

## Contending against the Self That Christ May Live in Us

- 1 There is a foe whose hidden pow'r  
The Christian well may fear,  
More subtle far than inbred sin,  
And to the heart more dear.  
It is the pow'r of selfishness,  
It is the wilful I,  
And ere my Lord can live in me,  
My very self must die.
- 2 There is, like Anak's sons of old,  
A race of giants still:  
Self-glorying, self-confidence,  
Self-seeking and self-will.  
Still must these haughty Anakims  
By Caleb's sword be slain,  
Ere Hebron's heights of heav'nly love,  
Our conqu'ring feet can gain.
- 3 Oh, save me from self-will, dear Lord,  
Which claims Thy sacred throne;  
Oh! let my will be lost in Thine,  
And let Thy will be done.  
Oh, keep me from self-confidence,  
And self-sufficiency;  
Let me exchange my strength for Thine,  
And lean alone on Thee.
- 4 Oh, save me from self-seeking, Lord,  
Let me not be my own;  
A living sacrifice I come,  
Lord, keep me Thine alone.  
From proud vain glory save me, Lord,  
From pride of praise and fame;  
To Christ be all the honor given,  
The glory to His name.
- 5 Oh, Savior, slay the self in me  
By Thy consuming breath;  
Show me Thy heart, Thy wounds, Thy shame,  
That self be put to death.  
When the Shekinah flame came down,  
E'en Moses could not stay;  
So let Thy glory fill me now,  
And self forever slay. (*Hymns*, #415)

The above hymn by A. B. Simpson describes the warfare in the daily living of all genuine seekers of God; the Spirit within them contends against the flesh, the natural man, with its inward contradictions. This hymn, like most of Simpson's hymns, arose from the burden devel-

oped in one of his sermons, entitled *Thirty-one Kings, or The Victory over Self*. In his exposition and application of the Old Testament scriptures, Simpson cites the family of Anak, the son of Arba, and their progeny of thirty-one kings who occupied the land that Jehovah had given to the children of Israel as an inheritance (cf. Josh. 12:7-24; 14:15; 15:14). In order for the children of Israel to possess and settle in the good land, the occupants had to be expelled. Simpson compares these kings to various forms, attributes, and practices of the self-life, assigning to each of the thirty-one kings specific names of various aspects of the self, such as self-will, self-indulgence, self-seeking, self-complacency, and self-glorying. He writes:

These words describe the great conflict of the higher Christian life in the Land of Promise. This is not a conflict with the grosser forms of sin, for we leave them behind us when we cross the Jordan and come into the land of holiness, obedience and rest...

There are various forms of self-life which, while not perhaps directly and willfully sinful, in the grosser sense are yet as contrary to the will of God, and as necessary to be subdued and slain, before the soul can be in perfect harmony with the Divine will. They are all tyrants, which, if allowed to remain, will ultimately bring us into subjection to sin and separate us from the Lord.

They belong to one family, and the progenitor of every one of them is Arba, the father of Anak; and his first born son, Anak, has perpetuated his generation through many children, and the numerous offspring constitute a line of no less than thirty-one; so that there is a foe for every day in the month, in the Christian's calendar.

The name Arba means—"the strength of Baal." This represents the strength of the natural heart. Baal was the ancient Sidonian god of nature, and Arba stands for the natural heart, in all the force of its self-will and self-sufficiency.

The name of his son, Anak, signifies in Hebrew, "long-necked," and everybody knows that a long neck suggests pride and self-will; so that these two names express the character of the whole family.

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The descendants of Arba and Anak were first encountered by the twelve men sent out by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan with its inhabitants. After their lengthy captivity in Egypt, Moses and the children of Israel had been brought to the border of the good land that Jehovah had promised to Abraham. When the twelve spies came to Hebron, they saw Anak's three sons, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, and some considered them with their people to be insurmountable obstacles to possessing the land. When the twelve returned to report to Moses, all of them, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, gave an evil report to Moses and the congregation of Israel (Num. 13:17-33).

**A**lthough they acknowledged that the land was truly a land flowing with milk and honey, the ten spies annulled this positive impression with an apprehensive warning. They reported that the people occupying the land were powerful, fortified, and men of great stature, identifying them with the Nephilim of old. They brought to the children of Israel an evil report of the land that they had spied out, saying,

The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eats up its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great size. And there we saw the Nephilim (the descendants of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight. (vv. 32-33)

The term *Nephilim* literally means “the fallen ones.” According to the record in Genesis 6, fallen angels had joined themselves to the daughters of men and produced Nephilim, “the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown” (v. 4). Because of that impure generation, God sent the flood over the earth in the time of Noah. God could not allow such a tainted race to fill the earth. The men of great size, whom the spies saw, were identified as Nephilim, a generation of giants. The sight of such men made most of the spies feel like grasshoppers in their presence. These people thus occupied the good land and frustrated the Israelites from possessing their inheritance.

### **The Inner Man and the Outer Man— the Self versus the Spirit**

In the New Testament our good land is Christ, who has been given to us as our allotted portion (Col. 1:12). We, like the children of Israel, have frustrations that prevent us from entering into our inheritance. Through the fall, the soul of man has been corrupted by the contamination of the satanic life and nature, affecting our soul and making it the self. The self in its many aspects distracts and occupies us, and it restrains us from entering into the full enjoyment of Christ as the portion allotted to us by our Father. The opening word of the hymn sounds this alarm:

“There is a foe whose hidden pow’r / The Christian well may fear, / More subtle far than inbred sin, / And to the heart more dear. / It is the pow’r of selfishness, / It is the wilful I.”

The foe whose hidden power is cunningly residing within us is the “power of selfishness”; it is the “willful I.” Watchman Nee writes concerning the woeful condition of a would-be servant of God:

Sooner or later a servant of God discovers that he himself is the greatest frustration to his work. Sooner or later he finds that his outer man does not match his inner man. The inner man heads in one direction, while the outer man heads in another direction. (7)

**T**his is the anomaly of the Christian life. We have received the very life of God; God in Christ has come to make His home in our heart and to live through us. With His indwelling, there is the empowering grace (Col. 1:11; Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:10). The Bible unveils the surpassing greatness of this power, the power that raised Christ from the dead (1:19-20). Paul declared that he could do all things through His empowering. Yet, in spite of the inward, energizing power of grace, we often seem to be powerless—impotent to carry out the smallest changes in our personal manner of living. As the apostle before us, we may often agonize over our lamentable incongruity:

I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not. For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice...Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom. 7:18-19, 24)

The intrinsic nature of our problem lies in the presence of two “men” within us—the inner man and the outer man. Second Corinthians 4:16 reveals that the outer man is decaying while the inner man is being renewed day by day.

The outer man consists of the body as its organ with the soul as its life and person. The inner man consists of the regenerated spirit as its life and person with the renewed soul as its organ. The life of the soul must be denied (Matt. 16:24-25), but the faculties of the soul—the mind, will, and emotion—must be renewed and uplifted by being subdued ([2 Cor.] 10:4-5) so that they can be used by the spirit, the person of the inner man. (Recovery Version, 4:16, note 1)

Our fallen soul—the self—is in a perpetual dispute with our regenerated spirit. The manifestation of the outer man in all its aspects is the self. The manifestation of the

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inner man is Christ, who lives out the life of God through us on earth. We have received the Lord Jesus as our Savior, and we have the life of God abiding within us. It is, however, easy for the life of God to be bound, or locked up, in us.

Among all the people in the world, some have the Lord's life within them. Among those who have the Lord's life, we find two different kinds of conditions. With the first, the life is bound, surrounded, and locked up. With the second, the Lord has opened up a way and the life can be released. The problem with us today is not how we can have life, but how we can allow this life to flow out of us. When we say that the Lord has to break us, this is not a figure of speech or a doctrine. Our very being has to be broken by the Lord. The Lord's life is well able to spread over the whole earth. However, it is locked up within us! The Lord is well able to bless the church, yet His life is imprisoned, contained, and blocked in us! If the outer man is not broken, we can never become a blessing to the church, nor can we expect the world to receive God's grace through us! (Nee 9)

**S**tanza 1 concludes, "And ere my Lord can live in me, / My very self must die." This closing thought expresses the essence of Paul's well-known pronouncement: "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). Only after we have experienced the termination of the self will it be possible for Christ to fully live in us and live Himself out through us.

#### Four Giants

In stanza 2 the imagery of the song continues, developing around Anak and the Anakim. "There is, like Anak's sons of old, / A race of giants still... / Still must these haughty Anakims / By Caleb's sword be slain." Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak in order to take possession of the land as the inheritance. The hymn points to the giants that are among us still—self-glorying, self-confidence, self-seeking, and self-will. In this stanza particular names are assigned to some specific characteristics of the self, which must be slain. The backdrop of this stanza is found in Joshua chapters 14 and 15.

Then the children of Judah approached Joshua in Gilgal; and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, You know the word that Jehovah spoke to Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning you in Kadesh-barnea... And to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion in the midst of the children of Judah according to the commandment of Jehovah to Joshua, that is, Kiriath-arba (Arba was the father of Anak); this is

Hebron. And Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai, the children of Anak. (14:6; 15:13-14)

With this scriptural history as the foundation, the attention of the hymn turns to the identity of specific "persons" in this race of giants facing the Christian in daily life: self-glorying, self-confidence, self-seeking, and self-will.

#### *Self-will*

Stanza 3 is a further prayer and commentary concerning self-will: "Oh, save me from self-will, dear Lord, / Which claims Thy sacred throne; / Oh! let my will be lost in Thine, / And let Thy will be done." Self-will is intent, like Lucifer its father, to wrest the throne from God. Simpson writes in *Thirty-one Kings* that self-will "is old Arba, the head of the dynasty. It expresses its decrees in the personal pronoun and the active verb—I will, I shall." Satan is the origin and originator of this characteristic in man's fallen nature—the great "I will." Isaiah describes the pride in Lucifer's heart and his determination to make himself equal with God:

How you have fallen from heaven, / O Daystar, son of the dawn! / How you have been hewn down to earth, / You who made nations fall prostrate! / But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north. / I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High. / But you will be brought down to Sheol, / To the uttermost parts of the pit. (14:12-15)

**I**n this picture of rebellion, Satan repeats "I will" five times. In contrast to this self-absorbed creature, the Lord Jesus took the lead to learn obedience and absolute submission to God through the things that He suffered, offering up "both petitions and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him out of death" (Heb. 5:7-8). He was faced with death, the death of the cross, but He repeated three times the petition to the Father, "Yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44). The Lord also instructed His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (16:24). Not only the evil will but the entire will of the self—both the good and the evil—must die. "Oh! let my will be lost in Thine."

#### *Self-glorying*

The hymn further opens the heart to the Lord in prayer in stanza 4 concerning the "king" of self-glory: "From proud vain glory save me, Lord, / From pride of praise and fame; / To Christ be all the honor given, / The glory

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to His name." Self-glorying seeks the praise of others in order to elevate one's own self-esteem. The Lord never sought His own glory (John 8:50). His desire was that the Father would be glorified in Him. Because of the Son's full submission and obedience, the Father highly exalted Him. Not only did He not seek the praise of others, but He would not even receive glory from men. He questioned the Jews in regard to their own conduct: "I do not receive glory from men...How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?" (5:41, 44). Receiving glory from men is a direct hindrance to believing and receiving glory that comes from God alone.

Paul followed of the pattern of his Savior, testifying to the young church in Thessalonica,

Even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. (1 Thes. 2:4-6)

To seek glory from men can be a pernicious temptation to those who give themselves to be ministers of the gospel or to be shepherds of the flock of God. Therefore, Paul warned the Ephesian elders to take heed to themselves first and then to the flock of God (Acts 20:28), and Peter counseled the elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly, according to God, never "lording it over" their allotments but rather being patterns of the flock (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1-3).

### ***Self-confidence***

In stanza 3 we find prayer relating to self-confidence: "Oh, keep me from self-confidence, / And self-sufficiency; / Let me exchange my strength for Thine, / And lean alone on Thee." The killing of self-confidence within our being can be a painful and sometimes costly process. Any kind of reliance on our own wisdom, strength, zeal, or righteousness must be slain in us. Simon Peter boasted confidently, "Even if all will be stumbled, yet I will not!" And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that today in this night, before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." But he went on speaking more intensely, "Even if I must die with You, I will by no means deny You!" (Mark 14:29-31). The stronger Peter's protest, the more bitter was his failure. We should be quick to learn the lesson to slay any semblance of self-reliance and place our confidence wholly on our Lord so that His strength may be made perfect in our weakness, for "when I am weak, then I am powerful" (2 Cor. 12:10).

Regarding the giant of self-reliance, Simpson writes in *Thirty-one Kings*, "The strongest natures have often to fail in order to bring them to the end of self, and lead them, like Peter, to lean on God, and like Jacob, with wounded thigh, to go forth depending henceforth on the strength of God."

### ***Self-seeking***

According to the burden of prayer in stanza 4, self-seeking should be countered with the giving of oneself to be a living sacrifice to the Lord (cf. Rom. 12:1-2): "Oh, save me from self-seeking, Lord, / Let me not be my own; / A living sacrifice I come, / Lord, keep me Thine alone." Self-seeking is another dominating condition of the soul-life in the natural man that must be recognized and put to death before we can gain the goal of our Christian living. Paul gives us some illumination into the pervasiveness of self-seeking when he writes concerning his young co-worker, Timothy: "I have no one like-souled who will genuinely care for what concerns you; for all seek their own things, not the things of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:20-21). What an extraordinary lament! Among all his co-laborers in the Lord's work, only Timothy escaped the grievous assessment that no one was like-souled with the apostle, because all sought their own things, not the things of Christ Jesus.

### ***Beseeching the Lord to Free Us from Self***

Stanza 3 and 4 consist of various personal prayers asking the Lord to save from self-will, taking His will for our own, and that He would save from self-glorying, self-confidence, and self-seeking. This portion of the hymn reveals the severity of the fight within the Christian in his effort to be truly free of the self. Every seeking believer has discovered in multiple ways that he is powerless to free himself. He needs Christ as his intrinsic strength and righteousness to live out the holy life of God. Apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). We need His shining, dealing, and exposing in our daily experiences until our eyes are fully enlightened, and we are abundantly clear that only Christ is the unique source of the resurrection life that overcomes. Only after we have seen our own unqualified helplessness to defeat this inner foe will we be ready to abandon all hope in our capacity and strength to do anything positive and to turn absolutely to our indwelling Savior.

### ***Ultimately Gaining the Heights of Hebron***

At the end of stanza 1 the goal is described: "And ere my Lord can live in me, / My very self must die." At the end of stanza 2 the goal is the gaining of the heights of heavenly love at Hebron. In *Thirty-one Kings* Simpson speaks of "the higher Christian life in the Land of Promise." He

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further describes our conflict as that which confronts us after we leave behind the “grosser forms of sin.” In other words, in his view we are no longer occupied and harassed by the outer forms of the sins of the flesh; rather, we are struggling against the craftiness of the self to enter into the “land of holiness, obedience and rest,” described in Simpson’s hymn as Hebron.

In *Thirty-one Kings* Hebron is defined by Simpson as “the city of love.” In his view it is the place where we have fully surrendered our living to the indwelling Christ, allowing Him to possess us completely. We have handed ourselves over to Him, and we now allow Him to live in us. For this to become a reality, it is mandatory for us to give God the absolute right to own us, control us, and possess us forever, never retreating from our unconditional and uncompromising consecration to Him.

In our commitment to God and His purpose, we will pass through many tests and experiences that will establish our consecration as a kind of worked-out righteousness, a living toward God and for God. For this to become our reality, a genuine love of Christ must separate us from the influence of sin, the flesh, the self, and the world. This is confirmed by 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: “The love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.” Only the love of Christ can serve as a counterweight to the operation of the self in our living. The effect of our loving consecration to the Lord will be Christ making His home in our heart. This is the deeper experience, having not only the love of Christ but Christ Himself as the indwelling Resident in us becoming our ultimate satisfaction and rest. This is our Hebron.

### The Need of Christ’s Direct Organic Operation

Eventually it should become clear that the distinctive need of the self-plagued Christian is the direct organic intervention of the Savior; He in His very life and nature must actively operate in us to apply His death to our “willful I” (cf. Gal. 2:20). Stanza 5 confirms this need, saying, “Oh, Savior, slay the self in me / By Thy consuming breath; / Show me Thy heart, Thy wounds, Thy shame, / That self be put to death.” Self-deception is a pervasive factor in the souls of men, and Christians are not exempt from its subtle effects. Self often masquerades as a spiritual giant, a humble worker for good, a generous giver. But in the end, it is exposed as a deceptive and self-serving performer. For example, while petitioning the Lord to free us from self-seeking and all vainglory, we may, without any sense of contradiction, inwardly long to be known by many as a humble servant of God. Therefore, in the final stanza of the hymn, there is the desperate cry, “Oh, Savior, slay the self in me / By Thy

consuming breath.” The seeker at last comprehends the hopelessness of the soul of a natural man and asks the Lord to do the killing work in him.

The list of the ways in which the self is expressed is difficult to exhaust. Simpson touches thirty-one aspects: among them are self-will, self-indulgence, self-seeking, self-complacency, self-glorying, self-confidence, self-consciousness, self-importance, self-depreciation, self-vindication, sensitiveness or touchiness, self-seeing, introspection, self-love, self-affections, selfish motives, selfish desires, and selfish choices. His inventory further includes selfish pleasures, selfish possessions, selfish fears and cares, selfish sorrows, selfish sacrifices and self-denial, selfish virtues and morality, self-righteousness, selfish sanctity, selfish charities, selfish Christian works, selfish prayers, selfish hopes, and selfish life. To be free of the “giants yet in the land,” there is the indispensable necessity of the organic operation of the divine life.

For this, we need to look away unto Jesus,

the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. For compare Him who has endured such contradiction by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary, fainting in your souls. You have not yet resisted unto blood, struggling against sin. (Heb. 12:2-4)

When we see the wonderful person of Christ Jesus, our Lord, self is put to shame, and we are drawn to enter into Him as our good land. After Paul cried out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” there was a glorious response: “Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:24-25). In Christ Jesus there is a wonderful law of the Spirit of life that frees us from the law of sin and death in our bodies. The only way for us to be free from the “willful I” is by this life. Oh, the joy of looking away to Him!

Strictly speaking, our transfer into the good land of Christ as our portion has already been accomplished through our new birth. We are a new creation living in a new realm (2 Cor. 5:17). Still, there are enemies within us doing their best to prevent us from fully possessing this Christ in our daily living. Salvation from self comes by focusing our attention on Him. The testimony of the apostle is

I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith, to

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know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. (Phil. 3:8-10)

We must, therefore, experience our organic oneness with Christ in everything—letting go of our aspirations and hopes, cultivating the desire to solely know Him, rejecting our own righteousness to be found in Him and His righteousness, and entering into union with this wonderful person in His sufferings and death through the power of His resurrection.

Paul lived in a condition of having not his own righteousness but the righteousness that is out of God, in order to know (to experience) Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. In v. 8 to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is by revelation. But to know Him here is by experience—to have the experiential knowledge of Him, to experience Him in the full knowledge of Him. Paul first received the revelation of Christ, then sought the experience of Christ—to know and enjoy Christ in an experiential way. (Recovery Version, Phil. 3:10, note 1)

### The Descending of Shekinah—the Filling with Glory

Somewhat unexpectedly, the final stanza introduces the thought of the shekinah glory of God descending upon the tent of meeting in the midst of the camp of the Israelites, filling it with glory: “When the Shekinah flame came down, / E'en Moses could not stay; / So let Thy glory fill me now, / And self forever slay.” This event is recorded in Exodus 40:34-35: “Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.”

The term *shekinah* is not used in the Bible, but the concept is clearly present. The word is a derivative of the Hebrew verb *shakan*, which indicates “abiding, dwelling, or habitation.” Jehovah’s dwelling with His people was made real to them repeatedly in the cloud and the fire that accompanied them when He brought them out of captivity in Egypt, established His law with them, and directed them in the erecting of the tabernacle as a place for His presence with them (cf. 29:45-46). The shekinah presence of God is directly associated with and is often manifested as the glory of the Lord in a physical manifestation of His presence with His people. When the construction of the tabernacle was completed and it was erected in the wilderness, the cloud covered the tent, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle (40:34). Then the physical appearance of His presence continued to be with Israel throughout their wilderness journey: “The cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and

there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel on all their journeys” (v. 38). In a similar way, when the temple that Solomon built was dedicated, the presence of Jehovah was confirmed and signified by physical manifestations of the cloud and glory (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:14; 7:1-2).

In the New Testament the temple, the dwelling place of God, is Christ Jesus our Lord (John 1:14; 2:19-21). He has come to dwell with His people in perpetuity. First, He came as God with us, Emmanuel. Then through the process of His incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, He became the life-giving Spirit to indwell us (1 Cor. 15:45), and near the time of His ascension, He promised, “I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

When the shekinah, the glory of Jehovah, descended on the tabernacle and again on the temple, no one was able to enter. The hymn affirms, “When the Shekinah flame came down, / E'en Moses could not stay.” It seems Simpson’s meaning is that eventually only the intimate and abiding presence of the Lord in His glory will fully terminate the self in us—Christ Himself is not only the Victor in us; He is everything in us. Now it is truly “no longer I...but...Christ” (Gal. 2:20). He is with us in a close and intimate fellowship. “So let Thy glory fill me now, / And self forever slay.”

This hymn provides motivation and encouragement, alerting us to the insidious presence of the self within us. However, one key factor missed by the hymn is the corporate aspect of the Lord’s goal and way in our journey. The shekinah glory descended on the tabernacle, a type of the corporate people of God. It did not come down on individuals. In the New Testament the church is the house of God (Heb. 3:6; 1 Tim. 3:15), the dwelling place of God in spirit (Eph. 2:20-22). Here His presence can be manifested. His glory can fill the house. Eventually, we all must see the vision that God’s goal for us is not to become individual overcomers; His purpose is that we be built together into His dwelling place on earth. Today this building is the church; in eternity it will be the New Jerusalem. This is His intent. May it become our aspiration and destiny.

by Gary Kaiser

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