

The Church as a Corporate Warrior in Ephesians

by Ron Kangas

The specific and particular characteristic of Ephesians is that it is written from the heavens, eternity, God's heart, and God's eternal purpose (1:3, 5, 9, 11; 3:11). Ephesians speaks not from the earth but from the heavens, not from time but from eternity, and not from the sinful condition of fallen human beings but from the mystery of God's will "according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" and from the perspective of "the economy of the fullness of the times" (1:5, 9-10). Because the revelation in Ephesians brings us into the heavens (2:6), in our study of this Epistle we should not be distracted by earthly things or focus on our spiritual condition. Because Ephesians ushers us into eternity through the vision seen by the apostle Paul (Acts 26:19), we should not be inwardly constricted by time and space but brought into eternity by experiencing Christ as the ladder set up on earth and leading to heaven (John 1:51; Gen. 28:11-22), keeping heaven open to earth and joining earth to heaven. As we read and study Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, we need to be brought out of ourselves into the realm from which it was written—the heavens, eternity, and the heart and purpose of God.

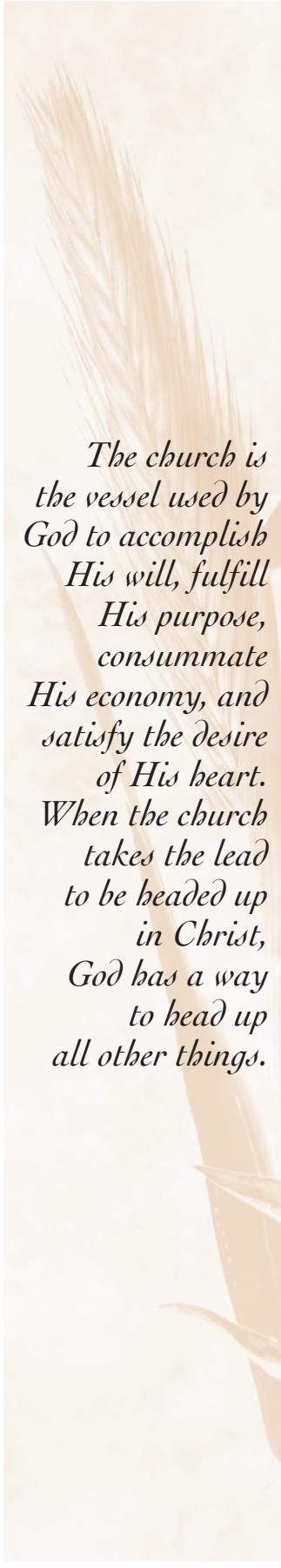
If we intend to explore the deep, divine thoughts in Ephesians, it is crucial that we concentrate on the mystery of God's will (1:9), the heading up of all things in the heavens and on earth in Christ through the church (v. 10), the multifarious wisdom of God made known to the rulers and authorities through the church (3:10), and God's eternal purpose (v. 11). As we exercise the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of God and the eyes of our heart are increasingly enlightened, we will have a genuine spiritual understanding of the profound concepts in Ephesians 1:9-10 and 3:10-11, and we will have a governing vision of the church not only as the Body of Christ and the new man but also as a corporate warrior engaged in spiritual warfare against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens" (6:12).

The Mystery of God's Will

In Ephesians 5:17 Paul speaks a direct word to the church in Ephesus: "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." God's will is what He wants and what He intends to accomplish. God's will is the source of His eternal purpose (3:11). Since God is eternal—self-existing, ever-existing, without beginning or ending—His will is also eternal. The will of God lies at the heart of the origin of the universe, and He created all things for His will so that He might accomplish His eternal purpose. God's will is concentrated in Christ and is for Christ to have the preeminence, the first place, in all things (Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:9, 15-18; 3:4, 10-11). The eternal will of God is to bring forth the church as the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:32). The living God has blessed us, believers in Christ and children of God, by "making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (1:9). It was God's good pleasure, the desire and delight of His heart, to make the mystery of His will known to us. "In eternity God planned a will. This

will was hidden in Him; hence, it was a mystery. In His wisdom and prudence He made this hidden mystery known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 9, note 2).

According to the good pleasure of His will, God predestinated us unto sonship (v. 5). God's good pleasure is of His will and is embodied in His will, so His will is the source of His pleasure, purpose, and economy. God's good pleasure is the desire of His heart; it is what makes Him happy and joyful. God predestinated us to be His sons according to the desire of His heart. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us to be holy, the same as He is in nature. To be made holy is to be sanctified by God through His dispensing of Himself in Christ as the life-giving Spirit into us and then mingling His nature with us (2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:16-17). To be sanctified is the process, and to be sons of God is the aim, the goal. We become sons of God by being regenerated by the Spirit in our spirit (John 3:6), joined to the Son of God (Gal. 2:20), and conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God so that our whole tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body—would be "sonized," that is, made the same as the firstborn Son in life, nature, and expression (Rom. 8:29). In Ephesians 1:11 Paul goes on to say that in Christ we have been "predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will." Whereas God's will is His intention, His counsel is His consideration of the way to accomplish His intention. According to His will and in keeping with His foreknowledge and our being "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Pet. 1:2), a council was held by the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—before the foundation of the world to make a counsel, a decision, which is His determined will regarding the way by which He will cause us to become the sons of God with the life and nature of God. All who love God and who have been called according to His purpose will eventually realize that all things work together for our being conformed to the image of the Son of God so that He may be the Firstborn among many brothers, His reproduction, for the church as His corporate expression.



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in Christ,
God has a way
to head up
all other things.*

The Heading Up of All Things in Christ

Ultimately, God's will in the universe is to head up all things in Christ through the church as the Body of Christ: "Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him" (Eph. 1:10). God the Father subjected all things under the feet of Christ and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22-23). Through the various periods of time in all the ages (dispensations), all things will be headed up in Christ in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2); this will be the fulfillment of God's eternal administration and economy. God is now working to liberate His creation from bondage and vanity and bring it into liberty by heading up all things in Christ. In actuality and practicality, God will subject all things under Christ by heading up all things in Christ through the church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 15:24-28). God is heading up His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated ones to be the Body of Christ with Christ as the Head. What we may call the church life—a living in "the church" as Christ is building up His church (Matt. 18:17; 16:18; Rev. 1:11, 20)—is a life of being headed up in Christ. For Christ to be the Head over all things to the church indicates that Christ's headship is being transmitted to the church; this means that, in a sense, the church can share the headship of Christ over all things. The first step in the heading up of all things in Christ is for God to place His chosen and predestinated ones, His sons, under the unique headship of Christ. For this, God has ordained that the one Body of Christ should be expressed on earth locally as one church per city (Acts 8:1; 14:23; Titus 1:5; Rev. 1:11; 2:1; 22:16). The church is the vessel used by God to accomplish His will, fulfill His purpose, consummate His economy, and satisfy the desire of His heart. When the church takes the lead to be headed up in Christ, God has a way to head up all other things. Eventually, in, with, by, and through His Body, Christ will be the universal Head over all things. In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem (the wife of

the redeeming God) as the center, all things will be headed up in Christ (21:2-3, 9-11, 23-25; 22:1-2). This will be the complete fulfillment of Ephesians 1:10.

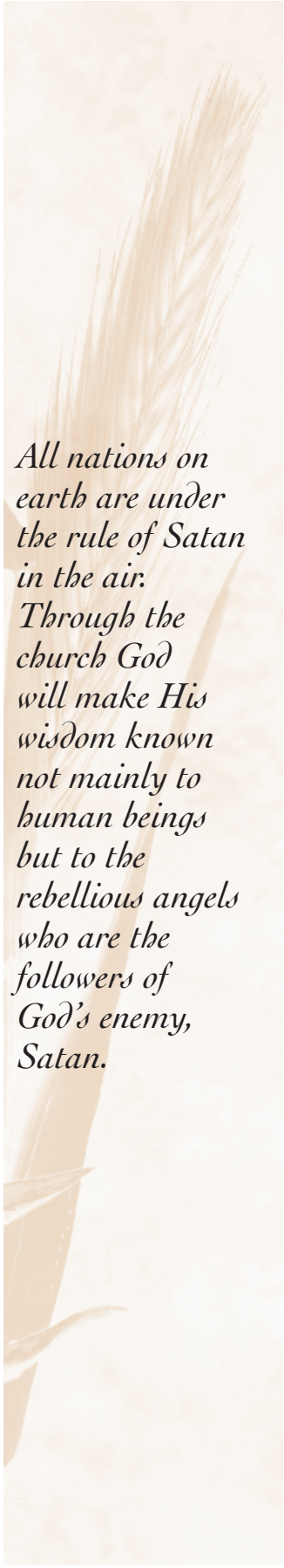
The Multifarious Wisdom of God

Through this headed-up church, the multifarious wisdom of God will be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenlies (3:10). The rulers and authorities are the angelic rulers, both good and evil. Ephesians 3:10 refers especially to the evil powers—Satan and his angels. Presently, Satan’s sphere of rule is in the air and on the earth (2:2; 1 John 5:19). The book of Daniel indicates that all nations on earth are under the rule of Satan in the air (10:13). Through the church God will make His wisdom known not mainly to human beings but to the rebellious angels who are the followers of God’s enemy, Satan (Rev. 12:7). As we will see in a following section of this article, even the rebellion of Satan is within the realm of God’s wisdom and sovereignty (Isa. 14:12-14). If it were not for Satan’s rebellion and war against God, God’s wisdom could not be made known in a full way. In his subtlety Satan has, unintentionally, created many opportunities for God’s wisdom to be manifested in various ways, aspects, and angles. In the way and time ordained by God, Satan, God’s enemy, will be defeated, subdued, and made to know the multifarious wisdom of God. The time will come in the present age when many of God’s chosen and redeemed people will partake of, enjoy, and be saturated with the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8); they will be built up as the church, the organic Body of Christ, through which God’s multifarious wisdom is made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenlies (vv. 9-10). Those who are governed, directed, encouraged, and strengthened by this truth and heavenly vision eagerly await the coming day when, through the church, the built-up Body of Christ (4:16; 2:21-22), Satan and his angels will be put to shame and will be compelled to realize that everything that they have done gave God the opportunity to manifest His wisdom through His church.

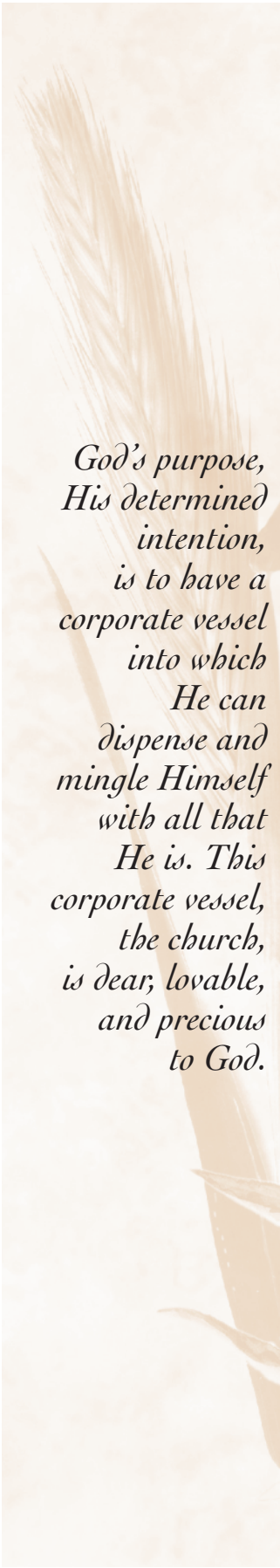
God’s Eternal Purpose

The multifarious wisdom of God that is made known to the rulers and authorities through the church is “according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord” (3:11). Literally, the meaning of the original language rendered as “eternal purpose” means “purpose of the ages.” A purpose is a determined intent to do something or to gain something. The determined will of God became the purpose of God. God Himself is the initiation, the origination, and the sphere of His eternal purpose (1:9). Regarding His eternal purpose, God did not take counsel with anyone. Under the sovereignty of God, everything is working for God, and nothing can overthrow it. God’s purpose was made by God in eternity past for eternity future. In eternity past, before the foundation of the world—before the heavens, the earth, and all things were created—God made a purpose in Christ for something in the eternity to come; therefore, it is called the eternal purpose, the purpose of eternity (vv. 4-5, 9, 11). The word *purpose* in Ephesians 3:11 is equivalent to the word *plan*—the eternal plan that God made in Christ. In Romans 8:28 *His purpose* refers to the purposeful determination in God’s plan to produce many brothers of His firstborn Son (v. 29) for the Body of Christ (12:4-5) expressed as local churches (16:1, 4-5, 16). God’s plan is to have a corporate expression of Himself in Christ the Son by the Spirit through the Body composed and built up with many regenerated and transformed people by dispensing Himself into them and mingling Himself with redeemed humanity.

In Ephesians we see that God’s purpose, His plan, is His determination to gain the church, the Body of Christ. Ephesians 3:10-11 reveals that the existence of the church is according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord. This indicates that the church was planned by God in eternity; before time began, God purposed to have the church. It is for the church that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world “to be holy and without blemish before Him in love” (1:4) and predestinated us “unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,



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to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved” (vv. 5-6). In eternity past and for eternity to come, God planned and purposed to have the church for Christ and in Christ (3:10-11). God’s purpose is to have the church, the Body of Christ through which He can and will express Himself in glory. His will, good pleasure, and eternal purpose are to have the church, and for the church He is determined to gain a group of human beings who will be the living Body of Christ. In eternity past God planned to have the church composed of regenerated and transformed people who are coordinated and built together as a corporate Body (1:22-23; 2:21-22; 3:14-21). God planned that this organic Body would be a corporate vessel into which He would work Himself through Christ’s making His home in their hearts (vv. 16-17). This means that God’s purpose, His determined intention, is to have a corporate vessel into which He can dispense and mingle Himself with all that He is. This corporate vessel, the church, is dear, lovable, and precious to God because the church is His good pleasure, the desire of His heart.

The existence of the universe is according to God’s eternal purpose to have the church (Rev. 4:11; Eph. 3:9-11). The full revelation of the Scriptures unveils that all things in the universe are for the church. The heavens, the earth, the multitude of other things, and the tripartite man are required in order that the church may exist to express the Triune God. In the divine economy, the three persons of the Godhead operate together for the divine purpose of having the church to fulfill God’s eternal plan and satisfy the desire of His heart. Therefore, we boldly assert that the purpose of God in the universe is to produce a people who will be the same as He is in every possible way (John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2). In life, nature, image, appearance, radiance, glory, and expression, we, the children of God, are maturing to become full-grown sons of God. For the fulfillment of this purpose, God is dispensing Himself into us and operating in us “both the willing and the working for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). He is working Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people so that they may be permeated and saturated with His communicable attributes to be the same as God in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead and not as an object of worship.

With God’s determined intention in view, we need to see and understand God’s purpose in creation and redemption. God’s purpose in creation was that there would be a corporate man on earth to express Him and represent Him. Creation was a part of God’s original purpose, but redemption in Christ is remedial; that is, redemption brings fallen human beings back to God’s eternal purpose (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The divine purpose in creation and redemption is that God would have many sons (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:26; 4:4-7), thereby accomplishing in time His predestinating of us in eternity past unto sonship according to the good pleasure of His will. Furthermore, in Christ our Redeemer, God saved us and called us with a holy calling “according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9). It is vitally important that we view salvation from God’s perspective. The purpose of God’s salvation is for His created and redeemed people to have the sonship, that is, to have the life of the Son and be conformed to the image of the Son so that the Son would be the Firstborn among many brothers (1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:29) for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose to have the church, the Body of Christ, composed of the many sons of God (v. 14; 12:4-5). God’s intention is His eternal plan according to the good pleasure of His will to put us into Christ and make us one with Him so that we may have Him as eternal life and share His position and thus be His glorious corporate expression (Eph. 1:5, 9, 22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 5:11-12). The grace “which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages” (2 Tim. 1:9) and by which we were saved (Eph. 2:8) is God’s provision in life for us to live our daily Christian life for God’s eternal purpose. Moreover, we need to experience the superabounding grace so that in our daily Christian life “grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:20-21). Through His grace God’s purpose becomes our purpose (2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10).

God’s salvation involves our being saved from a human life that is meaningless, a life of vanity (Eccl. 1:2). The gospel of God saves us from a human life that is without meaning

into the meaning of the universe. Through His mercy, kindness, and tenderheartedness, we now realize that God created man to live on earth a life of meaning and purpose. Sadly, man fell, and the gaining of the meaning of human life was damaged. Through His salvation God rescued us from vanity and meaninglessness and brought us back to His (and our) original purpose, which is the meaning of the universe (Rev. 4:11).

At this juncture we need to consider the reason for and the aspects of the spiritual warfare carried out in the victorious Christ and by the church as the Body of Christ, the new man, and the corporate warrior. Because a war is taking place in the spiritual world behind the physical world, there is the necessity of spiritual warfare, of fighting, to fulfill God's eternal purpose to defeat the enemy of God and bring in the kingdom of God (Dan. 10:10—11:1; Rev. 11:15; 12:10).

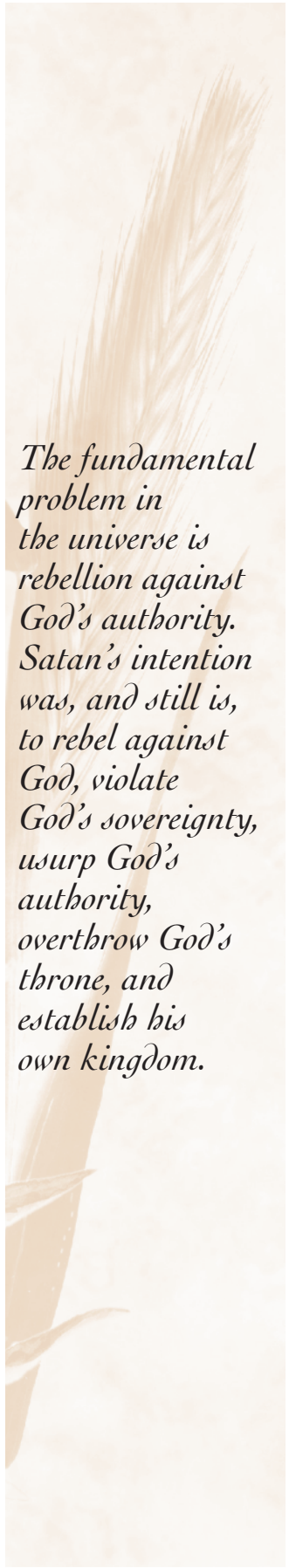
The Rebellion of an Archangel against God

God is the supreme authority and has all authority. Whereas God's power represents His works, God's authority represents God Himself. God's authority is actually God Himself issuing out from God's own being (22:1). The fundamental problem in the universe is rebellion against God's authority. Satan's intention was, and still is, to rebel against God, violate God's sovereignty, usurp God's authority, overthrow God's throne, and establish his own kingdom. Two great principles are now operating in the universe—God's authority and Satan's rebellion; the controversy between God and Satan concerns authority and rebellion—the denial of God's authority and the rejection of God's rule. Originally, Satan was an archangel created by God, but due to his pride, he uplifted himself, rebelled against God, violated God's sovereignty, became God's enemy and adversary, and established his own kingdom, consisting of the angels who followed him in rebelling against God and His authority (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:2-19; Matt. 12:26).

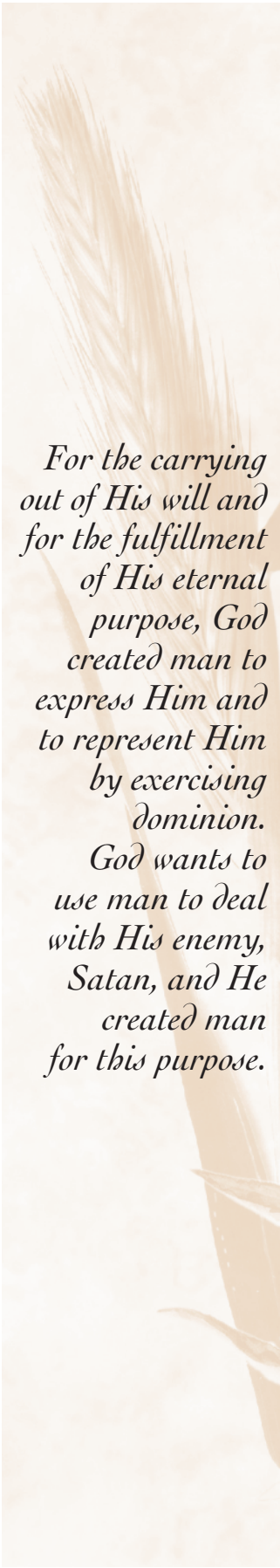
As an angel, Satan was an anointed cherub created by God before God created the earth; he was highest among the angels (Ezek. 28:12-15; Job 38:4-7). He was the "Daystar, son of the dawn" (Isa. 14:12), one of the first angels created by God at the "dawn" of the universe, appointed by God as head of all the angels (Ezek. 28:14; Jude 9). This anointed cherub was appointed by God to rule over the preadamite universe (Luke 4:6). Satan was the one closest to God, and having both the kingship and the priesthood, he held the highest position in God's creation (Ezek. 28:13).

Satan's rebellion against God and His authority is revealed in Isaiah 14:13-14 and Ezekiel 28:2-18. Satan, the archangel, rebelled against God because of the pride in his heart, which had been lifted up because of his beauty. His intention was to overthrow God's authority and to exalt himself to be equal with God; in his rebellion against God, he wanted to be on the same level as God (Isa. 14:13). Because of his rebellion, Satan became God's enemy, God's adversary (Zech. 3:1-2; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). *Satan* means "adversary." As God's adversary, Satan opposes God. *Enemy* refers to the foe outside of God's kingdom, whereas *adversary* refers to the foe from within God's kingdom (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). Satan is not only God's enemy outside of God's kingdom but also God's adversary from within God's kingdom, rebelling against Him. After he rebelled against God, Satan was condemned and sentenced by God (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19). Satan's previous right to enter into the presence of God whenever "the sons of God," the angels, came to present themselves was not immediately taken away from him (Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10). In His wisdom and sovereignty God did not execute His judgment on Satan but has allowed him to do certain things that provide God the opportunity to manifest His wisdom.

Satan has his kingdom, the authority of darkness (Matt. 12:26; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). Satan has his authority and his angels (Matt. 25:41), who are his subordinates as rulers, authorities, and world-rulers of the darkness of this world; hence, he has his kingdom, the authority of darkness. Satan, "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4), is the ruler of this world



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For the carrying out of His will and for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, God created man to express Him and to represent Him by exercising dominion. God wants to use man to deal with His enemy, Satan, and He created man for this purpose.

(John 12:31). Ephesians 2:2 speaks of God's enemy as "the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience." In this verse *the spirit*, in apposition to *the authority of the air*, refers to the aggregate power, the aggregate of all the evil angelic authorities, over which Satan is the ruler. The rulers, the authorities, and world-rulers of this darkness are the rebellious angels who followed Satan in his rebellion and who, invisibly, now rule over all nations on the earth. This indicates that Satan, the devil, has his kingdom in which he occupies the highest position and in which the rebellious angels are under him. At the end of this age, after the victorious, overcoming believers are raptured and stand before the throne of God, there will be war in heaven. Using the past tense, Revelation 12:7-9, says, "Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon [the devil]. And the dragon warred and his angels. And they did not prevail... And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him." Before this occurs and before the kingdom of the world (Satan's realm—1 John 5:19) becomes "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15), the genuine church, the new man, must engage in spiritual warfare in what will be the conclusion of three God-ordained steps: the creation of man; the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of Man; and the battles fought by the church under the leadership of the victorious, enthroned Christ.

God Creating Man to Deal with His Enemy

As recorded in Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion...over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." For the carrying out of His will and for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, God created man to express Him and to represent Him by exercising dominion. God wants to use man to deal with His enemy, Satan, and He created man for this purpose. As the unique Creator, God will not lower Himself to deal directly with the enemy. God wants creature to deal with creature. He wants His creature man to deal with His fallen and rebellious creature Satan in order bring the earth back to Himself. The man whom He created is being used by Him for this purpose. After creating man, male and female, "God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (v. 28). "*Subdue* here implies that a war is raging on earth between God and His enemy, Satan. Whoever gains the earth will have the victory. Man was created by God to subdue, to conquer, the earth and recover it for God" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 28, note 1). God's intention is to give man dominion to exercise His authority over the earth in order that the kingdom of God may come to the earth, the will of God may be done on earth, and the glory of God may be manifested on earth (Matt. 6:10, 13). In *The Glorious Church* Watchman Nee addresses this with penetrating words: "If man has not restored the earth from the hand of Satan, he has not yet achieved God's purpose in creating him...Dealing with Satan is for the benefit of God... Dealing with Satan satisfies God's need" (11).

The man whom God created to express Him, represent Him, recover the earth, and deal with His enemy, Satan, failed to fulfill the purpose for which he was created. He disobeyed God, receiving the element of sin into his being; thus human beings became "children of the devil" (1 John 3:10) and a part of Satan's kingdom. However, God in His wisdom and foreknowledge had foreseen this dreadful situation and planned that His intention—that man would express Him in His image and represent Him with His authority—would be fulfilled in Christ as the second man and in the church as the corporate one new man (1 Cor. 15:47; Eph. 2:15; 1:11-23; 1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 3:10-11).

The Second Man, the God-man

For the fulfillment of His purpose, God had created man to express Him and to represent Him in dealing with His enemy, Satan, but this man failed in God's purpose. Instead

of creating another man, God Himself, through the incarnation of Christ, came in His Son as the Son of Man, becoming a man in His Son—"the second man." What a great matter this is! Regarding Christ, the Son of the living God, the second man, 1 Corinthians 15:47 says, "The first man is out of the earth, earthy; the second man is out of heaven." "The first man was the head of the old creation, representing it in creation; the second man, Christ Jesus, is the Head of the new creation, representing it in resurrection" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 47, note 2).

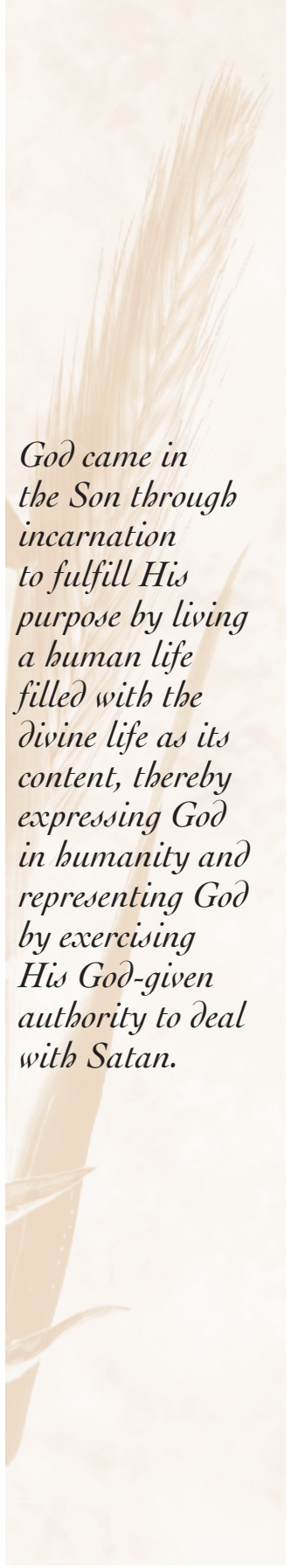
Christ's incarnation and God-man living fulfilled God's intention in His creation of man. In order to know Christ, the God-man, we need to know the intrinsic significance of Christ's incarnation. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—participated in the incarnation of Christ (John 1:14; Luke 1:35; Gal. 4:4). The incarnation of Christ was the union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the tripartite man (John 1:1, 14). *Union* concerns oneness in life, *mingling* is related to the divine and human natures, and *incorporation* denotes persons coinhering in each other. Through His incarnation Christ brought God into man and made God one with man. As the God-man, Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and was born of a human virgin with the human essence (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:31, 35; Gal. 4:4). As the union, mingling, and incorporation of the Triune God with the tripartite man, the Lord Jesus is the Triune God-man, the Triune God expressed in humanity. Therefore, we may say that Christ, the God-man, is actually the Father-the Son-the Spirit-man (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; John 8:29). The Savior in whom we believe and whom we have received is the wonderful Triune God-man (Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; Phil. 3:20). The incarnation of Christ fulfilled God's purpose in His creation of man (Eph. 1:9; 3:11; Gen. 1:26-27). It is a great thing to see that the incarnation of Christ is closely related to the purpose of God in creating man in His image and according to His likeness—that man would receive and contain Him as life and express Him in His attributes. Since the first man failed God in His purpose, God came in the Son through incarnation to fulfill His purpose by living a human life filled with the divine life as its content, thereby expressing God in humanity and representing God by exercising His God-given authority to deal with Satan. The divine nature with its attributes was expressed in the God-man's human nature with its human virtues; thus, the living of the Lord Jesus was humanly divine and divinely human. No human words can describe the living of this wonderful God-man, whose life is recorded in the four Gospels. Christ expressed in His humanity the bountiful God through His human virtues. Throughout human history no one has ever lived a life resembling the one lived by the first God-man, the second man.

The Victorious Christ

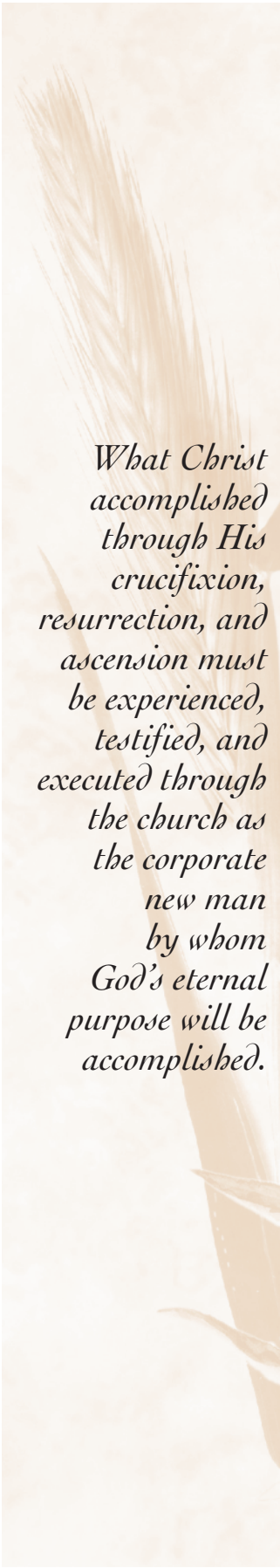
In His earthly ministry the victorious Christ defeated the devil and destroyed his works (Matt. 4:1-11). For Him to accomplish His ministry for the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord Jesus had to defeat God's enemy, the devil, Satan. This He had to do as a man; hence, He stood as a man to confront the enemy of God. The devil's temptation of the first man, Adam, was a success; his temptation of the second man, Christ, was an absolute failure.

In His ministry on earth, the Lord Jesus through His death on the cross destroyed the works of the devil: "The devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). The Greek word translated "destroy" may also be translated "undo" or "dissolve." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might undo and destroy the sinful deeds of the devil, that is, condemn, through His death on the cross in the flesh (Rom. 8:3), sin initiated by him, the evil one; destroy the power of sin, the sinful nature of the devil (Heb. 2:14); and take away both sin and sins" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, 1 John 3:8, note 4).

In His crucifixion the victorious Christ cast out the ruler of this world, destroyed the devil, caused the rulers and authorities to be stripped off, and nullified death (John 12:31; Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:10). In His work on the cross, Christ cast out the ruler of



God came in the Son through incarnation to fulfill His purpose by living a human life filled with the divine life as its content, thereby expressing God in humanity and representing God by exercising His God-given authority to deal with Satan.



What Christ accomplished through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension must be experienced, testified, and executed through the church as the corporate new man by whom God's eternal purpose will be accomplished.

this world and judged the world through His work in His death. Simultaneously, the world system related to Satan was judged (1 John 5:19). The base of Satan's rebellion was shaken, and the strongholds of Satan's earthly kingdom were shaken (Matt. 27:51). In His humanity and through His work on the cross, Christ destroyed the devil (John 3:14). In Hebrews 2:14 the Greek word translated "destroy" can also be rendered as "bring to nought," "make of none effect," "do away with," "abolish," "annul," or "discard."

Colossians 2:15 portrays the warfare that took place at the time of Christ's crucifixion. It reveals a particular aspect of the work of Christ on the cross: "Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it." The activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic rulers and authorities were brought into focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God's eternal, central, and unique way to deal with His enemy and with every negative thing in the universe. In His crucifixion Christ was laboring to accomplish redemption, and God the Father was working to judge sin and nail the law to the cross. At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in closely to God and Christ; thus, a warfare was raging at the cross. God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame.

In His work on the cross, Christ nullified death, making it of none effect, through His devil-destroying death and death-swallowing resurrection (2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:52-54). The resurrection of Christ declares that He is victorious over death (2 Tim. 2:8). It was not possible for the Lord to be held by death (Acts 2:24), because He is both God and resurrection, possessing an indestructible life; death could not hold Him (John 11:25; Heb. 7:16). After the Lord Jesus defeated death, He "was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). In Revelation we have a vision of the resurrected Christ who is "the living One" and has "the keys of death and of Hades" (1:18). As the living One, the Lord became dead, but now He is "living forever and ever" (v. 18). The resurrected Christ has the keys of death and of Hades; death is subject to Him, and Hades is under His control.

In His ascension the victorious Christ "led captive those taken captive" (Eph. 4:8). The Amplified New Testament renders *He led captive those taken captive* as "He led a train of vanquished foes." *Vanquished foes* may refer to Satan, to his angels, and to us, the sinners. This indicates Christ's victory over Satan, sin, and death; in His ascension there was a procession of vanquished foes, led as captives for a celebration of His victory (2 Cor. 2:14). When Christ ascended to the heavens, we were in the train of captives led by Him to "the height" (Eph. 4:8). The ascended Christ is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him. The victorious Christ has released us from the usurping hand of Satan and brought us to the heavens, where we are now sitting—not as captives but as sons of God and members of Christ. In His ascension the victorious Christ has brought us to the highest place in the universe (2:6).

The Church as the Corporate New Man Fulfilling God's Purpose

When Christ was on the cross, dying for our redemption and dealing with Satan, He, the second man, terminated the old man and created in Himself "one new man," the corporate reproduction of the first God-man (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 2:15). Based upon this marvelous but often neglected truth, Paul charges the believers to put off the old man, to be renewed in the spirit of the mind, and to "put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality" (4:22-24). As a development of the truth concerning the new man revealed in Ephesians, Paul goes on in Colossians to speak of putting on "the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where...Christ is all and in all" (3:10-11). What Christ accomplished through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension must be experienced, testified, and executed through the church as the corporate new man by whom God's eternal purpose will be accomplished.

We have seen that God's intention in His creation of man was to have a corporate man to express Him and represent Him (Gen. 1:26, 28). God's creation of man in Genesis 1 is a picture of the one new man in God's new creation. The church as the new man is the corporate man in God's intention, and this new man will fulfill the twofold purpose of expressing God and representing Him. God created a corporate man to represent Him by having dominion over all things; the goal in giving man dominion was for him to subdue God's enemy, Satan, who rebelled against God. God's intention that man would have dominion over all things will be fulfilled by the church as the one new man. The church as the corporate new man is the corporate warrior to defeat God's enemy and to bring in the kingdom of God (Eph. 4:24; 6:11, 13). The church as the new man is a warrior fighting against God's enemy, for the new man fulfills God's purpose to express God and to fight against God's enemy for God's dominion, God's kingdom (Rev. 11:15).

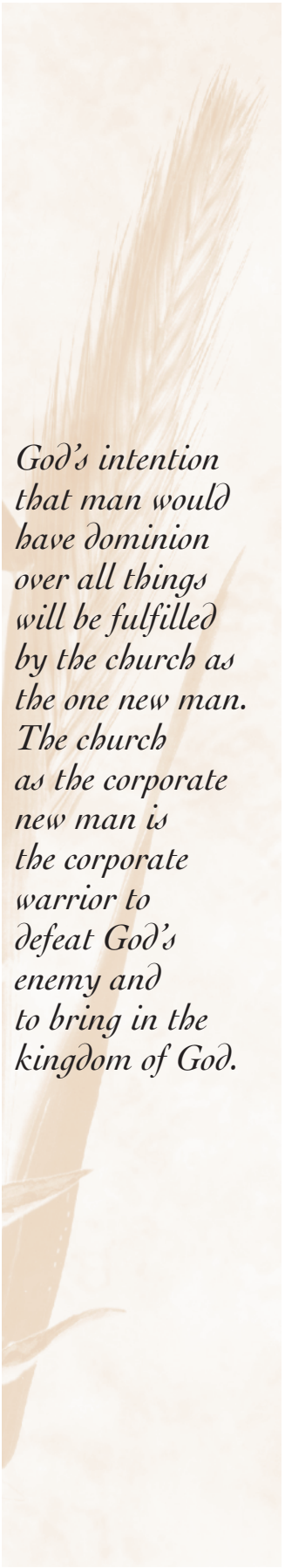
The spiritual warfare in which the new man must be engaged is necessary because Satan's will is set against God's will. If we would know how the church as the new man can be God's warrior to engage in spiritual warfare, we need to realize that in the universe there are three wills—the divine will, the satanic will, and the human will. Spiritual warfare has its source in the conflict between the divine will and the satanic will (Matt. 6:10): Lucifer's pride in his high position and beauty gave rise to an evil intention, which became the satanic will (Ezek. 28:12-19; Isa. 14:12-15). Before the archangel of God rose up to contradict the divine will, there was no war in the universe; the rebellion of Lucifer was the beginning of all the fighting that is now taking place among nations, in society, in the family, and within individuals (cf. Rev. 12:3-11; Gal. 5:17). God wants His creature *man* to deal with His fallen creature *Satan*; for this, the human will must stand with the divine will (Matt. 26:39; 12:30; 7:21). As the church, our fighting is to subdue the satanic will and defeat God's enemy.

With local churches in mind (Rom. 16:1, 4-5, 16), Paul declares, "The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (v. 20). The crushing of Satan is related to the church life—the strongest means by which God overcomes Satan. The Greek word rendered "your" in Romans 16:20 is plural; this refers to the Body, not to the Body in a universal sense but to the local and practical expression of the Body. "Dealing with Satan is a Body matter, not an individual matter" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 20, note 1), contrary to the widespread opinion among a majority of preachers, theologians, and Bible expositors. Satan can be crushed only under the feet of the practical expression of the Body in the local churches. Therefore, "it is only when we have a proper local church as the practical expression of the Body that Satan is crushed under our feet" (Note 1). It is significant that in Romans 16:20 God—the One who crushes Satan under our feet—is called "the God of peace." Peace is the Sanctifier; His sanctification brings in peace. The peace of God guards, mounts guard over, our hearts and thoughts because the God of peace patrols before our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil, trusting and resting in the victorious Christ, the Head of the Body.

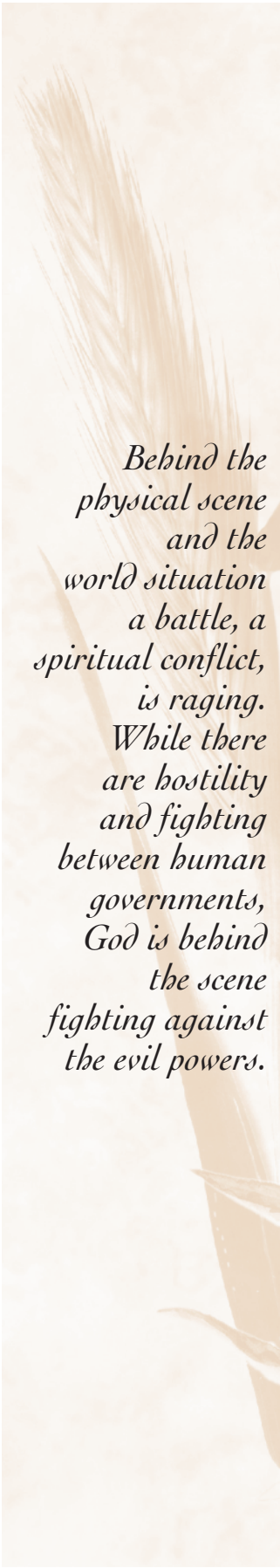
The New Man as a Corporate Warrior Engaging in Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-20 reveals that the church as the new man is a corporate warrior fighting against the enemy of God for God's kingdom and for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. The church as the new man is a corporate man in God's plan, and this corporate new man will fulfill the twofold purpose of expressing God and dealing with His enemy. Not only must God's eternal purpose be fulfilled and the desire of Christ's heart be satisfied, but God's enemy must be defeated; for this the church must be a warrior. The eternal purpose is to have the church, but the enemy of God opposes God, seeks to frustrate the fulfillment of God's purpose, and attacks the church with his evil powers. Thus, there is a cosmic conflict. God in Christ fights this battle through the church, and the church, the new man, fights the battle for God in the victorious Christ.

In order to understand and participate in the necessary and intense spiritual warfare



God's intention that man would have dominion over all things will be fulfilled by the church as the one new man. The church as the corporate new man is the corporate warrior to defeat God's enemy and to bring in the kingdom of God.



Behind the physical scene and the world situation a battle, a spiritual conflict, is raging. While there are hostility and fighting between human governments, God is behind the scene fighting against the evil powers.

carried out by the new man, the corporate warrior, we need to be filled with the full knowledge of God's will, purpose, need, and intention "in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col. 1:9). This requires that we exercise our regenerated spirit with its function of intuition and open our inner being to the indwelling Christ to be renewed in the spirit of the mind so that we may have a clear view of matters related to spiritual warfare: seeing the invisible spiritual scene behind the visible world situation, sitting with the ascended Christ in ascension, wrestling against the devil and his evil forces, being empowered in the Lord, standing in Christ's power, taking up the whole armor of God not individually but corporately, and praying with authority in the position of ascension.

Seeing the Spiritual Scene behind the World Situation

For us to engage in spiritual warfare, we need to see the spiritual things behind the physical things, the spiritual world behind the physical world and the world situation. It is crucial to see that behind the physical scene a spiritual struggle, a struggle not seen with human eyes, is raging. In our fighting we should deal not with things that appear on the surface but with the powers of darkness behind these things. The spiritual scene in Daniel 10 includes both good and evil spirits that are engaged in an invisible spiritual war (vv. 12-13, 20-21). While Daniel was praying for twenty-one days (vv. 2-3), a spiritual struggle was taking place in the air between two spirits, one belonging to Satan and the other belonging to God. An angelic messenger came to Daniel and told him that for these twenty-one days he himself had been fighting "against the prince of the kingdom of Persia (v. 13, cf. v. 20), probably an evil spirit, a rebellious angel, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 11, note 1). It is of vital importance that, with Daniel as the scriptural base, we see that behind the physical scene and the world situation a battle, a spiritual conflict, is raging. While there are hostility and fighting between human governments, God is behind the scene fighting against the evil powers.

Revelation 12 presents a clear vision concerning the war in heaven—the warfare in the universe between God and His enemy. The vision in this chapter shows that the true situation in the universe involves God's enemy fighting against Him (vv. 1-4, 8-9, 13, 17). The universal bright woman—the totality of God's people from Genesis 3:15 unto the end of this age—brought forth a man-child—the victorious Christ and the overcomers, the victorious believers (Rev. 12:11; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21). The man-child, the overcoming believers, is engaged in fighting against God's enemy continually on earth, and heaven is waiting for the man-child to arrive at the throne of God so that war may be waged to cast Satan out of heaven. After the man-child is raptured to the throne of God, there will be war in heaven, and Satan and his angels will be cast down to the earth (12:5, 7-11). What a marvelous vision of the warfare in the invisible, spiritual realm!

Seated with Christ in the Heavens

In the surpassing greatness of His power and according to the might of His strength, God the Father raised Christ from the dead and seated Him "at His right hand in the heavens, far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named...; and He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:19-22). The ascension of the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, was His inauguration into His heavenly office through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to execute God's administration and carry out God's economy. In ascension Christ is the One who is at the right hand of God, the first and highest place in the universe. Having placed the Lord Jesus there, God gave Him the preeminence and highest honor in the entire universe. The Lord's ascension caused Him to be crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9)—"glory is the splendor related to Jesus' person; honor is the preciousness related to Jesus' worth, value, and dignity" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 9, note 2). In His ascension Christ was enthroned for God's administration; He, the Son of Man, is now seated "on the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). The fact

that God in the ascended Christ is sitting on the throne means that God administrates throughout the universe from within Christ and through Christ, who is on the throne to administrate the universe. Christ is the unique Administrator, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev. 5:6; 1:5; 17:14; 19:16). The ascended God-man Jesus is Lord of all (Acts 2:36; 10:36). The resurrected Christ “is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him” (1 Pet. 3:22).

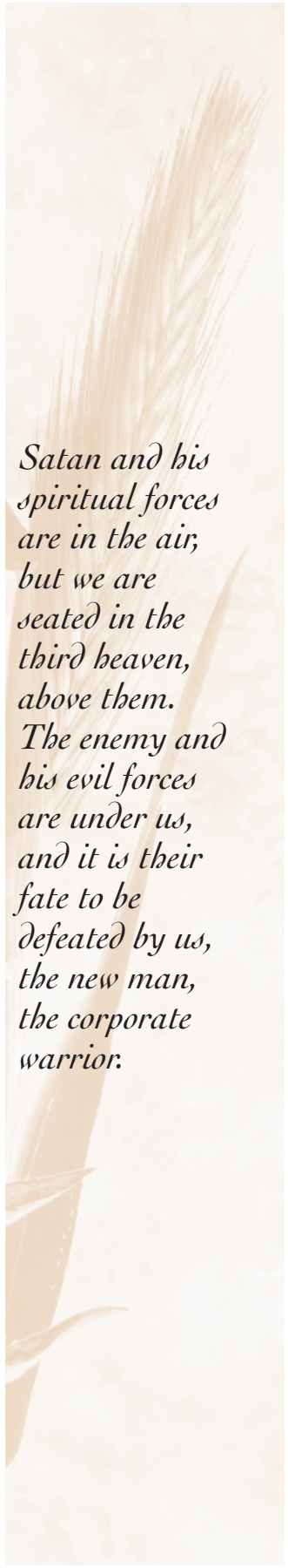
Amazingly, we, the believers in Christ, the children of God, and members of the Body of Christ, are with Christ in His ascension. This marvelous truth is revealed in Ephesians 2:5-6: even when we were dead in offenses, God, because of His great love for us, “made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.” As those who are seated with the ascended Christ in the highest place in the universe, we are above all of God’s enemies. “It was in Christ that God seated us all together, once for all, in the heavenlies. This was accomplished when Christ ascended to the heavens, and it has been applied to us by the Spirit of Christ ever since we believed in Him. Today we realize and experience this reality in our spirit through faith in the accomplished fact” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 6, note 5).

In order to engage in spiritual warfare, we must live in ascension far above the evil powers. Christ gained the victory over Satan and the evil powers through His death, resurrection, and ascension, but Satan and his evil forces are still in the heavenlies. Thus, it is crucial that we maintain the position of ascension and live in ascension, far above the evil powers. As we live with Christ in His ascension as the corporate new man in resurrection, we become intensely involved in spiritual warfare to testify of Christ’s victory and to bring in the kingdom of God. The spiritual warfare described in Ephesians 6:10-12 is based upon the position of ascension in Ephesians 2:6. Our position in ascension causes us to be victorious in battle because only in the position of ascension can we deal with God’s enemy. Whenever we lose the position of ascension, we are unable to carry on any spiritual warfare. We must be believers of Christ in ascension before we can attack the enemy in the air from above. The position of ascension causes us to be victorious in battle because only in the position of ascension do we have heavenly authority. Whenever we live with Christ in ascension, we transcend Satan’s sphere of activity and thus can attack and defeat him in our victorious Christ. Our warfare is based on the victory of Christ, who, through His death on the cross, destroyed the devil, bringing him to nothing (Matt. 27:51-54; Heb. 2:14). Satan and his spiritual forces are in the air, but we are seated in the third heaven, above them. The enemy and his evil forces are under us, and it is their fate to be defeated by us, the new man, the corporate warrior.

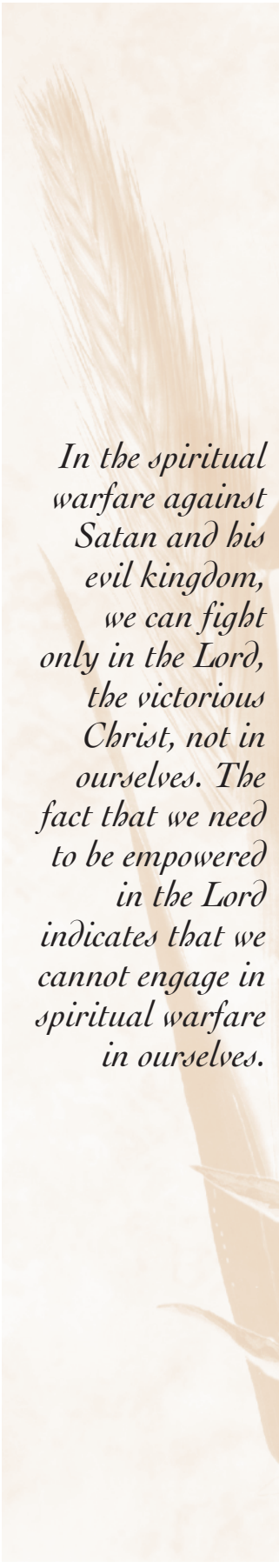
Wrestling against the Devil and the Evil Powers

The warfare between the church as the new man and Satan is a battle between those who love the Lord and are His church (Matt. 16:18; 18:17) and the evil powers in the heavenlies. “Our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies” (Eph. 6:12). With this verse before us, we need to realize that our wrestling, our fighting, is not against human beings but against the evil spirits, the evil powers in the heavenlies. *Blood and flesh* refers to human beings. Behind fallen human beings are the evil forces of the devil, fighting against God’s purpose. Our enemy, therefore, is not people but the forces of darkness that utilize fallen human beings to carry out Satan’s evil intent. If we are clear regarding this, we will fight not against people but against the evil forces of the devil, which are against God’s purpose.

Regrettably, certain theologians and critical Bible scholars do not believe that the rulers, the authorities, the world-rulers of darkness, and the spiritual forces of evil actually are



*Satan and his
spiritual forces
are in the air,
but we are
seated in the
third heaven,
above them.
The enemy and
his evil forces
are under us,
and it is their
fate to be
defeated by us,
the new man,
the corporate
warrior.*



In the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom, we can fight only in the Lord, the victorious Christ, not in ourselves. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot engage in spiritual warfare in ourselves.

real spiritual beings in a spiritual realm. Instead, they offer various opinions asserting that what is mentioned by Paul is merely a mythical concept, sin personified, psychic structures signifying the inner battle between good and evil, or symbols of unrighteous earthly political powers of various sorts. In contrast to all such notions, what the believers who are, as living members of the organic Body of Christ, actually engaged corporately in spiritual warfare can testify is that there really is a spiritual realm inhabited by spiritual beings and that in this invisible realm there is a spiritual warfare, a combat between those in the kingdom of God and the evil powers in the kingdom of Satan. Boldly we assert the revealed truth that the principalities, the authorities, and the world-rulers of darkness are the rebellious angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule with Satan in his kingdom. *This darkness* in verse 12 denotes today's satanic world system, which is fully under the ruling of the devil through his evil angels. "The world-rulers of this darkness" are the princes appointed by Satan to rule the various nations, a fact about which all unsaved persons and the vast majority of believers are oblivious. Because of the operation of Satan, who is the authority of darkness (Col. 1:13), the earth and its atmosphere have become darkness. As a new creation in Christ Jesus, we, the children God, a new creation in Christ Jesus, have had our eyes opened and have been turned from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). "The spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies" are Satan and his spiritual forces in the air. As the Body of Christ, the new man, we must fight against these spiritual forces.

Being Empowered in the Lord

"Be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength" (Eph. 6:10). To deal with God's enemy, to fight against the evil forces of darkness, we need to be empowered in the Lord with the greatness of the power that raised Him from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies, far above all evil powers in the air (1:19-21). First, we are empowered by the power that raised Christ from the dead and gave Him to be Head over all things, and then we know God's might and strength. It is significant that Paul does not say merely that we are empowered; rather, as always, he points to Christ with His unsearchable riches and says that we are empowered "in the Lord" (6:10). In the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom, we can fight only in the Lord, the victorious Christ, not in ourselves. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot engage in spiritual warfare in ourselves; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will. If we would be empowered in Christ for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised. Although our will should be flexible as we are being trained to obey the Lord and follow Him, we must never be weak-willed and vacillating. This is illustrated in Song of Songs 4:4: "Your neck is like the tower of David, / Built for an armory: / A thousand bucklers hang on it, / All the shields of the mighty men." The neck signifies our will. The lover of Christ is beautiful in having a will that is submissive to Christ, typified by the tower of David, and a will that is rich in defending power, typified by the bucklers and shields.

Standing in Christ and Withstanding in the Evil Day

We "stand against the stratagems of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) and "withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (v. 13). According to 2:6, we sit with Christ in the heavenlies, and according to 4:1, we walk in His Body on earth. In 6:11 and 13 we stand in His power in the heavenlies. "To sit with Christ is to participate in all His accomplishments; to walk in His Body is to fulfill God's eternal purpose; and to stand in His power is to fight against God's enemy" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 11, note 3). To stand is crucial in warfare, and to withstand is to stand against. As we are fighting in this spiritual warfare, we need to stand until the end. After we have done all, we still must stand unto the consummation of the age and the Lord's coming to reign on earth for a thousand years.

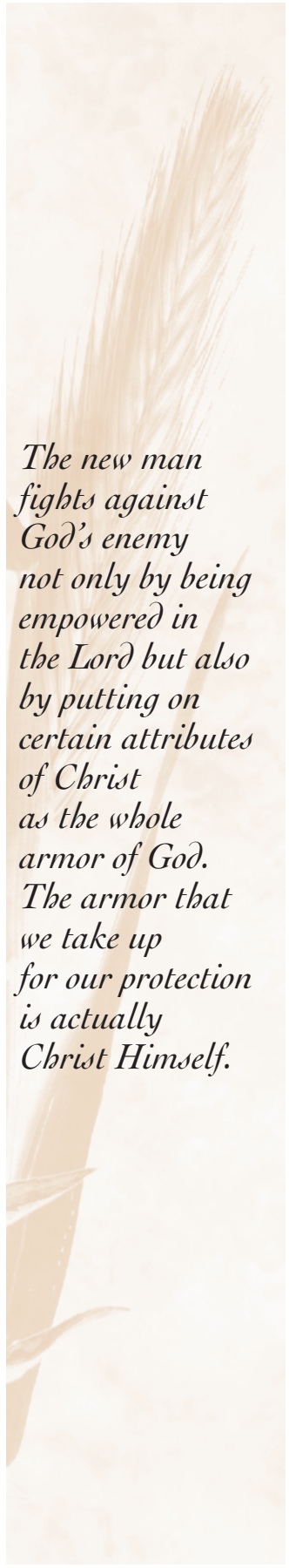
Putting On the Whole Armor of God

In Ephesians 6:11 Paul charges those engaged in spiritual warfare to “put on the whole armor of God,” and in verse 13, to “take up the whole armor of God.” This armor is not for believers as individuals; it is for the church corporately as the Body of Christ. In order to be part of the corporate warrior waging spiritual warfare, we must put on the whole armor, not some parts. The whole armor of God is for the entire Body of Christ, not for individual members of the Body. The correct understanding of these verses is contrary to the concept promulgated by preachers and in the plethora of religious books conveying the erroneous view that every individual believer can put on the entire armor of God and then join the fray as a hero. Millions of believers have been led astray by this falsehood. In this matter the blind are being led by the blind. The new man is a corporate warrior, and the believers together make up this unique warrior. It is necessary to emphasize the truth that only the new man as the corporate warrior can wear the whole armor of God. If we have genuine spiritual understanding concerning this, we will begin to fight the spiritual warfare not individually but in the Body.

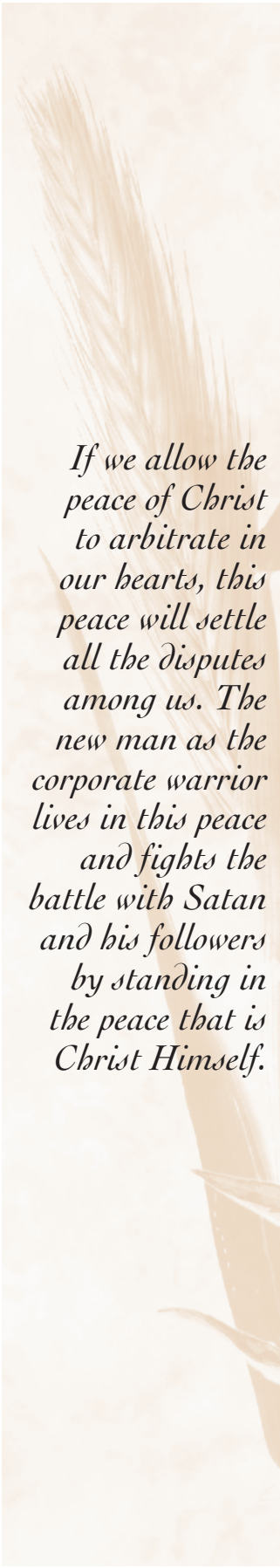
By putting on the whole armor of God, we are able to stand against “the stratagems of the devil” (v. 11). These stratagems are the devil’s evil and pernicious plans. Along with his evil will, the devil, the deceitful enemy of God, has subtle stratagems to work out his will and facilitate his perverse intentions. Even now Satan is actively plotting and working to carry out his evil, subtle stratagems. This is confirmed by Paul’s word in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11: “Whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ; that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” If we consider these verses under the shining of God as light, we will see that Paul’s word about the devilish schemes discloses the fact that the evil one, Satan, is behind the scenes in everything and works in everything. Like Paul, we should not be ignorant of Satan’s schemes—his subtle and wicked plans, plots, and wiles. Only by putting on corporately the whole armor of God can we stand against the stratagems of the devil. Any believer who is self-centered and individualistic, unaware of the reality of the Body of Christ, who assumes to put on the armor of God apart from the Body under the unique headship of Christ, will be defeated by the enemy. The new man fights against God’s enemy not only by being empowered in the Lord but also by putting on certain attributes of Christ as the whole armor of God. The armor that we take up for our protection is actually Christ Himself. In Ephesians 6:14-17 we have various attributes of Christ as the whole armor that we need to put on together as the corporate warrior.

Girding Our Loins with Truth

“Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth” (v. 14). When we gird our loins with truth, our entire being is strengthened. For the purpose of standing in Christ, our whole being needs to be strengthened with truth. In John 18:37 Jesus testified, saying, “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth.” The truth is Christ (14:6) and God’s sanctifying word (17:17); truth is the Triune God with His word. The divine truth is absolute, and in the midst of the battle with God’s enemy, we must be absolute for the truth and uphold and declare the absoluteness of the truth (3 John 3-4, 8). To be absolute for the truth means to set aside feelings and deny the self with its opinion. The truth of God is the unique standard, and we must stand on the side of the truth, girding our being with the truth. We should honor God’s truth, take the way of the truth (2 Pet. 2:2), and never compromise the truth. Furthermore, we need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being (1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2). The truth mentioned in Ephesians 6:14 is the truth, the reality, that is in Jesus and in the church as the new man. “*Truth* here refers to God in Christ as reality in our living, that is, God becoming our reality and experience in our living. This is actually Christ Himself lived out by us (John 14:6). Such truth, such reality, is the girdle that strengthens our whole being for the spiritual warfare” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 14, note 3).



The new man fights against God’s enemy not only by being empowered in the Lord but also by putting on certain attributes of Christ as the whole armor of God. The armor that we take up for our protection is actually Christ Himself.



If we allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will settle all the disputes among us. The new man as the corporate warrior lives in this peace and fights the battle with Satan and his followers by standing in the peace that is Christ Himself.

Putting On the Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14 also speaks of “having put on the breastplate of righteousness.” The breastplate of righteousness covers our conscience, signified by the breast. In fighting against Satan, who accuses us before God day and night (Rev. 12:10), we need to have a conscience void of offense. Like Paul, we should conduct ourselves “in all good conscience” (Acts 23:1) and exercise to “have a conscience without offense toward God and men” (24:16); we need to have a conscience covered with the breastplate of righteousness. The righteousness that covers our conscience and guards us from Satan’s accusations is Christ Himself (1 Cor. 1:30). Hence, we are covered by Christ as our righteousness. Moreover, Christ as the breastplate of righteousness is intrinsically related to the blood of Jesus, God’s Son (1 John 1:7). In our Christian life we cannot separate the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7; 2:13) from the person of Christ as our righteousness. Apart from His blood, Christ cannot cover us with Himself as the breastplate of righteousness. Under the cleansing of His blood, He becomes our righteousness. Whenever we are about to participate in spiritual warfare, we should apply Christ as the breastplate covering our conscience so that we may overcome Satan the accuser (Rev. 12:10-11).

Having Our Feet Shod with the Firm Foundation of the Gospel of Peace

In Ephesians 6:15 Paul goes on to speak regarding “having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace.” In order to engage in spiritual warfare, we need to have our feet shod with the firm foundation, the establishing, of the gospel of peace (vv. 11, 14-15). Christ made peace for us, between God and man, on the cross, and this peace has become our gospel (2:13-17). This gospel of peace has been established as a firm foundation with which our feet may be shod; being thus shod, we will have a firm footing so that we may stand to fight the spiritual warfare.

The Triune God is a God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 2 Thes. 3:16; Gal. 5:22). The New Testament speaks about both the peace of God and the God of peace; the peace of God and the God of peace are actually one (Phil. 4:7; Heb. 13:20). The peace of God is the God of peace infused into us through our fellowship with Him (Rom. 16:20; Phil. 4:9; John 14:27; 16:33). Ephesians 2:13-17 reveals that Christ is peace, that Christ has made peace, and that Christ came to announce peace as the gospel. Christ Himself is “our peace,” He who has made both Jews and Gentiles one (v. 14). On the cross Christ abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances and broke down the middle wall of partition, the enmity; in particular, He died to remove the partition between Jews and Gentiles (vv. 14-15). In resurrection Christ came as the Spirit to preach peace as the gospel (v. 17). The Christ who died as the Peacemaker, shedding His blood in order to reconcile us to God, came to us as the life-giving Spirit, even as the preaching Spirit, to preach the gospel of peace (Col. 1:20; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 20:19, 21, 26; 14:27; 16:33). Now in the Body life and for the Body life, we need Christ as our peace, and we should keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). Christ abolished on the cross all the differences among mankind due to ordinances, and in so doing, He made peace for His Body; this peace should bind all believers together and thus become the uniting bond of peace. We have been called to the peace of Christ in one Body (Col. 3:15). If we allow the peace of Christ to arbitrate in our hearts, this peace will settle all the disputes among us; then we will have peace with God vertically and with the saints horizontally (1:20). The new man as the corporate warrior lives in this peace and fights the battle with Satan and his followers by standing in the peace that is Christ Himself.

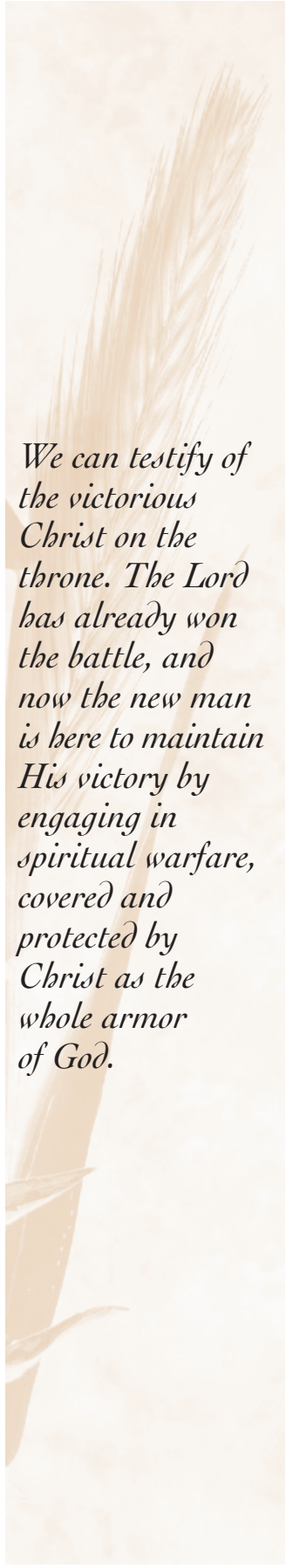
Taking Up the Shield of Faith

“Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one” (Eph. 6:16). We need Christ as the truth to gird our loins, as righteousness to cover our conscience, as peace to shod our feet, and as faith to

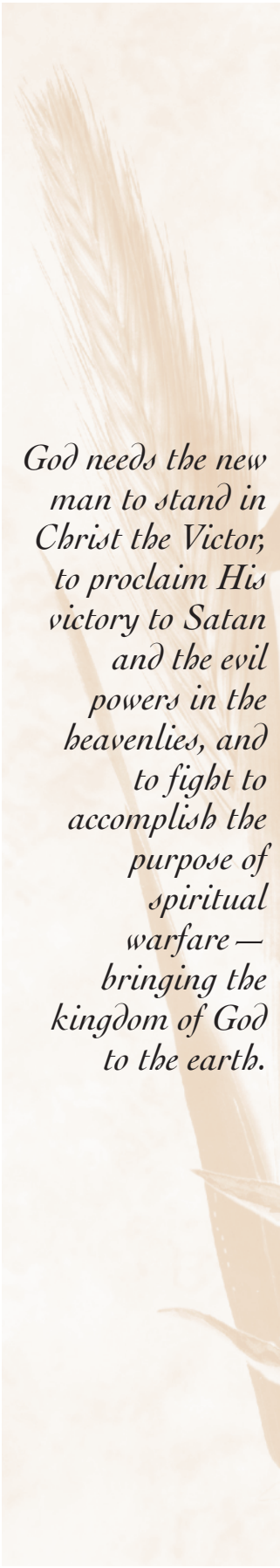
protect our tripartite being whenever the enemy attacks us. For us to stand firmly in the battle, we need to be equipped with these four attributes of Christ as God's armor. When we have these attributes of Christ experientially, we can easily have Christ as our faith so that we may take Him as the shield of faith against the flaming darts of the evil one. We do not put on the shield of faith; instead, we take it up in order to protect ourselves from the attack of the enemy. Faith as a shield issues from truth, righteousness, and peace. The more we have truth in our living, righteousness as our covering, and peace as our standing, we spontaneously have faith as a safeguard against the fiery darts of the evil one. Flaming darts were used by fighters in the apostle's time, and Paul uses this as an illustration of Satan's attacks on us. The flaming darts mentioned in Ephesians 6:16 are the enemy's temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and deceptions, but the shield of faith quenches all the satanic darts. Because faith is so crucial, we must turn away from all distractions and 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" (Heb. 12:2). When we look away unto Jesus, "crowned with glory and honor" (2:9), He infuses faith into us, perfecting our faith. The Lord's perfecting of our faith enables us to exercise a spirit of faith, to believe in Christ's resurrection and ascension, and to have faith in God's heart, faithfulness, ability, word, will, and sovereignty. As a wonderful result, we, who are parts of the corporate warrior, will be protected by Christ as an impenetrable shield covering us. The enemy can continue to hurl his darts toward us, but they will be quenched by Christ as the shield of faith.

Receiving the Helmet of Salvation

In Ephesians 6:17 Paul issues a command: "Receive the helmet of salvation." The battle between Satan and God is in our mind. The human mind is a battlefield where Satan fights with God; therefore, it is very dangerous to open and expose our mind to the enemy. The evil spirits try to take control of all fallen human beings and of countless believers by subtly injecting into passively open minds thoughts and concepts that originate not in the human mind but in the crafty mind of Satan. We should not trust in our mind. Most people have been taken over by Satan in their mind and thus are manipulated and utilized by the perniciously evil one. Because our mind is a battlefield, our mind needs to be covered. The helmet of salvation is for covering our mind against thoughts injected into us by the evil powers. The helmet that we need to receive and use to protect our mind is God's salvation. "Satan injects threats, worries, anxieties, and other weakening thoughts into our mind. God's salvation is the covering that we take up against all these" (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 17, note 1). In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul encourages us to put on "a helmet, the hope of salvation." Often in the midst of a fierce battle with the enemy, Satan tries to inject into our mind thoughts and feelings of despair and hopelessness, with the intention of causing us to feel that our warfare against him is in vain and that we are bound for defeat under his superior power. When we cover our mind with the helmet of salvation, we are filled with living hope, for Christ in us is "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). We will not be defeated in "Christ Jesus our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1). We need to cooperate with the indwelling victorious Christ by setting our mind on the spirit (Rom. 8:6), being willing to be renewed in the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4:23), and offering ourselves to the Lord for us to be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). We need to learn the basic, practical lesson of always turning our mind to the Lord, whose desire is to make His mind our mind, His thoughts our thoughts. While we are cooperating inwardly with the Lord by setting our mind on the spirit and letting this mind be in us, which is the mind in Christ Jesus, the God-man (Phil. 2:5), we need to put on the helmet of salvation as part of the whole armor of God. If our mind is not covered, we cannot deal with Satan, but with a mind covered with the helmet of salvation and the hope of salvation, we can "withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13) and testify of the victorious Christ, the glorified Son of Man on the throne. The Lord has already won the battle, and now the new man is here to maintain His victory by engaging in spiritual warfare, covered and protected by Christ as the whole armor of God.



We can testify of the victorious Christ on the throne. The Lord has already won the battle, and now the new man is here to maintain His victory by engaging in spiritual warfare, covered and protected by Christ as the whole armor of God.



God needs the new man to stand in Christ the Victor, to proclaim His victory to Satan and the evil powers in the heavenlies, and to fight to accomplish the purpose of spiritual warfare — bringing the kingdom of God to the earth.

Receiving the Sword of the Spirit

“Receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit” (vv. 17-18). Among the aspects of the whole armor of God, only the sword of the Spirit is an offensive weapon used for attacking the enemy. We need to pay attention to *the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God*, because this somewhat mysterious utterance reveals that, in the context of Ephesians 6, the Spirit is the word of God. The Spirit is the sword, and the word of God is also the sword; therefore, the sword, the Spirit, and the word are one. In our Christian life and experience of the indwelling Christ, the word and the Spirit should be one—both of which are Christ (John 1:1-2, 14; 5:39-40; 6:63; Rev. 19:13). In Ephesians 5:26-27 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride, but in Ephesians 6:17-18 the word is for killing, enabling the church as the corporate new man to engage in spiritual warfare. The phrase *by means of all prayer and petition* in verse 18 modifies the word *receive* in verse 17. By prayer we receive both the helmet of salvation and the word of God, “praying at every time in spirit.” *Spirit* in verse 18 refers to “our regenerated spirit, indwelt by the Spirit of God. It may be considered the mingled spirit—the spirit that is our spirit mingled with God’s Spirit. In praying, the main faculty that we should use is this spirit” (Lee, *Recovery Version*, v. 18, note 3).

The Purpose of Spiritual Warfare

We have emphasized the fact that Christ has already defeated the enemy, destroying him on the cross, and that the corporate warrior is not fighting to gain victory but is fighting in the victory of the victorious and conquering Christ. The sovereign God needs the new man, the warrior, to stand in Christ the Victor, to proclaim His victory to Satan and the evil powers in the heavenlies, and to fight to accomplish the purpose of spiritual warfare—bringing the kingdom of God to the earth. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Although God’s enemy has already been defeated, the kingdom of God will not come automatically without earnest lovers of Christ who live out Psalm 110:3: “Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration.” These consecrated warriors realize that in order for the kingdom of God to come, there is the need of spiritual fighting. The responsibility of the church is to continue the warfare that Christ fought on earth and the victorious work that Christ carried out against Satan (1 John 3:8; Col. 2:15). The kingdom of God for which the corporate warrior is fighting is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God (Matt. 6:10). Wherever the devil has been driven away and wherever the work of the enemy has been displaced by God’s power, the kingdom of God is there (12:28). Through the spiritual warfare of the church as the new man, the enemy will suffer loss and be put to shame. The overcomers, the victors produced by the overcoming Christ (Rev. 3:21; 5:5-6), will continue to engage in this warfare until a glorious declaration will be made: “Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ” (12:10). This will signify the greatest dispensational change in history—the end of the age of grace and mystery and the beginning of the manifestation of the kingdom. Then a trumpet will sound, and voices in heaven will proclaim, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever” (11:15). **AC**

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