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Kearsley Newsletter Editor's Letter

By Pauline Grimshaw

At this time of year, many people in the Christian world observe the six weeks before Easter as a special period in their religious lives, the period generally called 'Lent.' I was rather surprised to discover that the word Lent itself, rather than having some sort of scriptural meaning derives from the old English word for spring. Presumably it was so named because the period coincided with its symbolism of new beginnings and the embarking into a new phase of life.

The concept of the forty days of Lent commemorates the length of time, the forty days that Our Lord spent in the wilderness prior to his temptation by the Devil. During that period Luke's gospel records that the Lord ate nothing. Hence the practice of trying to abstain from some food or drink or other activity that gives us bodily pleasure for a certain length of time. If done seriously, it can help us to develop the ability, by resisting comparatively minor bodily temptations, to perhaps resist more easily major temptations -or at least that is the theory!

Others observe Lent as a period of thought, prayer and meditation and perhaps instruction, in the way that the Lord must have meditated and prayed during the period before his temptation. Still others couple together denial and spirituality with the desire to do something for others by giving the money, saved by their denial, to the church or to a worthy charity.

Instances of temptation are the temptation or test suffered by Abraham when called upon by the Lord to sacrifice his son Isaac and the temptation of the Lord himself in the wilderness at the beginning of his ministry. Just as the Lord was tempted in the wilderness we ourselves often seem to be in a spiritual wilderness at the time of our temptations.

The Writings of our church tell us that no-one can be tempted until some kind of conscience has been acquired. A conscience is a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong that has been built up, usually in the earlier part of a person's life. When a person tries to live according to their conscience then temptations arise. Temptation is the battle between what might be termed our higher and lower selves. Our minds are the battleground for ideas that come from heavenly sources or from hellish ones. Our temptations consist in choosing to do what is right or what is wrong. It is through facing and overcoming temptations that we build up and strengthen our spiritual lives.

How did the Lord deal with His temptations? He replied by rejecting the Devil's suggestions using quotations from the Word of the Old Testament. This shows the power of the Word in resisting and overcoming falsities. Perhaps one way we can overcome temptation in this world is by turning to the Word of God for when a person reads the Word in this world there is a link with the spiritual world. It is very difficult to fight temptation alone but when reading His Word we are no longer alone for he is with us supporting us and giving us the strength that we need that we need to overcome temptation.

May you all have a blessed and happy month

Pauline