All the probationary ages are past, and Christ's work of redeeming and leading mankind back to God is accomplished. The time has come for the Father to open all the riches of His Being to His dear children. We have to understand Christ's subjection to the Father in 1Cor.15v28. in the light of Christ's work as Redeemer and Mediator. All things have been put into subjection to Christ, Heb.2v3-14., and the Millennial kingdom is ruled by Christ. However, when the Millennial kingdom is finished and the Great White Throne judgement is passed, the Son delivers the kingdom to the Father and His kingdom merges with the Father's kingdom, with whom He is one.

The making of Creation made it necessary for the Trinity to take up different activities and responsibilities, and this is true over the work of mediation and redemption. Christ in His work as Mediator and Redeemer, has always acted in complete subordination to the Father, and has always done God's will. There is no new subjection or subordination in 1Cor.15v24-28.; all that is stated is that Jesus brings the kingdom, that has been given to Him by the Father, under the authority of the Father, and Christ, as glorified man, Mediator and subduer of all foes, is subject to the Father. The apostle Paul is not referring to a new subjection, He is speaking of the final manifestation of Christ's subjection to the Father, the time when He lays the kingdom under the direct control of the Father. When the Great White Throne judgement is concluded, all the probationary ages are

finished; and all who can be redeemed, are redeemed; and sin and sinners are banished from the new Heaven and new Earth; Christ's work as a mediator will cease, and the Father will deal directly with the redeemed and glorified creation.

In 1Cor.15v24-28., Paul is not speaking of the eternal dominion and coequal deity and glory that belongs to Christ as God, but to the Millennial kingdom over which He reigns as Mediator. In this age and the Millennial age, Christ acts as Mediator between man and God the Father. Though Christ is God and possesses absolute deity, yet as Mediator He reigns with the power delegated to Him by God the Father; after the Great White Throne judgement, this delegated authority will be delivered back to the Father who gave it. Christ, who existed eternally in the form of God, and was God, and was equal to God the Father, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father and demonstrate His subjection to God the Father for the work of mediation and redemption. Phil.2v6. Jn.1v1. Though Christ is subject to the Father in His work as a mediator; even while on earth He claimed equality with the Father in respect to His Divinity, and the Jews tried to kill Him because of this claim. Jn.5v18,19,30. 8v58,59.

Having conquered and subdued all foes, Christ subjects His kingdom to the Father; and THE TRINITY, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, WILL RULE TOGETHER OVER THEIR KINGDOM. We know from the Scriptures that Christ receives an everlasting kingdom and shares it with the saints. Dan.7v27. His throne as God is for ever. Dan.2v44,45. 7v13,14,18,27. Ps.45v6. with Heb.1v8. Is.9v6,7. with 2Sam.7v16. Lk.1v32,33. Having fulfilled His work as Mediator and Subduer of all evil, Christ will rule and guide in love the redeemed creation with the rest of the Trinity. All the creation will applaud the triumphs of our Lord's grace and power; He will be worshipped for ever as the eternally reigning King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and our Saviour God. Rev.5v10-12. 11v15. 19v6-16. 22v3-5. Titus.2v13. 2Pet.1v1.

We can clearly see through the Scriptures that we have studied, that Christ's Sonship is unique and proves His absolute deity. Christ's humiliation in becoming man, and His subjection to the Father for the work of mediation and redemption, in no way disproves His claim to absolute deity. Indeed, the glorious, sinless life of Christ under the limitations and temptations of human nature, fulfils in full the prophecies concerning the coming Christ, and prove beyond question the absolute deity of Jesus.

The Two Stages of Our Saviour's Temptation.

There were 40 days of continuous temptation and three specific temptations after these 40 days of temptation. The aim of Satan was to turn the Lord Jesus aside from His ministry and the Cross. The eloquence and plausibility of Satan's arguments can be imagined, for he is far more plausible than any human orator. There would also be hints and threats of opposition if the Saviour continued on His path of devotion to the will of His Father. There would also be evil faith-destroying atmosphere that accompanies these wicked angels. None of the lesser wicked angels were entrusted with this task, the arch-tempter himself was to lead the attack against his Creator. For 40 days the Lord Jesus was attacked by every kind of temptation, not only the more obvious temptations, but the more subtle appeals to the aspirations of Christ, and the temptation to bring them to pass in the wrong way. Christ rejected every temptation of Satan, He answered again and again "It is written," He answered Satan's lies with the Scriptures. Christ used His marvellous knowledge of the Scriptures to answer Satan's lies, and we should do the same. For six weeks Satan tried to destroy the character of his Creator, but Christ completely resisted the temptations that had caused Satan to fall and had destroyed his character. Ezek.28v12-20. Is.14v12-20. Judev8-11. Dan.10v13,20,21. Here we see the king of love and life being bitterly opposed by the king of evil and darkness, but even though the Lord Jesus was at such a tremendous disadvantage, He triumphed over Satan and sin.

There were times after these 40 days of temptation, three specific temptations. The order of the temptations in Matthew and Luke. is different, which suggests that the Wicked One tried these temptations several times before he finally departed. Doubtless these temptations were put into the mind of Christ during the 40 days of temptation with increasing power and force until they resulted in the temptations recorded in Lk.4v2-13. and Mt.4v1-11.. This was a stratagem planned to the last detail. Many temptations would seem to spring out of Christ's own mind, (and as Bunyan found out, these can often be the most trying) but they are in reality accusations, suggestions and insinuations put there by the Evil One. It also seems from the accounts in Matthew and Luke., that Satan also appeared to the Lord Jesus as an angel of beauty and light, and perhaps in the name of true religion, as he so often does. For we find that Satan's main method of corruption is in the name of false religion and false ideals, that lead one from real worship of God and into denial of Scriptural truth. Satan tried to brain-wash Christ by continual evil suggestion and temptation, but he failed completely. After our baptism in the Holy Spirit we will find that God allows us to have our conflicts with Satan, and we will have to fight to keep our experience, our call, our holiness, and the gifts that God has given to us. Let us see the way that the Lord Jesus was tempted and how He overcame those temptations, and then apply it to our own experience. If we really take heed to the great lessons revealed in the temptation of our Lord, we shall experience a revolution in our spiritual life and the life of our churches.

1. SATAN ATTACKS CHRIST'S FAITH.

"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry, and when the tempter came to Him, He said, 'If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.'" Mt.4v2,3. After receiving the Spirit without measure at Jordan, Jn.3v24., Christ was attacked by Satan in the area of faith. Satan twice tries to make Christ doubt His Sonship and experience in the first two temptations; with the utmost

sarcasm he twice uses his faith-attacking "If" to say that Christ's claims to deity and a unique Divine Sonship was ridiculous. Satan will also try to rob us of our experience and God-given blessings, by an attack on our faith, he will do his very utmost to fill us with uncertainty, fear, doubt and unbelief. Our greatest spiritual battles are caused by the lies and insinuations of Satan, we must not give place to him, we are to resist him. James.4v7,8. 1Pet.5v6-10. Satan's attack is always based on lies, he is the father of lies, and though he may tell his lies in a convincing way, there is no truth in him at all. His use of half-truths and partial truths is only to further the lie and his implacable hatred against God and truth. Jn.8v43-47.

a. Satan will attack and cast doubt upon our most holy and blessed experiences.

John had witnessed that Christ was God's Lamb and God's Son, he had witnessed to Christ's purity and Christ's experience. John had testified that he had seen the Holy Spirit as a dove rest upon Christ in unlimited power. The Father's beautiful voice had said for all to hear, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mt.3v11-17. Jn.1v30-34. 3v34. Yet Satan had the audacity to challenge the witness of God the Father and God the Spirit, and to challenge and to cast doubt on God the Son's blessed and holy experience. What evil affrontery! Satan will try to do the same with our lovely God-given experiences and gifts, we must resist him and rejoice in what God has given us, for God's word and promises to us are always true and reliable and will not fail us. God stands behind His Word to perform it. Ps.119v89.

b. Satan will attack and cast doubt upon God's Holy Word.

"Hath God said," still comes from the serpents lips. Gen.3v6. with Rev.12v9. Satan was in reality challenging the Scriptures, for Christ's claim was not only confirmed from a wonderful experience from Heaven, it was based upon and confirmed by the Holy Scriptures. Our Pentecostal experience and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not only confirmed by Christian fruits and precious God-given experience, they are confirmed by the immutable Word of God. Our Heavenly Father has promised that a born-again Christian can never receive anything false when they earnestly, humbly and sincerely seek God for the Holy Spirit. Lk.11v1-13.

Oh, seeking hearts will always find, in the upper room, That our Father is so kind, in the upper room.
For He loves His children so, Stones and snakes He'll not bestow.
Only good gifts from Him flow, In the upper room.

When our Christian experience is confirmed, encouraged and commanded by the Word of God, we can rejoice and glory in that experience. No matter how much Satan and unbelieving men may try to deny our God-given experiences, we never need doubt our Heavenly Father's Word. His Word stands forever true.

c. Satan attacked and cast doubt on Christ's sinless life.

Satan had the affrontery and impudence to smear and cast doubt on Christ's perfect, pure and holy life. For 30 years Christ had walked in perfect holiness and purity and Satan knew it, yet he dismisses and casts doubt on Christ's beautiful life with his lying sarcastic "If." Christ had lived a perfect life of love and devotion to His Father, yet Satan tries to bring Christ to a place of dejection and despair by his evil insinuations. Satan will try to give us feelings of extreme guilt, despair and dejection by casting aspirations on our character and work for God. Satan will try to dismiss all our acts of love and devotion to God at one sweep by his evil insinuations; however, the Scripture assures us that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." Heb.6v10. In Rev.12v9-12. Satan is not called the accuser of the brethren for nothing, for he who accused Christ also accuses all Christians, all Christians suffer from Satan's accusing and depressive attacks. The powers of darkness are very good at running us down, such thoughts as "You are no good," "I am a failure," "God can't love me," "I will never do any good, I am hopeless," "God is angry with you," "God is angry with me," etc., almost invariably spring from Satanic sources. Such thoughts certainly don't come from God, for God's attitude to His children is one of deep love and the most lovely tender affection. God so loved us that He gave His Son to die for us, and He loves us as He loves His Son. Jn.3v16. 15v9. 17v23. God loves to pour upon us His good gifts. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v9-13. Eph.1v3. Our Saviour understands and cares, and even His disciplines and rebukes spring out of perfect tender love for us. Heb.4v14-16. Rev.3v19-22. 1Cor.11v31,32. Christ is made unto us all we need, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. 1Cor.1v30,31. Phil.4v13,19.

Don't accept Satan's lies about yourself; only recognise, admit and confess to what the Scriptures say you are in Christ. Say what God says you are, say, "I am a child of God, born of the Holy Spirit, redeemed by the blood. I am beloved, precious, and tenderly loved. I have a wonderful and gentle Father, a precious and loving Saviour, a gracious and kind Comforter. I have a glorious future and an eternal Heavenly home." Exalt God's grace, and praise and thank Him for the love that has made a lost sinner a child of the King of Kings. Don't let Satan depress you, your Heavenly Father appreciates and makes a record of all we do for Him and our love for Him, realise His tremendous affection towards you. Let praise and worship take the place of your heaviness and despair, God's gifts to His children are love. peace and joy. Draw near to God in praise and prayer, resist Satan and he will flee from you. James.4v7-9. God is love He appreciates our love and work for Him.

d. Satan even attacked and tried to cast doubt on the deity of Christ.

Christ had created Lucifer ("heyel" 1966, from 1984 "halal," to shine, to boast, to praise, in the sense of brightness; the morning star. Greek. "Phosphoros," Light-Bearer, Light-Bringer.) It was Lucifer, who in the full light of the character and works of God, and in the very presence of God in Heaven, rejected God, goodness, and truth and wilfully exercised his free will to choose evil, sin, and the lie. By choosing evil and sin, instead of God, goodness, and love, Lucifer became Satan, the Devil, the Prince of Darkness, and the Lying Slanderer.

Is.14v12-20. Ezek.28v11-20. Here he is looked upon as the power behind the king of Babylon. Jesus had created Satan, and Satan knew it, yet he tries by lies to deprive Christ of His faith in His Sonship. If Satan attacked Christ's Sonship, he will very certainly attack ours. Don't give place to him for an instant, "Beloved, now are we the Sons of God." 1Jn.3v1,2. Don't let Satan take away your Christian assurance, or blind you to the privileges and joys that are yours in Christ Jesus.

There are today, many servants of Satan who deny the absolute deity of Christ, but Christ is the great Jehovah and Creator of the Old Testament. Is.44v6. and 48v12. with Rev.1v10,11,17. 2v8. 22v12-16., Is.9v6. 10v21. and Jer.32v18. with Is7v14. and Mt.1v22,23., Is.45v22,23. with Rom.14v10-12. Phil.2v9-11., Is.6v1-5,10. with Jn.12v40,41., Ex.3v14. with Jn.8v24,28,58. 13v19., Is.8v13. with 1Pet.3v15., Ps.68v17,18. with Eph.4v8-11, Ps.102v12,25-27. with Heb.1v10-12. and 13v8., Neh.9v6,7. with Jn.1v3. and Col.1v16,17., Ps.23v1. with Jn.10v11,14. and Heb.13v20. and 1Pet.2v25., Is.12v6. with Acts.3v14. Rev.3v7. and 1Jn.2v20., Jer.23v5,6. Micah.5v2. Zech.9v9. with Mt.21v3-5. Jn.4v42. Rom.10v13. 11v26. Phil.3v20. 1Jn.4v14. Is.45v21. 43v11.. Christ is repeatedly spoken of as Lord and God. 1Cor.2v8. Rom.9v5. 1Tim.6v14-16. with Rev.19v16., Jn.1v1-3. 20v28. Phil.2v5,6. Rev.1v8. 22v13. Col.1v15. Heb.1v3. Phil.2v9,11. Titus.2v13. 2Pet.1v1. Heb.1v8. Christ is looked upon as the omnipotent, omnipresent and omnipotent Lord. Mt.18v20. 28v18-20. 28v18-20 Jer.11v20. 17v10. with Rev.2v23. Col.2v3,9. Christ, the Messiah, was Jehovah incarnate, and one day He will return and bring His saints with Him. Zech.12v8-10. 14v1-21. with Rev.19v11-21. Jude.v14,15. Acts.1v11. 1Thes.4v13-17. Is.9v6,7.

e. Satan will even attack and malign the character, love and provision of God.

Satan was in effect saying to Christ, "You say that you acted on the revealed will of God, and look where it has got you, into a wilderness with no provision, what a good God you serve." How Satan tries to imply that our circumstances prove that God has failed us, and that His lack of miraculous intervention proves that God does not care, but it is a lie, we are always upon our Father's heart. God may allow our faith to be tried by difficult circumstances, temptation, etc.; but He will never leave us or forsake us. Lk.11v13. Rom.8v14-39. Heb.13v5,6,8. 1Pet.1v5-9. How much more reliable than the closest of earthly ties is the abundant affection, unceasing care, and unfailing love of our Heavenly Father.

f. Satan tried to cast doubt on the reality of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"You have not had one miracle," he taunted Christ, but the Lord Jesus knew that God's power and gifts are manifested under the guidance of God's wisdom and in God's time and will. We cannot direct or demand great manifestations of God's power at our will, it is "severally as He will." 1Cor.12v11. The lack of great power after our baptism can be a major temptation, but great gifts of revelation and demonstration are given to mature Christians, not Pentecostal babes, and these great manifestations of spiritual gifts do not occur regularly in a mature Christians life, unless they are entrusted with a particular ministry, or are in great need. Jn.5v19,30.

Satan told Christ that the voice that He had heard at Jordan and the spiritual power and anointing that He had felt were just the result of an over active imagination, and that He should go back home and forget all about His claims. One can imagine the sarcastic emphasis, "What! You God's Son? What an imagination you have. Where is the evidence of your experience? Where are the miracles if you have been baptised in the Spirit? If you have received the baptism of the Spirit, why are you having such a dreadful conflict? Would such severe trial follow such a great blessing? Would not the Messiah, Jehovah incarnate, be able to do miracles at will?" Satan will try us as he did the Lord Jesus, and we shall have to fight to retain the gifts and blessings that God has given to us, and if we hold fast, the reality and beauty of God's lovely gifts will manifest themselves.

The Things That Gave Added Power to Satan's Lies.

a. Loneliness and solitude.

Loneliness and lack of spiritual fellowship give added power to Satan's lies, and this is why in these evil days we are exhorted to gather together regularly for Christian fellowship and encourage one another in the Christian way. Heb.10v24,25.

b. Difficult circumstances.

Naturally speaking Christ's circumstances appeared quite hopeless, the priesthood and ministry were a closed shop, there were no human prospects of support or provision, circumstances seemed very black and hopeless, in fact they could not have looked much worse. However, Christ looked beyond the dark and trying circumstances that He was in; in faith He looked to the wonderful blessing and mighty ministry just ahead. Christ said, "I am the Lamb of God, the salvation of all mankind depends on Me. I must go on for their sakes." He saw millions in Heaven because He was willing to go on to Calvary, and so He resisted the temptation to walk into Heaven and forget it all. Our Lord's place and glory are unique, but we can enjoy eternal blessedness and our Lord's "Well done" if we are faithful in our trials, tribulations and temptations.

Satan tempted Christ through the needs of the body, and he tempts us by these means too; He tries to get us worrying about our seeming insecurity and provision for the future. However, God promises to care for us and to meet all our needs, and sometimes He uses the most unusual channels to do so. 1Kings.17v1-16. Mt.17v24-27. How many of us would continue to trust God if He led us into a place where we had no food for 40 days, but Jesus had this experience, He was tried to breaking point, but He stood firm, believing and upheld by the promise of God. Though He had no food, no companions, or human prospects, He believed and relied on God's

Word and the supernatural revelations that He had received, and went through in victory.

Satan tries to get us to be so intent on supplying the needs of the flesh that we forget or neglect spiritual things. The Bible tells us that the needs and desires of the flesh can be one of the enemies that the Christian has to fight. Gal.5v24. 1Jn.2v16,17. To really serve God you cannot live just for the flesh. Christ said that if we love our relatives more than Him we cannot be His disciple. Mt.10v37-39. Lk.14v26,27. The legal desires of a home and family must be kept in their right place, and must take a subordinate place to the Lord Jesus. This does not mean that our families will be neglected, indeed, the very opposite is true, when the Lord Jesus takes first place the whole family benefits, for the love of Christ will constrain and control our every action.

I am certainly not decrying or belittling marriage and home life, God designed them, and He desires us to enjoy and profit from this greatest of natural blessings. I am saying that we should be careful in case God's greatest natural blessings are looked upon as a be-all and end-all of life, and as a result we neglect our Christian discipleship. Never forget that God has no time for the person who neglects the proper needs of their family with the excuse that they are working for God, Paul says that those who do so are, "worse than an infidel." 1Tim.5v8. There must be no shirking of family need and responsibility in the name of God and religion. We also need to remember that those who forbid to marry are inspired by demons, celibacy is only for the few who desire it and are able to bear it. 1Tim.4v1-3. Mt.19v3-12. 1Cor.7v7. We should know ourselves, a train of broken romances by an unmarried person is a disgrace and a dishonour to God, such people should act honourably and marry.

Do we pander to the interests of the flesh by excessive rest and sleep, or by passing the time in idle chatter or worldly entertainment, instead of spending time in prayer, a study of God's Word and Christian fellowship. This pleasing of the flesh is not the way to power over Satan, we shall end up like Samson, shorn of spiritual power if we act like this. Do we put the interests of the home, family and income before God? If we do we will find that this inordinate desire for worldly things can spiritually cripple us in our Christian life. Let us reconsider our priorities and follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus, who crucified the interests of the flesh and took up His cross to bring about our salvation. When Satan tries to tempt us through difficult circumstances and the interests of the flesh, let us be faithful to the Lord and continue to trust His goodness and love.

c. The time lapse in predictive prophecy.

When the powerful spiritual blessing and anointing that accompanied a spiritual revelation have gone, we have to continue to believe that revelation in circumstances which seem to deny its authenticity and authority. After a great prophetic promises about Christ's ministry, the years had gone by without any fulfilment of those prophecies and so to Christ's family they began to look like a tantalising and unreal mirage, and their faith failed. Jn.7v5. The Lord Jesus was the only one who continued to believe and understand the import of these revelations. When God gives us a precious predictive prophecy, let us not give way to the lies of Satan, let us continue to believe God, delay does not mean denial.

The bitter circumstances of treachery, slavery, false accusation, imprisonment, loneliness, and a delay in the fulfilment of prophecy, seemed to deny the prophecies that God had given to Joseph through his dreams. Joseph did not realise until after God's Word had been fulfilled, that the bitter circumstances and trials that he had to suffer were the very means by which God was going to fulfil His Word. The great trial of Joseph's faith was actually going to prepare Joseph's character for the fulfilment of God's Word. Delay in the fulfilment of God's Word can not only greatly try our faith and character, it can greatly improve faith and character. Faith and faithfulness will not only see God's Word fulfilled, they will also see the wonderful wisdom of His ways. Gen.45v5-8. 50v20,21. Ps.105v17-22. N.B. v19. "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out." Rom.11v33. We may not always understand God's ways and delays, but we can always trust the divine love and wisdom that is guiding us and planning for us.

Christ's Answer to Satan's temptation.

The Lord Jesus answers Satan from the Scriptures, and this is what we should do when Satan Tempts us. Christ quotes from Deut.8v3., the context of this verse is very instructive, so we will quote some of it. "The Lord led thee these 40 years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and feed thee with manna..., that He might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.... as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." Christ was in effect saying: -

a. God's people have always been tried by adversity.

Christ was saying that the fact that His faith was being tried proved the reality of His experience and Sonship, for God has always allowed His people's character and experience to be tried by adversity. Trials humble us and show us what is in our hearts and makes us rely on God's grace and power, instead of our selves. When God allows us to be tested, it proves that we have an experience that is worth testing.

b. God's people have always proved God's Word and love to be completely trustworthy.

Our Lord said in effect, "The God who looked after the multitude of Israel in a barren wilderness for 40 years, could and would look after Him for a few days in the wilderness. The same God can and does look after us. The

experience that God has given to His people can be a great comfort and strength to us. The God who baptised men and women in the upper room with the Holy Spirit, can and does give us the same experience today. Acts.2v38,39. 1Cor.14v2,4,18.

Christ said that He was going to rely on the written Word of God, that God's people had proved was completely reliable. Christ said, "The Holy Scriptures confirm my experience, call and divinity; my Sonship and experience does not rest upon a mere miracle, but on the eternal Word of God. I am not doubting or directing my Father, I can trust Him to care for me, His love will never fail." We can also trust our gracious Heavenly Father when Satan and the trials of life assail us.

How Satan attacks our faith in the baptism of the Spirit and our gift of tongues.

a. Satan will try to get us to depend upon our feelings instead of the Scriptures.

The apostle Peter tells us that there can be periods of heaviness due to trial and temptation, even after the most tremendous spiritual experiences, and he was certainly in a position to know the truth of this. 1Pet.1v6. On these occasions we have to stand on God's Word and answer Satan's accusations with the Scriptures just as the Lord Jesus did. We depend on what the Bible teaches, not our feelings.

b. Satan will certainly say that our gift of tongues is not a real language.

Satan will say that our baptism in the Holy Spirit is a fake and a product of our imagination, just as he tried to say that Christ's experience was a figment of His imagination. One only has to listen to foreign radio stations to realise that real and perfectly good languages sound perfect nonsense to those who don't understand them. Many Christians have listened to Satan's suggestion that the language that the Holy Spirit has given to them was their own invention, instead of believing that God always gives the genuine article to His own dear children, as Christ took great care to stress in Lk.11v9-13. It is impossible for a sincere child of God to receive a stone, snake, or scorpion, from their Heavenly Father, only good gifts from Him flow. These are the very words of Christ, so stand on the word of God and resist the lies of Satan. We can't judge languages by the sound of our own English language, some African languages sound to us like a succession of grunts, but they are complete and perfect languages. William Burton, the Congo Missionary, heard a Christian lady speak in a tongue under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it sounded so peculiar he thought that it could not be a language, it turned out to be perfect Japanese.

Satan will say that the continual repetition of certain words or phrases would not take place if our language were real, and how many Christian's have been defeated and disturbed by this lie. The truth is that such repetition is proof and confirmation of that the gift of tongues is a genuine gift from God.. The prime purpose of the gift of tongues is devotional. God has given this gift as a divine aid to praise, worship and prayer, and so there is of necessity a repetition of words of adoration, praise and prayer. Acts.2v11. 10v46. 1Cor.14v2,4.

Jesus said in Jn.4v21-24. that worship is the paramount act of the Christian, worship expresses our love for God and our faith in God, it is the basis of our fellowship with God. This sincere worship is commanded in the first and greatest commandment. Worship is the supreme Christian act, and the only Christian work that is really worth-while, is service that springs out a deep love and devotion to God. Worship is not only the paramount act of the Christian, it gives the greatest incentive and worth to our Christian service, it is the greatest means of edifying the soul, and is the most powerful means of prayer. Since worship is the most important aspect of the Christian life, we can well understand why the Holy Spirit causes us to repeat again and again words of deepest praise in the language that He gives to us. A Christian can say a few words in tongues that can reach the very highest level of prayer and praise, through the words of deep love and devotion that the Holy Spirit gives to us.

In English, or any language, the vocabulary of praise that is used by most Christians is limited to a small number of words, such as, Praise the Lord; Glory to God; Wonderful Jesus! In fact the simple Hebrew "Hallelujah" has taken its place in the language of every Christian group on earth. Some Christians just whisper the name of Jesus again and again in worship and reach the very highest levels of love, praise and worship. The same kind of repetition can take place when a Christian is speaking in tongues and through the divine aid of the Holy Spirit they can reach the very highest levels of worship, praise and prayer.

William Burton tells us in His book "Signs Following" how one Christian lady who was using two words again and again in an unknown tongue, and the repetition was such that even her thought that the tongue was not genuine. The Pastor had heard these words so often that he knew them by heart, he told them to Mr. Burton and asked his opinion It was fortunate that Mr. Burton knew the language; it was a Congo language and the women was using the words in exactly the same repetitive way that the natives did in the Congo to give their highest praise to their tribal chiefs. When Mr. Burton returned to the Congo and again heard the prolonged and repetitive use of these words by the natives in praise of their chiefs, he quite understood how well these words expressed this woman's love and devotion for her Lord. Christians who spend much time in prayer and diligently use their gift of tongues, will find that the Holy Spirit will enable them to pray and praise in several languages, and this will bring a wonderful liberty and blessing to the soul. However, there will be a repetition of words of love, worship and devotion. Christian, keep on speaking with tongues, don't let Satan rob you of your experience with his faith-attacking "if." God's Word confirms your experience. Follow the example of Jesus, stand firm on the Word of God, and resist Satan's attacks on your faith.

2. SATAN TEMPTS CHRIST TO BE PROUD, PRESUMPTUOUS AND FANATICAL.

"Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.'" Mt.4v5-7. Satan misquotes Ps.91v11,12.

Christ answers Satan from Deut.6v16. "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God as ye tempted Him in Massah." The account of the incident is given in Ex.17v1-7..

"In Rephidim...there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did abide with Moses, and were almost ready to stone him." Moses was told to take his rod and smite the rock in Horeb, and he did so and water came out for the people to drink. "And he called the name of the place, Massah (i.e. tempting or proving) and Meribah (i.e. chiding or strife) because of the strivings of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

We will not dwell at length on Satan's attack on Christ's faith and Sonship, even though this was one of Satan's main aims in this temptation, we will mainly confine ourselves to the other main parts of Satan's attack on Christ.

1. Christ resisted the temptation to pride manifesting itself in self-will, presumption and fanaticism.

The Lord Jesus told Satan that He was not prepared to distrust the guidance of His Father, He was not going to doubt the provision and guidance of God as those at Massah had done. Christ was not going to make His own way, He knew that His Father would show Him what to do and how to overcome the difficulties that faced Him. Moses had trusted God to bring him through Massah and many other tremendous difficulties and God had not failed Him, He could trust His Father to bring Him through the enormous problems and difficulties that faced Him. Christ only wanted to do what His Father wanted Him to do, He had no plans of His own, there was a complete dedication to the Father's will. Even during His busy life as the carpenter of Nazareth, there was a complete dedication to the work that the Father had given to Him to do. Secular work is as sacred as any religious duty when it is performed out of love for God and in the will of God. Col.3v23-25.

Every morning Christ asked His Father for His guidance and tuition, and when the Father gave it He responded to it whatever the cost was, even to the cross. Is.50v4-9. In the life of Christ there was no self-will, presumption, fanaticism, or love for His own way, He was completely dedicated to His Father's will and plans, may we follow His wonderful example. How great are the perils of pride, presumption, self-will and fanaticism. When Satan quoted Ps.91v11,12., he omitted some very important words as can be seen by a comparison with Lk.4v10,11. and Mt.4v6. Satan omitted the words "in all thy ways," i.e. the ways of Christ as directed by God. How often Satan has deceived people and sent them on a perilous path of pride, presumption, self-will and fanaticism, by misquoting, misinterpreting and omitting part of God's Word. We need to carefully examine our motives and take special care to rightly interpret the Scriptures; for if we neglect, distort, or omit vital Christian truth, we shall find ourselves in the gravest spiritual danger and devoid of the power of God.

Why did Satan choose and misquote Ps.91? The answer is almost certainly that Christ was continually thinking about this Psalm during His temptation in the wilderness. Christ was living the life of prayer and communion stated in Ps.91v1,2., and He was claiming the promises of blessing, direction, and preservation from evil that are recorded in Psalm 91.. The Lord Jesus would not attempt a miracle without His Father's guidance, He knew that His Father would direct His paths according to His promises in the Scriptures. The power that Christ had received from His Father was going to be used only under the direction of His Father. Satan misquotes Ps.91v11,12. and suggests that Christ had a Scriptural authority for a daring act of faith. Satan was in effect saying, "This is one of the Scriptures that you particularly love and rest your faith on; this is one of the words out of the mouth of God, why not put it to the test? If you are God's Son and He has given you power and authority, then, prove it. As God's Son you can go ahead on your own, you don't need guidance from God, you can plan your own way."

Christ rejected the temptation to put His Father to the test and go ahead on His own. Christ knew that the promises of God must be used in the context in which they are quoted and in conjunction with the whole tenor of Christian truth. Great manifestations of spiritual gifts can only be expected in the will and purpose of God. We can only expect certain promises to be fulfilled when we are definitely led of God. To go ahead in Christian work without the guidance of God, is to put God to the test, it is an attempt to force His hand. The basis of this self-direction is a distrust of God's ways, or an unwillingness to believe that God can direct us. It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to direct the use of His spiritual gifts, they are given "severally as He wills." Men love to usurp the Holy Spirit's position and take over the rule of Christ's Church, **and one really wonders if the Lord can take any pleasure in much of the human planned Christian work of today.** God can only take pleasure in Christian work performed in faith and inspired and directed by Himself and His Word. It is not sufficient to know that we are doing something for God, we need to be sure that we are doing God's will. Obedience to the guidance of God brings real results, but going ahead without the guidance of God means that very little of real spiritual worth is accomplished.

The golden rule in guidance from God is, "Do what God last told you to do, until He tells you to do otherwise." The Lord Jesus never went ahead without the express guidance of His Father, and this, as we see from Jn.5v30. was by supernatural revelation. The greater New Testament ministries could only function under the manifest

anointing and divine guidance of God. Gal.1v12. 2v2. Acts.16v6-10. Notice how in Jn.7v6,8. the Lord says, "My time is not yet full come, but your time is always ready," we see the self-will of Christ's brothers compared with the perfect obedience of Christ to the will of God.

Satan will certainly try to get us to misuse spiritual gifts. In every revival there is always the danger of fanaticism through misinterpretation of the Scriptures. We have to make quite sure that our manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are according to the New Testament Scriptural pattern. We can give a wrong emphasis to a Scripture, or take it out of its context, as Satan did, and we shall find ourselves out of the will of God and walking in dangerous paths. If we want to dodge the truth, we will be able to find a Scripture to back us up, by wresting a text out of its context, misquoting it, or by neglecting or ignoring other Scriptures upon the subject. Satan still comes today "with a Bible under his arm, and a text in his mouth." Satan still tries to start us upon presumptuous and fanatical enterprises, or tries to pervert our interpretation of the Word of God. The perils of presumption are great, they produce fanaticism and "great transgression." Ps.19v13.

We can only defeat Satan as we own the Lordship of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and this means that we must take earnest heed to what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. We must take real heed to prophecies that are given by prayerful men and women of good character and a proved prophetic ministry. Some Christian leaders have got to the place where they cannot trust what God says either through His Word or through His gifts, this is the evil heart of unbelief that the Bible condemns so much. Heb.3v7 to 4v16. 10v38. Ps.95v7-11. A New Testament church can only prosper as it allows the Holy Spirit to work, move and speak freely. 2Chron.20v20. Rev.2v11,17,29. etc. A presumptuous enterprise is an act of unbelief, not faith, for it demonstrates an inability to trust the guidance of God. The result of this unbelief is defeat, degeneration and declension that results in an almost complete, or complete absence of spiritual power and spiritual gifts. Let us follow the example of our Lord and resist Satan's attacks on our humility, let us resist Satan's temptations to pride, self-will, presumption and fanaticism.

2. Jesus resisted the appeal to pride manifesting itself in a desire for power, prestige, praise and position.

This can be viewed in two main ways.

a. Jesus refused to use God's power in a spectacular way to win the support, praise and approval of people.

The evil one was again casting doubt on the Sonship of Christ, but he was at the same time appealing to the aspirations of Christ and for those aspirations to be fulfilled in the wrong way. Satan said in effect, "I don't believe that you are God's Son, but if you are show us all how great you are, and what wonderful miraculous ministry you have. If you claim to be God's Son, Jehovah incarnate and Israel's Messiah you will have to prove it to us all. The people are looking for a miracle-working Messiah and would follow you if you gave them proof of your Messiahship and appealed to them in a spectacular way. You have the right to do this, for here is a Scripture to prove it. If you are really God's Son you have the right to prove it by an out standing spectacular sign."

The Lord Jesus resisted this appeal to pride, He was in effect saying to Satan, "I know Israel desires its Messiah, but it wants the wrong kind of Messiah, it desires a warrior and general, not a sacrificial lamb. I have come to die, not to lead to victory over Rome. I have come to save people from their sins, not to receive empty adulation. To do as you say would disprove my Sonship, not prove it; it would make me as bad as the Israelites at Massah. I do not need to prove that my Father is with me and that I am His Son, my experience, the Scriptures and His presence prove it. I do not have to put my Father's Word, love provision and guidance to the test."

The Lord Jesus knew that the people whose hearts were open to the truth would realise that He was the Messiah and come to accept Him as their Lamb and Saviour. The Lord Jesus knew that the sensational and spectacular use of miraculous power would not change the hearts of men who loved evil and rejected the Word of God. Lk.16v27-31. The people who love sin do not have their hearts changed by miracles, they are changed by accepting the truth that these miracles testify to. It was proved later that miracles would never change the attitude of mind of the vast majority of those at the Temple, they were so full of iniquity, man-made tradition and love of power, that the Word of God had no place in them. Satan asked Christ to throw Himself down before those who were most securely under his control, and who became the greatest enemies of Christ and His kingdom. Mt.23v1-39. The Bible makes it quite clear that miracles have a vital part to play in bringing people to God, but they will never win some people. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18-21. Jn.4v48. 5v20,44. 11v15. 12v37. Lk.16v31. The Lord Jesus was going to have many signs, wonders and miracles, but He was not going to use them to impress the proud or for self-glory; they were to meet the needs of mankind and to point them to the truth that He spoke, and confirm its truth. Christ was always meek and lowly in heart, there was no trace of arrogance or egotism.

Satan had fallen through the sins of pride, covetousness, and love of praise and position, Satan tries to make his Creator fall into the same sin that had caused his own fall and doom. Ezek.28v17. Is.14v12-14. Satan will also tempt us to use the gifts that God has given to us in a proud and spectacular manner to win the admiration and praise of the people. There can be a desire to show people that God has called us and used us. It is all right to tell what God has wrought through us if we do it in humility to God's glory and in order to help people's faith,

as Paul and Barnabus did in Acts.14v27.. We need to take real heed to Prov.27v2., "Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Prov.27v2. Satan's servants, like Simon the sorcerer, may boast that they are a great one, but servants of the meek and lowly Christ must be genuinely humble. Satan puffs up his servants, God humbles His and measures their greatness by their humility. Mt.18v1-5. If we allow Satan to rob us of our humility we shall have a great fall and the power of God will leave us.

b. Jesus refused to use God' power to impress Israel's religious leaders, and win acceptance from them.

Satan in effect advised Christ to use His power in a way that would win the praise and support of the elders of Israel at the Temple, and so gain a leading place among the religious leaders of the land. Satan was saying to Christ, "Cast yourself down at the Temple before the elders of Israel, the spiritual leaders of the nation. Seek the help and patronage of the influential, and get in with the religious elite, make these your followers. Let it be your first task to win the religious rulers over, for to do the work that you want to do, you need the people with money, power and authority behind you. You need position and prestige in the Temple before you can accomplish anything in Israel.

The Lord Jesus refused to accept the fact that it was impossible to serve God except through the resources of and association with the traditional organised religion of His day. He said, "I can trust my Father to look after me, God's will and purposes do not depend on men, but on the power and guidance of God. I do not need the financial support or backing of men with false traditions, I have come to do the will of my Father and where He guides He also provides. I will not tempt Him by doubting His guidance and provision as those at Massah did. I know that my Father will meet my material needs, just as He did the people at Massah, and I refuse to doubt my Father's Word as they did."

It took real faith for Christ to believe that His Father would undertake for Him and meet His spiritual and material needs in the ministry that lay ahead of Him. How many have thought that they must bow to the doubtful or wrong traditions of organised religion, and seek the favour of religious leaders before they could work for God. How many have compromised truth and experience by throwing themselves down at the Temple of worldly and religious prestige, and in trying to win power and position or praise in their denomination, have offended God and lost the power of God. We shall see in the third temptation the end of this attitude. The thing that always goes along with seeking the praise of man, is compromise of truth because of the fear of man. The Devil says, "Don't preach truth that will offend the religious leaders, do the very best you can to get them on your side, if you want to do any good and succeed in your mission, you will have to compromise the truth and be orthodox. You seek popularity with the people that count, use your power to win them, work within their traditional approach. Don't preach against their traditions and upset them, impress them and seek their aid."

There would have been no conflict with the religious leaders if Christ had submitted to their authority and used His spiritual gifts in the way that they desired, and to uphold their traditions. However, how to win the support and admiration of the religious leaders of His day and how to prove His work was of God, was not the concern of Christ, His concern was the will of God. The Lord Jesus knew that the vast majority of the religious leaders of His day were not preaching the truth, they were preaching unscriptural man-made traditions. How Christ felt about their hypocrisy and false tradition is clearly seen in Mt.23v1-39. Mk.7v1-9. and Jn.8v37-59. Christ was not going to sacrifice truth to keep in with those in authority, there was not going to be any compromise, He was going to preach the full truth as it was revealed by His Father and in the Scripture. Christ was going to preach what His Father told Him regardless of the consequences.

The Lord Jesus was going to do anything but go along with worldly and wicked religious leaders of His day, He was going to offend them and expose their wickedness. How could the Lord Jesus create danger and put God's promise to the proof, and demand a display of power, just for the purpose of currying the favour of the hypocritical religious leaders of His day. To do this was to doubt the whole purpose of His ministry, which was to bring people to a state of repentance from sin and a new life of holiness and purity. Christ knew that these religious leaders would crucify Him, they were the pawns of Satan, to curry favour with them was to curry favour with their master the Devil. If people do not love the truth we have to offer, do not let us seek to impress them, we must leave them to God. Fear of men can cause us to lose our inheritance, and love of the praise of men will keep us spiritually poor. Jn.12v42,43. Let us not give place to intellectual dishonesty and embrace orthodox but Scriptural doctrines through fear of men. Let us make sure we love the praise of God more than the praise of men.

The Evil One had said to Christ, "Make these religious leaders your first followers and disciples," but the desire and will of God was quite different and the Lord Jesus knew this. God had chosen ordinary working men, who had a deep spiritual experience under the ministry of John Baptist to be the apostles of Christ. God chose these ordinary working men to be the companions of Christ because of their deep and sincere love of Himself, and because their minds were not full of all kinds of man-made traditional nonsense. They were not indoctrinated with a lot of false and unscriptural tradition, they were ready to receive the truth that Christ taught them. The Lord knew that the vast majority of these religious leaders were set in their ways and they did not want disturbing out of them. Christ's ministry was mainly to the poor and needy, the non-influential people of Palestine. Lk.4v18. Is.61v1,2. It is the same today, the ordinary Christian with an open mind will receive the baptism and gifts of the Spirit, and the blessing of God before those who have been systematically trained in unbelief in many of today's Theological Colleges.

The tradition trained reinforced carnal mind has come in contrition to God before it can receive the blessings of the Gospel. You may say, "You are asking me to bury my intelligence." I suggest no such thing, no Christian would bury their intelligence, we are to worship God with all our mind. God did wonderful things with intelligence, we are to worship God with all our mind. God did wonderful things with the mind of Paul, God anointed his intellect and Paul under this inspiration wrote a large part of the New Testament Scriptures. We need to make sure that we have a humble mind and sanctified intelligence that is subordinate to the will and Word of God. It is always true that God exalts the humble; proud unconsecrated intellectualism like proud unconsecrated ignorance, will only lead one into the barren deserts of formality and unbelief. Those with greater intellectual ability and training need to have the humility to realise that God desires to use the nobodies rather than those who think that they are somebody. 1Cor.1v26-31.

In almost every revival it is the lay-people who have led the way and the professional clergy have followed later, however, we must thank God for those who, like Charles Wesley, have been the exception. The Lord Jesus under the guidance of His Father chose the lay-people of His day to be the leaders of His Church, He did not choose any of the religious leaders that men had chose. Men had chosen Israel's religious leaders, God had nothing to do with it, and it is almost always men, not God, who decides who is to lead their churches and denominations. We may call a person "Pastor," Bishop," "Elder," "Deacon," etc., but if God does not they are an impostor. Christ humbled the religious leaders of His day by showing His preference for the prayerful, intensely spiritual, humble and sincere ordinary working people of His day, rather than the intellectual, well-trained, hypocritical, tradition-bound, pray-less priests. Christ is the same today, He still chooses the humble, sincere and spiritual before the able but unspiritual proud.

According to Acts.6v7., a great company of the priests became believers after Pentecost, but only a small number of these, if any, belonged to the religious leaders at the Temple, for these violently opposed Christianity. It appears that these converted priests were a mixed blessing to the early Church, some obviously wanted to take over the reins of leadership, out of them sprang the party of the Judaizers who says, "You must keep the Law of Moses to be saved." They caused Paul and the early Church a great deal of trouble, their influence was so powerful that even Peter and Barnabus were overcome by their influence, they tried to impress and please the priests and played the hypocrite. Acts.15v1-7,24. Gal.2v11-14. When the early Church started to take note of those who had purely human religious training they got into trouble, only those with a deep spiritual experience should lead in the work of God. Denominations and churches nearly always become a law unto themselves, and a group of men usually usurp the authority and position of the Holy Spirit. God's perfect will is very seldom done, because men love to take the place that belongs alone to Christ, I am stating these facts, not to attack or malign genuine servants of Christ, my aim is to bring us back to Scriptural principles, and to make us all realise that God only uses the humble and spiritual, He always resists the proud. Those who strive after position in churches or denominations, out of love for position and pre-eminence are moved by Satan and ungodly ambition, not the Holy Spirit; it is the humble child-like spirit that is content just to be a blessing that is great in God's sight. Mt.18v1-5.

A faithful Christian child will receive a far greater reward than an able but proud and unfaithful church leader. Rev.17v14. If we are as happy, or happier, speaking to a child. as we are preaching to a convention, there is a possibility that we have a humble child-like spirit. Pride manifesting itself in love of the pre-eminence, love of the spectacular, love of men's praise and the position that they can give, has wrecked many lives that showed great promise for God. Let us not tempt the Lord by pride, presumption or fanaticism, or the work of God will suffer and we shall lose our Heavenly anointing. Let us use our spiritual gifts according to the principles of love as laid down in 1Cor.13.. Let us make sure that our gifts are directed by love, directed by God's Word and the Holy Spirit and all will be well. We cannot do this in our own strength, we have to live a life of prayer and deep communion with our Heavenly Father like the Lord Jesus lived, only by this means shall we find God's will for ourselves and be strong enough to perform it.

3. SATAN TEMPTS CHRIST WITH WORLDLY THINGS.

"Again the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them; and said unto Him, 'All these things I will give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'" Mt.4v8,9.

Christ answers Satan, "Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." This was quoted from Deut.6v13-15. and 10v20. These Scriptures tell of the judgement and destruction that awaits those who worship other God's, and also of the prosperity of those who love God.

1. Jesus refused Satan's offer of worldly power, in exchange for God's power and His cross.

Satan showed all the beauty and glory of every nation and said, "Why fight me? Why have such a battle? Why go to the cross? Why have such a life of sacrifice and hardship when you can avoid it? You can have all the world without a fight, if you go my way, and accept my standards and worship me. Don't bother to take up your cross, exchange your path of consecration and dedication for the worlds pleasures, power and wealth, it is a broad and easy way." Satan wanted Christ to exchange the glory, blessing and wealth of Heaven for the empty glory, wealth and pleasure of a fallen world. Satan only showed Christ the glory of the world, he did not show Him the suffering, shame, filth and sin, that was hidden under this veneer of glamour and glory, a filth and corruption that Satan gloried in and was primarily responsible for.

Satan offered Christ, the King of Kings a kingdom which belonged to Christ, but which Satan had usurped from Him, a once beautiful kingdom which Satan had almost destroyed through his wickedness. It was certainly no bargain, and Satan was the most unprincipled and treacherous of all salesmen, particularly as Christ already owned the world. In quoting Deut.6v13-15., Christ was saying, "How can you sell what belongs to God, and as I am God, what belongs to me? Your kingdom is soon going to end, you have nothing to offer. To listen to you would bring destruction, not prosperity. Those who serve and worship God have an eternal future, those who follow you Satan, are going to suffer eternal judgement." The Lord Jesus quotes Scriptures whose context warns of the judgement of God upon apostates who follow the idols of the worldling and Satan. The curses of Deut.28v15-68. come upon all those who forsake the Lord of hosts and worship other gods.

There was a strong implication from Satan, that if Christ did not follow his advise, He would experience the most sustained and vicious opposition. Satan said in effect, "If you don't want my way, or my help; if you are not willing to seek the aid and sympathy of my followers if you try to oppose and smash my kingdom, I will oppose and persecute you with all my power. The people who are in control in this world are under my control, if you don't fall in with them and take their standards, I will make sure that they give you an awful time; I will bring them against you with devastating power, malice and hate." It is certainly true that the Wicked One has a lot of His children inside as well as outside religious organisations, and He used them to oppose the Lord Jesus. Satan will attack the fervent Christian through the same means, he will bring religious and state opposition, the opposition of the press, T.V., radio, etc., against those who attack his kingdom.

Christ had to face the most vicious slander, hatred and persecution from the children of Satan. Are you willing to have your good name and reputation slandered for the will of God as the Lord Jesus did? Are you willing to suffer and die for the truth as the Lord Jesus did? People who normally were enemies, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, gathered together to fight Christ; the same thing has happened to fervent Christians throughout Church history. Fear of men is one of the main things that Satan can use to hinder our Christian witness, and keep us from the will of God. Jn.12v42,43. The fear of the opposition of the Canaanites, based on the reports of the ten unbelieving spies, kept Israel out of Canaan for many years, and it can keep us out of our Heavenly Canaan of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the glory of the Spirit-directed life.

Christ had nothing in His heart and life that Satan could appeal to, Christ said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Jn.14v30. Let us make sure that we have nothing in our lives that Satan can use. Temptations from the world's pleasures and standards will come to every Christian. Miss Worldliness will try to allure us with her seemingly lovely but unreal and transient bubbles. If this fails then Satan will bring these same worldly powers against us with bitter and vicious opposition. How many people sell their soul for worldly wealth and glory. How careful the Christian must be in their choice of work and the standard of living that they enjoy. The anxious pursuit of large wages and many material goods, will leave us with little or no time to seek and serve God, and this can lead to spiritual disaster. There are some Christians who God can safely prosper, for they determine that whatever happens, God's work will come first. However, we need to remember that we cannot serve God and riches. Mt.6v24. How wonderful it is that our Lord Jesus, who was so rich, became so poor in order to make us rich. He cut His earthly needs to an absolute minimum in order to save and redeem us. We can certainly learn a very valuable lesson from this, however, as we have said before, the person who neglects the need of his family with the excuse that he is serving God, "is worse than an infidel." 1Tim.5v8.

Any glory of the world that Satan can give is only temporary, and truly earthly blessing, as well as spiritual blessing, can only come from God, as the Scriptures clearly show. Deut.28v1-14. Mt.5v44-48. James.1v16-18. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." Ps.24v1. Any authority that Satan may have is usurped from the Lord of all. The only thing that Satan can lay claim to is the empty veneer that he puts on his followers and kingdom, and the filth and sin that lie under this veneer. The respectable and cultured of this world, who have turned their back on God, may have a culture, religion and glory that appeals to men, but the rebellion against God will finally result in their character being as evil as their master, Satan. Satan was once far more glorious than they, but he lost his glory and beauty through sin. Satan knew more than anybody else that to serve the false idols of worldly pride and ambition meant absolute loss and disaster. We need to remember that things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination to God. Lk.16v1. The Lord Jesus refused to exchange His call and cross, and spiritual blessing for the world's temporary and empty glory, and we will have to follow His example if we are to worship and serve the Lord as we should.

2. Jesus refused to supplement the power of God with the glory of the world.

Satan in effect had said to Christ, "You need finance, you need backing, you need power, wealth and worldly influence before you can expect to do something for God. You will need to appeal to the world on its own level, and with its methods, if you are to have any hope of success." However, the Lord Jesus started out without any human help, or backing and with no worldly power, glory, or influence and God undertook for Him. Christ kept His financial needs down to the very minimum, He had no financially expensive programmes, such as church buildings, literature or even homes for evangelists Christ followed the guidance of His Father and did the miraculous and this brought the world's greatest revival and founded the Church. It was not worldly wealth of worldly influence that founded the Church, it was spiritual power, God's power and influence, operating through the lives of Christ and His dedicated, prayerful, and spiritual disciples.

Christ knew that only the power of God could meet all the needs of the world and that human endeavour and

worldly glory would always fail, He knew that worldly glory would only hinder people from finding God. It is only our communion with God and the power of the Holy Spirit that will bring men to God, this demands dedication and a cross, there is no other way.

How often the Church of Christ has succumbed to this temptation, and the end result has always been the same, the power of God has been usurped by the reliance upon human endeavour and worldly glory, and the Church has become spiritually bankrupt. In some cases churches have even come under the reign of Satan, political power has forced people to Church and made them accept doctrines which have been anything but Christian, and genuine Christian dissenters have been tortured and murdered by these religious but godless people. Churches that do this kind of thing are not of God, they are ruled by Satan, even as the synagogues that persecuted Christians, were the synagogues of Satan. Rev.2v9,10. 3v9. Mt.23v1-39.

The rulers at the Temple were nearly all under the influence and control of Satan, and were doubtless among the worldly kingdoms that Satan showed to Christ, for the Scripture says that he showed the Lord Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. They had taken the glory that Satan had to offer and had lost the glory of God. Many schemes to bring people to church, and the doctrines that are taught, can claim the inspirations of the Evil One. How often church people bow down and worship Satan by taking his standards and using his worldly methods in their churches. There is a strong appeal to pride and the offer of prestige; there is the offer of a worldly social life and even an appeal to covetousness and materialism by easy gains through gambling. These methods always offend God and nearly always empty a church, but even if they fill a church, the congregation will consist of unregenerate people who have no experience of God or His salvation.

It is always possible for us to rely upon colleges, universities, culture, music, art and literature to do for us what God alone can do. The further we get away from God, the more we rely upon the human and the glory of the world. I do not want to give the impression that we should place any premium upon ignorance; we should worship God with our mind and all our abilities, our talents have their place and we should consecrate them to God. The danger comes when we feel that we can manage on our own and we rely upon what we can do and not what God can do. The person with ability and human training tends to rely upon that ability and training, this is another reason why the Lord Jesus chose ordinary working men to be His apostles, they had no natural ability or training to do God's work, they had to depend on God or utterly fail.

If the Church depends upon human ability and training, it will always be defeated. We shall always find, as the apostle Paul did at Athens, that eloquence and human endeavour only brings limited results. When Paul tried to rely upon oratory and worldly wisdom at Athens, he did not have anywhere near the same results as when He used God's methods at Corinth, the message of Christ and His cross confirmed by the miraculous. 1Cor.2v1-8. 2Cor.12v12. Acts.17v15-34. 18v1-18. N.B. v10.

It is very sad that most churches, including many Pentecostal churches, have replaced God's mighty workings with the energies of the flesh. The desire for God to take the lead and do the things that He did in the New Testament has gone, and there is a reliance upon the human instead of the Divine. Singing, testimonies, intellectual preaching, open-air work, door to door work, radio ministry and literature out-reach, can be done on a very low level of faith, and even looked upon as replacing, or substitutes for, the early Church's Pentecostal power and miracles. We should do all these activities they are essential aspects of Christian work, but they should be steeped in prayer and our faith should not just rely upon God blessing human ability, but on God manifesting His power and gifts in our churches. The manifestation of the gifts of power and revelation in connection with these spheres of Christian service can bring great conquests. Even aggressive evangelism can be based upon faith in human ability and oratory, instead of faith in Divine power. This humanistic evangelism cannot make up for the manifestation of the power of God via the gifts of the Spirit and a Holy Ghost anointed ministry. We should be very careful that our desire to do something for God does not blind our eyes to what God can do for us.

The final result of supplementing the power of God with the glory of the world, is that the glory of the world replaces the glory of God, and the world, flesh and the Devil come into the Church. Activities are brought into churches to entertain the unconverted instead of bringing them into an experience of salvation; socials, whist drives, dances, and numerous other doubtful activities, replace the prayer meeting, Bible study, fellowship and endeavour meetings. The glory of God leaves such a church, if you can still call it a church, and all that is left is an empty husk that disillusiones those who are broken hearted, weary, sinful and ill, who are seeking and longing for the peace and blessing of God and a loving and gracious fellowship where they can find God and spiritual reality. Any church that compromises with the world and Devil finds itself powerless, barren, and quite unable to meet the needs of this suffering world. Worldly methods of winning the lost will always fail, the way to win souls is by personal dedication, prayer and powerful manifestations of God's convicting and miracle-working power.

3. Jesus refused to build an earthly empire around His ministry.

This temptation is very similar to the last one but there worldly influence, wealth and glory were looked upon as a means of doing God's work, here it is looked upon as the end to be aimed at. Many churches or denominations look upon a large church building or large religious organisations with great worldly wealth, buildings and influence, as the end to be aimed at. Satan, by showing Christ the kingdoms under his control, said in effect to Christ, "Follow my example and build up an organisation like mine. Go after worldly wealth, influence and power, then you will count in the world. Men will judge your success by your acquisition of worldly wealth, buildings, influence and power. Follow my example and make your religion and denomination the most wealthy

and numerous, most liked and respected, and most powerful and influential. Let it be judged mighty by its magnificent buildings, its great numbers, its financial wealth and its power and influence. This is the end to aim at."

The Lord Jesus absolutely refused to build an earthly empire around His ministry. He did not seek for worldly wealth and influence, He had no bank account, He did not even have a home, never mind great worldly possessions or a great and wealthy church organisation.

a. Christ's Financial Integrity.

Jesus has left us a perfect example of financial integrity and sincerity, His attitude to money was above reproach, His enemies mocked His total lack of worldly-mindedness and desire for money. Jesus did have food and shelter given to Himself and His disciples by grateful kind-hearted people, but He never tried to squeeze finances out of the people that He was preaching to. No one was to be charged for Divine healing, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Mt.10v7. Lk.19v5. There were no demands for money, indeed, as they were able, they gave money to the poor and needy. Jn.13v5-8. In Lk.8v1-3., we see that Christ's evangelistic band was supported by women of adequate means who had become part of the evangelistic band. These women had been healed under Christ's ministry and felt that they must help Jesus to fulfil His ministry. However, here we need to note that not any person was allowed to join and support the apostolic band, nor was financial aid received off every sympathetic person that desired to help, as the rich young ruler found out. Mk.5v18-20. Lk.9v57-62.

We never read of Christ seeking financial aid from anyone, He trusted His Father to meet His needs, and His Father provided Christ with some wealthy disciples to meet His basic financial needs during His ministry, but Christ did not rely totally upon them, or put upon them. Christ did not sleep at the best hotels, He had nowhere to lay His head on many occasions; He did not expect massive support for buildings, transport, equipment, literature, etc.. God even had to use a fish to meet Christ's financial needs on one occasion. Mt.17v24-27. The Lord Jesus was guided in His finances by supernatural revelation, as He was in all other aspects of His ministry. Jn.5v19-21,30. Divine wisdom guided Christ to receive financial aid only off people who were totally committed to Him and completely sympathetic to His cause, and this avoided any risk of criticism from outsiders and confirmed to all, even His enemies, the sincerity and integrity of Christ in financial matters.

The Lord Jesus was called many things by His enemies, but He was never called a "money-grabber," Christ kept Himself above reproach in this matter. No one ever said of Christ, "It is your money He is after," His enemies mocked Him for His warnings against covetousness and love of money. Lk.16v13-15. We never read of Christ Jesus making one financial appeal for His work, to have anxious thought on this matter was to doubt His Father's care and provision. Mt.6v19-34. The Lord Jesus had the most lovely spirit of self-sacrifice, He did not care that the baptism in the Spirit at Jordan had led Him into such great deprivation and sacrificial service. To fulfil His Father's will, to meet the needs of the sick and suffering, and bring our salvation, He was willing to go to any length of sacrifice.

The offer of substantial gifts of money will come to the person who is manifesting great spiritual gifts. There are still people like Simon the sorcerer, who will try to buy the blessing of God. Acts.8v9-24. There are also kind hearted people, who have been healed of incurable or crushing complaints, who feel so grateful, that like Naaman the Syrian, they will offer a gift to the person who has been the channel of God's healing power. We need Elisha's integrity of character, when Naaman urged Elisha to take a gift, Elisha emphatically refused to take anything from Naaman. Gehazi did not possess Elisha's integrity of character, and for his covetousness God smote him with Naaman's leprosy. 2Kings.5v16,25-27. To play upon the gratitude of someone who has been healed, or someone's hope of healing, as a means of reaping financial gain, or building up one's organisation or denomination, is positively sinful, wrong and evil. We are not here to increase our bank balance, or to build our organisation or denominations size or prestige, by exalting Christ and His spiritual gifts. We are to use all our resources with the sole motive of exalting Christ and His gifts, so that mankind may be blessed through knowing Him, it is this and this alone that makes our work count in God's eyes. If financial gain, or the extension of our church organisation or denomination, is the only motive for desiring or using spiritual gifts, then we are using them for the very worst of motives. Our emphasis should be "Our Christ" not ourselves, our organisation, or our church building. One can only rejoice at the simplicity and beauty of the early Church's organisation, and the sincerity of its members, they were motivated by the desire to exalt the Lord Jesus by the manifestation of His lovely gifts. Acts.4v12-33, N.B. v30,31.

The apostle Paul also had tremendous results in his ministry with little or no financial support or backing. Paul showed complete financial integrity in his ministry. Paul said that his ministry gave him the right of financial support from Christian believers, but he did not always use this right. 1Cor.9v1-9. However, he makes it quite plain that though he had the right of financial support, he never had the right to covert people's money. 1Thes.2v5. Acts.20v33. Deut.5v21. Rom.7v7. Exod.20v17. There were no great financial appeals from any of the apostles for their work. Paul appealed for the poor at Jerusalem, and the other apostles appealed for help for poor Christians and met their needs, but there was no soliciting of money for their work, or themselves, and though their faith was sorely tried at times, they never lacked, God was faithful and met their needs. Lk.8v1-3. Mt.27v55,56. It was the normal practice for Christ's apostolic band to give to the poor, and the early Church continued to follow this pattern. Jn.12v5,6,8. 13v29. Acts.2v44,45. 4v32-37. 2Cor.8v1-9. When money was given to the Church, most of it was given to meet the needs of the poor, it was not selfishly hoarded up for buying buildings, or for the upkeep of the ministers of the Gospel.

The first love of many churches today was the last thought of the early Church. In the book of Acts money is only mentioned in respect to the meeting of the needs of the poor, there is no mention of the apostles receiving any finances. Indeed, after recording the fact in Acts.2v44,45. that poor Christians financial needs were met, Luke goes on to state in Acts 3v6., that Peter had no money at all when the cripple at the Beautiful Gate was healed. However, Paul did not take up an offering, or ask for a pledge of money, either before, or after, this wonderful miracle, Peter was content to be a blessing. The apostle of Christ did not make the influx of large amounts of money an opportunity for feathering their own nests, they met the needs of others, they received money and gave it all away. Acts.4v34-37. The modern long appeals for money by some preachers and evangelists are certainly not seen in the New Testament, the apostles made appeals for the poor, but not for their own needs.

The apostles had no fixed salary, they looked to God for their needs, and a person who cannot trust God over financial matters should stay at home. Those who cannot trust God for their daily needs should not be engaged in God's work on a full-time basis. This trusting God for one's financial needs, is quite different from living on charity, or hinting or asking for gifts; it is living by faith in utter dependence upon God. In the New Testament full-time preachers received gifts, but not a fixed income, they also knew when they should graciously refuse gifts, as well as when to receive them. Paul received gifts from churches that he had founded to help in the founding of other churches, however, Phil.1v15-19., makes us realise that these were few and far between. Paul was very thankful for these gifts, but when they were not forthcoming or divine wisdom decreed it, Paul worked with his hands to keep himself.

Paul knew what it was to work for long periods in secular employment while he was engaged in pioneer evangelism, to meet his own needs and the needs of his evangelistic party. During the 18 months that Paul was at Corinth, he worked for Aquila and Priscilla at his trade of tent-making, his main evangelising taking place on the Sabbath. Acts.18v1-11. Paul also laboured day and night at Thessalonica, so that he might not be chargeable to anybody. 1Thes.2v9. 2Thes.3v8-12. At Ephesus Paul worked to keep himself and the others who were with him, for the 3 years that he was there. Acts.20v31-38. Paul stated that as God had sent him on his work, He was responsible for his upkeep, and he had the right to be kept by Christians as an apostle of Christ, but he did not always use this right, so that he might not hinder anyone over financial matters. 1Tim.5v17,18. 1Cor.9v1-27. Paul was not too proud to work for his living and preach the Gospel. Indeed, this flexibility to receive gifts or to do secular work, brought an independence of action under the Holy Spirit's guidance, and kept the Christian Church free from the charge of being mercenary minded money-grabbers. We certainly see that the early Church took no collections from the unconverted. 3Jnv7. Mammon is the great force in the world, faith and love are the most important factors in God's work.

The apostles did not feather their own nests, or build up an evangelistic fund out of the finances given by the warm hearted, generous converts of the early Church, they were pure in heart and kept themselves above reproach in financial matters. The modern method of some preachers of making long appeals for money, and asking for pledges of money from Christians and congregations, is wrong on the following counts.

a. Christian giving, or intention of giving, is to be in secret, not openly. Mt.6v1-4.

b. Paul said that Christian giving is to be "according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." 2Cor.8v12.

c. Long public appeals for money are really an expression of covetousness and the world knows it, and they despise the Christian preachers who do this. The apostles did not covet any man's gold or silver for themselves. Mt.10v9. Acts.20v33. Those who ask for pledges of money are not only coveting the money people have in the present, they are coveting the money that they will have in the future, without any regard to their future financial situation. In these modern times there is a great deal of insecurity about people's employment, and their financial situations can rapidly deteriorate. Jesus put a "Woe" upon preachers who place burdens upon people which are grievous to be borne. Mt.23v4. Lk.11v46.

d. Where God guides God provides without these kinds of appeals. Men are driven to these long appeals when they have conceived and followed their own plans instead of Christ's. It is not enough to do what we think is good or necessary, we have to do the will of God. The apostles could have done many things for which there seemed a real need, but they did not. They could have started literature crusades, bought homes for the poor, old and needy, built church buildings or Bible Schools, they could have gone on long journeys and evangelistic tours, but they did only what God directed them to, God directed them to live simply and have no great institutions or great financial demands. We have to do only what we know is God's will, not what appears to be necessary, otherwise the Church of Christ gets overwhelmed with many financial demands. In the New Testament the only thing that was considered essential was the meeting of the financial needs of the poor Christians. Essential needs were met, there was no thought of using the Church's finances for buying buildings; people are far more important than buildings.

e. The apostles and elders who laboured in the Gospel, received bare necessities, not princely salaries. The apostles had faith in God that He would meet their need. 2Cor.11v9. 12v14,15. Acts.20v33-35. God had commanded ravens to feed Elijah, and had fed all of Israel in the wilderness, without one appeal for help to the

surrounding nations, God would look after them.

The lesson that we learn from the attitude of the Lord Jesus and His early Church to finances, is that it is desirable to keep our evangelistic teams and church organisations as simple and as financially undemanding as possible, so that we shall not be a burden upon the people of God, and so that we can be sent by God to anywhere that He wishes, even to one Samaritan woman by a well, or one person in a desert. Jn.4v3-29. Acts.8v26-40. Christ's headquarters was a simple house in Capernaum, not a massive building or organisation. Mt.4v13. Mk.2v1. 9v33.

b. Christ's Organisational Simplicity.

Before creation the Godhead ordained and ordered all things in relation to the Church and its organisation, they considered what was the best form of Church organisation to encourage spiritual growth and evangelistic success, and perpetuate a spiritual and powerful Church that survive in persecution. The divinely ordained pattern was simplicity its self. In the New Testament we see independent local churches practising informal conversational body ministry and informal conversational evangelism. These churches were founded by evangelists and apostles, and cared for by elders who were teachers, shepherds, and overseers of each local church; and deacons performed works of charity and cared for the poor. Acts.13v6,23. 14v23. 20v17,28-32. 6v1-6. 1Cor.16v15,16. Phil.1v1. 1Thes.5v12,13. 1Tim.5v17-19. 3v1-13. Titus.1v5-9.

The churches once founded were helped by the ministries that founded them, these itinerant ministries exercised a loving ministry and oversight, but they did not take the rule of the local church out of the hands of the local elders. Each Christian and ministry was directly under the control of Christ the Head, and as Christ ministered through one the others received it, it was not an exclusive ministry, it was a Christ directed ministry. In 1Cor.11v1-14v40. we see the normal New Testament Christian meeting, which consisted of prayer, fellowship, manifestation of spiritual gifts, Scriptural exposition and celebration at the Lord's Supper at a simple meal. The Christians really shared their problems and blessings, there was a real fellowship and love, there was nothing boring or formal about New Testament Christian meetings. The New Testament pattern for Christian fellowship meetings is the last Supper of Christ and this divinely ordained pattern was informal, conversational, Scriptural, inspirational, fellowship meetings often lasted for many hours, particularly if there was some very special ministry from someone like the apostle Paul. Acts.20v6-12.

We also see in the New Testament that no building was needed for Christians to gather and worship in, two or three Christian believers could meet and worship anywhere and at any-time. Mt.18v17-20. with Jn.4v19-24. Christian meetings could take place in whatever place was suitable or convenient, in catacomb, open-air, or home. The visible representatives of God under the old covenant, were the Jews and their Jewish synagogues, these were almost devoid of God's power and love, for tradition had replaced truth. God told the apostles to preach the good news of a new covenant to the Jew first, however, the majority of the Jews nearly always rejected the Gospel message and so there was always division and bitterness because of the Gospel message, even as Christ had said there would be. Rom.1v16. Acts.9v20 13v5,14,15,42-52. 14v1. 17v1,10,17. 18v4,19,26. 19v8. 22v19. 26v11. Mk.13v9. 1v39. Jn.16v2.

The early Church followed Christ's example of preaching in the Synagogues and suffered the same opposition to their message. Mt.10v34-42. There is no hint in the Scriptures that God desired to use the synagogues as permanent centres of evangelism, they had many warnings from Christ that this would not happen, God was only interested in the people in these buildings. It is God's power, not buildings, that decides our ability to win souls for Christ. God did not organise the New Testament Church around a dedicated building, He centred it around Christ and the informal house meeting. Acts.2v2,46. 5v12. 12v12. 20v7-9. 10v44-48. 28v30-31. Rom.16v3-5,23. 1Cor.16v19. Col.4v15. Phil.v2. God had replaced the synagogue with the Church, a group of people who believed in Jesus as the Christ, and their Saviour and Lord.

When Paul evangelised for long periods in one place the Jews had rejected his message, he felt quite free to evangelise in secular buildings and homes. Acts.19v8-10. 28v30,31. This evangelism was conducted in an informal conversational manner as can be seen by the use of the word "dialegomai," which means "dialogue," "discuss," or "reason." Acts.17v2,17. 18v4,19. 19v8,9. 20v7,9. 24v12,25. People could ask questions, challenge statements, and comment as they felt necessary, this conversational debating of Gospel truth was very interesting and anything but boring, and it should still be our major method of evangelism and Bible teaching.

The early Church had no difficulty influencing their generation and winning a great number of souls to God, and neither will we if we follow their pattern and example. Let us pattern our Christian meetings whether they be in the home, open-air, secular building; on the New Testament pattern and we shall experience revival blessing from the Lord.

N.B. Church Organisation and its Relation to Revival.

Christ said that the Scribes and Pharisees had replaced God's truth with their own traditions and hypocritically pretended they were doing God's will. Christ said that such worship was vain and empty for they had made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions, teaching as divine doctrine the commands of men. We can do exactly the same kind of thing if we are not careful, we can replace God's order with our own organisation and tradition, and so make the Word of God of none effect. We can replace God's Word with our tradition; body ministry with one-man ministry; earnest prayer with committees, informal, deep fellowship with formal, shallow

fellowship; local churches with federated churches; local elders with "a minister"; spiritual gifts with music, intellectualism, and entertainment; and Christ's Lordship with men's authority. The result is disastrous, and worship is often vain, empty and devoid of God's blessing.

How binding tradition can be! We all tend to get so bound by the traditions of the Christians that we fellowship with, without even realising it, and these traditions actually become part of our personality, thinking and way of life. Young Christians usually accept what they are taught by older Christians without really thinking through what they have been taught and examining it in the light of the Scripture. They say, just as I did, "My Christian leaders are godly men of long experience, they must be right, so I will accept what they say." Then, as one grows in the knowledge of God and His Word, we begin to realise that many of the traditions that we have accepted have little or no Scriptural basis. But how hard it is to escape from the strong prisons of human tradition, into the fullness and liberty of God's order in His Word. It is all the more difficult if one has become part of an organisation and has preached man-made traditions for many years, there are few who are willing to humble themselves and admit that they were wrong. It took a vision of Christ to deliver Paul from his sincerely held man-made traditions, and it has taken the writer many years to escape from some of the prisons of man-made Christian Tradition. Let us follow the example of the Jews at Berea, "who received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed. Acts.17v10-12.

Some would object to what I have written and say, "It does not matter what form of church government we have, God is God, no forms can hinder Him, He can work through any form. It is not necessary to follow the New Testament pattern of church government to have revival." However, when the early Church believed God's Word and followed His directions, they had revival. If we follow the Word of God and imitate the New Testament Church, we shall have revival, if we fail to do this we shall experience spiritual barrenness. A truly Scriptural organisation with a genuine New Testament body ministry in the local churches, is the perfect channel of God's life and power, and churches that follow the pattern of the New Testament are mighty in evangelism and spiritual growth.

Men have tried to replace the wonderful liberty, sweet informality, mighty power and gifts, and love infused fellowship of the Christ-directed early Church, with their own cast iron prisons of men's traditions, constitutions and organisations, and their own rule, and yet they wonder why there is no blessing and revival. You can never shut God out of His Church and get away with it, yet how many churches follow the sinful example of the church at Laodicea and firmly shut out the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, out of their church gatherings. How many churches which are beloved of Christ, are "wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked" and yet they do not know it. They have shut Christ out of their churches, resisted the movings of the Holy Spirit and gone their own way. Rev.3v14-22. Man-made tradition was one of the greatest obstacles that Christ had to overcome in His earthly ministry, and it is still one of the greatest obstacles in His Heavenly ministry.

Throughout Church history we can see that men have preferred their own less spiritually demanding tradition to God's truth, and the same is often true today. There will have to be a turning away from men's tradition and a return to New Testament practice if we are to see a truly Pentecostal revival. Christ and His early Church carefully distinguished between tradition that arose from man's perversion of God's truth, and the tradition that is God's truth and is revealed in the Scripture, and we must do the same. Peter says in 1Pet.1v18. that unscriptural traditions, whether they be Jewish or Gentile traditions, are futile and fruitless, and so are unscriptural man-made traditions.

We really have to watch our traditions, it is so easy to get into routines which are not of God, this is tradition, and these traditions become ruts from which we cannot escape and they hinder or stop the workings of the Holy Spirit. There is a real relationship between church traditions, routines, and organisation and revival; our church organisation decides whether we operate as Christ intended. There can be no revival if our church organisation is riddled with men's traditions, and we make no allowance for the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Christ, and unless Christ ministers through the local church and the ministries of the Church as a body. I write and speak strongly because I have seen, as our Lord Jesus did, people bowed down with the most awful burdens and sicknesses and formal tradition-bound religion spiritually powerless to help them, and yet quite unwilling to seek God for His power to meet these poor people's needs. The ministration of God's power and love to needy mankind is the more excellent way that Paul directed us to follow, and I am making a heart-felt plea for a return to this divine highway. Those who desire a much more lengthy study on church government can read my book upon this subject.

Conclusion.

Lucifer was one of the greatest angels in Heaven, and undoubtedly one of the closest friends of Christ, but he had failed to beat temptation, and it destroyed him and he became Satan, the opponent and enemy of all that is good.. Here Satan came to try to destroy the character of his Creator, or to hinder the work that he was to do, but the Lord triumphs over him. Satan has many friends today, inside, as well as outside, church organisations, and we will find that if we experience revival blessing, they will set themselves against us, even as they set themselves against Christ in His day. Even godly people can be deluded by Satan, so that they will oppose a genuine move of God, a Pentecostal revival will always be "a sign that is spoken against." We read in Acts.13v50., that at Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews, filled with envy at Paul's success, "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and

expelled them out of their coasts." The Jews used devout and godly, good worshippers of God to oppose Paul and Barnabus. "Devout," is 4576 "seboma," to revere, to worship. See Acts.13v14-52. 28v22. Lk.2v34.

What is our position? Do we seek for the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit? Do we keep our gifts when Satan attacks us? Have we lost the power of God through listening to Satan? Do we use our gifts proudly for self-glory, or humbly for God's glory? Some one has said, "How often has ambition conquered those who have conquered nearly all else." There can be an ambition to build an empire around our personality and name, but such a temptation comes from Satan. To build a personality cult around ourselves is evil, the only aim of our ministry should be to bring glory to God, God is the only one to be worshipped. Any self-glory or self-seeking in our lives should be nailed to the Cross and ruthlessly dealt with, there is no place for this in God's kingdom. Mt.20v20-28. The only person worthy of worship and service is God, if service for Him means that worldly men, or religious men, will hate or kill us, He is well worth the sacrifice. To sell our God and His precious truth for worldly gain or glory, or personal benefit is unthinkable, "love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

In the seven Churches in Revelation, we see that Satan had made considerable inroads into some of them, and some were living in tragic defeat, they had lost the glow and glory of a Pentecostal fullness. Like the Israelites, Satan can persuade us that God's promises are not for us, or cause us to doubt the reality of spiritual gifts, or cause us to doubt the ability of God to look after us in the attacks which Satan makes upon us in the spiritual realm. Like the children of Israel we may prefer to wander in unbelief and despise our Pentecostal inheritance. Hebrews 3 and 4 make it quite plain that Satan will attack our faith, it is only by maintaining fellowship with God and faith in God that we can quench the fiery darts of the Wicked One. Eph.6v10-20.

There is a real relationship between purity and power, in the long run, power with God can only be retained after temptation is overcome. However, the manifestation of spiritual gifts does not always imply holiness or purity, a backslidden Christian may manifest spiritual gifts but only on a low level of spiritual power, and if there is no repentance complete spiritual shipwreck, shame, disgrace and judgement follow. Mt.7v21-23. 1Cor.11v29,30. If we have failed the Lord and feel defeated, let us come with real repentance to the Lord Jesus. We can find mercy after we have failed as well as grace to keep us from falling. The Lord knows all about us and He longs to restore us; He is full of sympathy and love and intercedes for us. We have a great High Priest who has overcome temptation and He can succour us in our trials and temptations and give us the victory. Heb.2v17,18. 4v14-16. The Lord Jesus came out of the wilderness full of grace and the power of God, completely victorious and we will come out of our wilderness experiences full of the Holy Spirit and able to deliver the souls and bodies of men, from the power of the Devil. If we really want to see great manifestations of the power of God in our midst, we will have to overcome the same temptations that our Lord Jesus did, there can never be any shortcut to real spiritual power.

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