

# *The Armor of Righteousness*

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*The Ten Commandments*  
*The Shepherd Psalm*  
*Behold the Man*  
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## *Foreword*

In the Scriptures the Christian is spoken of as a soldier, and life as a battle and a march, resulting in either defeat or victory. The precious promises of God's Word are made "to the overcomer." In this world of sin the Church Militant is pictured by the revelator as a warrior riding a white horse and carrying a bow and going forth "conquering and to conquer." When the warfare is over, the victors become the Church Triumphant.

It is not at all strange, therefore, that all Christians are urged to put on the whole armor of God, which is the armor of righteousness, as the only hope of victory over a relentless and cunning foe with millenniums of experience in leading men captive virtually "at his will."

This book has been written and published with the hope and prayer that it will prove a great blessing to the soldiers in the army of Prince Emmanuel.

THE AUTHOR.

## *Contents*

Our Implacable Foe . . . . .	7
A Sure Defense . . . . .	17
The Girdle of Truth . . . . .	27
The Breastplate of Righteousness . . . . .	35
The Armor of Righteousness . . . . .	45
The Gospel of Peace . . . . .	54
The Shield of Faith . . . . .	63
The Helmet of Salvation . . . . .	72
The Sword of the Spirit . . . . .	82
No Victory Without Prayer . . . . .	91

## *Our Implacable Foe*

**T**HE WORD *armor* indicates "defense against an enemy in battle." To the Christian soldier the Apostle Paul says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:10, 11, Revised Standard Version.

When Paul faced the false prophet and sorcerer Bar-jesus on the island of Cyprus, he said to him under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all unrighteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" The agent of Satan was then struck with blindness as the reward for yielding his life to the great enemy of the soul. See Acts 13:4-11.

Down through all the ages of the reign of sin the children of God have had many enemies, and they seem to be multiplying as we near the close of the great controversy between the forces of good and evil. But all these enemies are under the

*control and leadership of the one great enemy, spoken of in the Scriptures as the Devil and Satan. In Revelation 12:9 he is called "the great dragon" and "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."*

To those who were seeking His life, Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44. It was through lying insinuations that the once mighty Lucifer, the first of the covering cherubs, who "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" before the throne of the Eternal, brought disaffection to a third of the angelic host and led them in a revolt against the divine administration. It was through lies that the adversary deceived and brought about the downfall of our first parents and ushered in the reign of sin.

Satan is the commander in chief of all the agencies of evil, the generalissimo of the hosts of wickedness arrayed against the forces of righteousness in the long spiritual struggle portrayed in the following verses: "In conclusion, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the Devil. For ours

is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, remain victors on the field. Stand therefore, first fastening round you the girdle of truth and putting on the breastplate of uprightness as well as the shoes of the Good News of peace—a firm foundation for your feet. And besides all these take the great shield of faith, on which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the Wicked one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Pray with unceasing prayer and entreaty on every fitting occasion in the Spirit, and be always on the alert to seize opportunities for doing so, with unwearied persistence and entreaty on behalf of all God's people." Ephesians 6:10-18, Weymouth's Translation.

In Romans 13:12 this defense is called "the armour of light," and in 2 Corinthians 6:7, "the armour of righteousness." It is a shining armor illumined with the light of truth, a sure defense against all unrighteousness. It protects the character against all the darts of the wicked one and his innumerable agents.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 a warning is given

against the "man of sin," who is also called "the son of perdition," "the mystery of iniquity," and "that Wicked." Though there are and have been many men of sin and sons of perdition and wicked ones during the reign of sin, these terms apply primarily to Satan, who is pre-eminently "the man of lawlessness" (Revised Standard Version), "that Son of Destruction" (Emphatic Diaglott), and "the doomed one, the adversary" (Moffatt's Translation), whose counterfeit system of religion is called "the mystery of iniquity" in contrast to the gospel of Christ, which is called "the mystery of godliness."

Many today are looking for the coming of the antichrist, but the great antichrist has been in the world since the fall of man. "Anti" means "opposed to or against." Therefore an antichrist is one who is opposed to or against Christ. Jesus declared that "he that is not with me is against me." This basic principle makes an antichrist of anyone who is not definitely on the side of Christ. It is because this is true that we are told that there are "many antichrists." See 1 John 2:18; 4:2, 3; 2 John 7.

All human antichrists are only the agents of Satan, the great archrebel and supreme antichrist, and the leader of all apostasy and warfare against Christ and the children of obedience and righteousness. The Scriptures are replete with warnings against this great rebel and adversary who is at

war with the government of heaven, of which the following is a sample: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

Paul said of "that man of sin" and "the son of perdition" that he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." 2 Thessalonians 2:4. And then after declaring that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," he wrote: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

One of the chief evidences that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God was His power to perform miracles. Therefore the great antichrist will perform false miracles in an attempt to prove to his subjects that he is God. In fact, he has been so successful that he is designated as "the god of this world." (2 Corinthians 4:4.) In the Scriptures idolatry is called the worship of devils. In truth, all manifestations of false worship and religion are forms of devil worship. Of course when emperors and religious leaders assume the attributes and prerogatives of divinity and claim the adoration

and worship which belong alone to God, the prophecy quoted above is fulfilled in a secondary sense. It is the height of blasphemy for a mere human being to sit in the temple, or church, of God assuming the place of Christ as its head and claiming to be God on earth with supreme and infallible authority.

The revelator describes an apostate power as performing "great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do," and he also tells of "unclean spirits" which are "the spirits of devils" which will work miracles and "go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 13:13, 14; 16:13, 14.)

So closely will these "lying wonders" and counterfeit miracles resemble the true that all except "the very elect" will be deceived by them. The only safeguard will be a knowledge of and obedience to the Holy Scriptures. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20. Only those who fortify their minds with the truths of the Bible will be able to distinguish between the manifestations of divine and satanic power.

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed" is the prophetic forecast, and it is to happen just before

the unrighteous are destroyed with the brightness of the coming of Christ. Just before the return of the true Christ, the great antichrist will reveal himself in person in a final effort to prove that he is the Christ whose return is foretold in the Scriptures, so that he might receive the homage and worship due the Son of God. This will be the crowning act in the great drama of deception. It will be an almost overmastering delusion, which will captivate the world.

The revelator records the heavenly host as saying as the result of Christ's Calvary victory: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12. As his appointed doom draws near, the great antichrist is making the greatest bid in all history for the worship of mankind, and we are told that "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8.)

There is a growing intensity in the war between the forces of Christ and those of the antichrist. The gravity of this conflict exceeds that of any other struggle since the world began. Because this warfare is largely spiritual and invisible, many deny that there is such a war. This is chiefly be-

cause they refuse to believe that Satan is a real being and the leader in a real revolt. This gives the great enemy every advantage. Unfortunately, denying his existence does not eliminate him from the battlefield, nor does it make the struggle a myth. There is danger, however, that it will place the unwitting combatants on the wrong side. The war is on, and it is being fought and lost continually on thousands of individual battle fronts because of indifference or compromise.

Antichrist is no myth or legend or mere archaic idea. He is the real and living force in all that denies and rejects the authority and sovereignty of God. The enemy we face has a flexible and godless set of standards that appeal to the lusts of the lower nature and degrade and destroy the soul. His soldiers include many who are ignorant of the fact that they are in his army. His allies include all who attempt to be neutral, for in this war neutrality is treason. "Neutral men are the devil's allies" is a true saying. The soldiers of Christ are arrayed against the organized spiritual hosts of evil under satanic leadership and control. It is important that the church militant recognize that they face a real and not an imaginary foe. His wiles and deceptive maneuvers must be clearly perceived, or defeat is certain.

The devil is the world's master strategist. He works through trickery, and by means of his snares most of the inhabitants of the world "are

taken captive by him at his will." (2 Timothy 2:26.) His forces are well organized into principalities, despotisms, and empires, who "control and govern this dark world." The combat is spiritual rather than material and physical, as are the battles between nations. If their enemies were visible and fought in the open under their own banner, it would be easier for the soldiers of the cross.

While the Holy Spirit conceals Himself and even hides His identity and personality in order to reveal Christ more successfully, Satan makes every possible effort to conceal himself and his identity as the fallen angel in order to deceive mankind. And he has been very successful in making the world believe that he does not exist as a personal being, so that his name to most people is only a symbol of the spirit of evil inherent in human nature.

It is always wise to recognize the strength of the enemy. In time of war foolish optimism is always dangerous, as much so as is the exaggerating of his power to the point of discouragement. Wise generals never minimize the strength and resources of the enemy, because it leads to overconfidence, which is one of the chief causes of defeat. It often produces neglect and slothfulness, akin to cowardice and treason, and therefore the worst of military crimes.

We must never forget that though the great enemy of men's souls has done his worst against



the human kind, he is himself a defeated foe. Christ triumphed over him on every battlefield and has promised us His victory on the basis of faith. The divine promise is that "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37), and therefore we can with confidence say, "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57.

## *A Sure Defense*

**T**HE SOLDIERS of the army of the Lord Jesus must never forget that their enemies are the god and prince of this world and the wicked spirits under his control. These demons do not hesitate to attack the saints of God even "in high places," including the sacred precincts of the church, or temple of God. "Spiritual wickedness" is the most dangerous form of evil. It is falsehood disguised as truth and masquerading under the appearance of religious piety and devotion.

We are therefore warned against the crafty wiles and deceptive stratagems of the devil and his hosts of evil angels, against whom we must "wrestle" as in a hand-to-hand fight for supremacy. Wrestling represents close contact and personal encounter with the enemy, and not merely a battle between armies in mass movements. Ancient warfare was made up chiefly of contests between individual soldiers, so that it took on more of the aspects of adventure and chivalry than in

modern times with our present weapons. Spiritual warfare is likewise mostly composed of individual encounters with unseen foes, and victory and salvation are personal experiences.

The first essential to success in the great spiritual conflict with the hosts of wicked spirits is the recognition of the fact that in our own strength and skill we are helpless. Depending on human power alone, we are no match for our foes. Because we contend with supernatural forces, we must have supernatural assistance. We can have power and strength for battle and victory only "in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Victory in this warfare is a gift from God given to the Christian soldier on the basis of faith, and therefore it is called "the good fight of faith." The apostle said, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. "In the Lord" or its equivalent is found thirty-eight times in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and was one of Paul's favorite expressions.

The secret of strength and success in battle is therefore union with Christ, the great Victor. The closeness of this union is beautifully illustrated by the parable of the vine and its branches. Separation from the source of life means sure defeat and death. In the time when the enemy seems to "come in like a flood" to overwhelm us, we can come boldly to Christ for "help in time of need." In

fact, He is "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." We must never forget that a complete defense against all the attacks of the enemy has been provided in the "whole armour of God," and we must remember that it is *His* armor and not ours. It is our part to put it on for the conflict. We sometimes say that a man can fight best in his own armor, and that no man can successfully do battle in the armor of another. This is true only in respect to the armor of other human beings. David refused to fight Goliath in the armor of Saul; but he did defeat the great giant because he was clothed in the armor of God, so that the mighty weapons of the armor-clad giant were helpless.

Because all Christians are soldiers in the army of Christ and His church militant, the language in Ephesians 6:10-17 is clothed in military terms, all of which are found in Greek and Roman literature. Paul was well acquainted with the military equipment of Roman soldiers, as they were everywhere. When he was imprisoned at Caesarea and in Rome, he was not only guarded by them but at times chained to them. The armor and weapons in the time of Paul included swords, spears, shields, helmets, shoes or greaves, and breastplates. Samples of these have been preserved in modern museums, as well as the various kinds of weapons and armor which were used in warfare down to the present time.

It would be difficult for the modern soldier to imagine himself clothed in the ancient armor and defending himself with bows and arrows and swords and spears and slingshots. A battle today with those primitive weapons and means of defense would be an interesting spectacle. What a contrast to submarines, battleships, armored tanks, artillery, machine guns, and atom and hydrogen bombs! As each new weapon was invented down through the ages, it was felt that its deadly effects would discourage others from fighting, and thus bring an end to war. The same argument is being used with great emphasis at the present time.

The use of armor was especially developed by the Crusaders during the twelfth century as a protection against the newly invented deadly weapon of the crossbow. With the invention of gunpowder, armor to protect soldiers in warfare soon became obsolete, although officers and cavalymen continued to use partial armor until the beginning of the eighteenth century. In fact, the cuirass and helmet were sometimes worn by cavalymen during the first world war. In a figurative sense the term is still used as the symbol of defense against any form of evil, as well as something in which men put their trust. Jesus spoke of a strong man overcoming another and taking "from him all his armour wherein he trusted." (Luke 11:22.)

In the spiritual warfare "the whole armour of God" is necessary because the enemy is crafty and

cunning and knows the weak places in our characters. If any part of the character is left uncovered and unprotected by the armor of God, there the devil will direct his arrows and darts. The stone from David's sling struck the giant in the only unprotected spot, his forehead, for in his anger at seeing a mere lad come against him with only a sling he pushed back his helmet. Dr. Adam Clarke said that "a man's method of sinning is Satan's method of ruining his soul." The complete equipment and weapons supplied by our great General are abundantly adequate to bring victory on any battlefield under any circumstances. "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." 2 Corinthians 2:14. For what more could we ask than to triumph always and in every place?

But it must be "the whole armour of God." Gospel preaching must be well balanced, covering every aspect of Bible truth. There is no room for fanatics and extremists, as were the Pharisees who majored in minors and minored in majors, who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel, who tithed "mint and anise and cummin," but "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Bible teaching has to do with the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. It develops men and women spiritually, intellectually, and physically.

In wars between nations the outcome is usually clothed in uncertainty, at least during the earlier stages. No nation is absolutely sure of final victory, and no individual soldier can be promised immunity from wounds, defeat, or death. During the first months of both world wars, success was apparently on the side of the nations which were eventually defeated. Final victory is the thing that counts in warfare. But victory to the Christian soldier will be certain, and he will be able to stand, providing he obeys the orders of the Captain of the Lord's host and complies with the conditions on which victory is promised. He must "put on the whole armour of God" which has been provided by his Commander and then stand his ground with his face to the foe.

The purpose of the "whole armour of God" is that "you may be able to withstand the attack, and having carried the struggle through, still to stand your ground." (Ephesians 6:13, Twentieth Century New Testament.) "Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field." Ephesians 6:13, Weymouth's Translation.

The chief evidence of victory is possession of the battlefield at the close of the contest. Many great and decisive battles have continued for days with the contending armies surging back and forth over the battlefield. The victor is the one in pos-

session of the field when the battle is ended. This earth is the great battlefield of the ages, where for six thousand years the struggle for the supremacy between the forces of good and evil has continued. The important question is not so much who is in control now, but who will remain on the battlefield when the conflict is over. The fact that the battlefield, the earth, will be in the possession of the redeemed eternally is evidence of lasting victory.

"To stand" is the key expression of our text. "To stand," "to withstand," and "stand therefore" are all used to impress our minds with the necessity of putting on the complete battle equipment and then standing our ground unflinchingly without giving way or retreating before the assaults of the enemy. These statements, and in fact the entire description of the spiritual warfare, indicate that the struggle is chiefly defensive. The picture is not so much that of a march and attacks against the strongholds of the enemy, as the holding of the fortress of the soul against the onslaughts of an aggressive foe. The Christian soldier does not go out of his way to seek a fight with the devil, but it is the enemy who goes about "as a roaring lion, . . . seeking whom he may devour," and therefore we are admonished to "be sober," and "be vigilant," and on constant guard. In fact, we are told that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Proverbs 18:10.

Mr. Standfast is one of the heroes in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. He resisted every attack of the enemy of his soul and bravely stood his ground. The Christian soldier is already in the land and on the battlefield of the enemy, who is waging against him an aggressive warfare. The divine promise is, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," or, "put him to flight." Isaiah 59:19, margin. The chief business of the Christian is to resist and repel evil rather than attack it. The promise is, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7. Jesus did not go out of His way to attack Satan, but He did successfully withstand all of His enemy's assaults against Him. In the wilderness of temptation the aggressor in that fierce contest was the fallen angel. The defeated foe finally retreated from the field of battle.

Christ and the apostles spent no time attacking and denouncing the corruptions of the Roman Empire or its rulers, nor did they publicly censure the governor of Judea even though he was very remiss in the performance of his duties. Calvin Coolidge declared that "Jesus Christ spent no time in the lobby of the Caesars." It is always better to preach a positive rather than a negative message. Christian ministers have been divinely called and ordained to preach the everlasting gospel rather than to attack prevailing evils and reform society. The counsel of Romans 12:21

is still good: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." The only way to dispel darkness is to turn on the light, and the best way to correct error is to proclaim the truth.

The evil day suggested in the text is doubtless the day of battle when the enemy makes his attack and comes in "like a flood" to overwhelm us. It is the crisis hour when the destiny of the soul is at stake. The severest test is still future, but it is covered by a wonderful promise: "Because in spite of suffering you have guarded My word, I in turn will guard you from the hour of trial which is soon coming upon the whole world, to put to the test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming quickly: cling to that which you already possess, so that your wreath of victory be not taken away from you." Revelation 3:10, 11, Weymouth's Translation.

There are of course many evil days in the conflict with the hosts of evil. With such a persistent and relentless foe, every day is fraught with danger. The devil never slumbers nor sleeps. His surprise attacks may come at any moment, and therefore we must be always sober and vigilant. Our great foe has always fought undeclared wars. In his final onslaught he will fight with the desperation of a defeated warrior, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." If we successfully meet the evil days as they come on a day-by-day basis, we need not fear the final

crisis hour which will end the long struggle between good and evil.

Let us never forget that the secret of victory is the defense provided in "the whole armour of God." It is the same armor in which Christ fought and triumphed during His earthly visit. Of Jesus the prophet wrote, "For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." Isaiah 59:17. The armor of Christ is put on when we accept Christ and abide in Him and are clothed in the garments of His righteousness. Not only is "Christ in you, the hope of glory," but it is also the hope of victory. After saying, "Let us put on the armour of light," the Apostle Paul said, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." See Romans 13:12, 14.

Putting on the complete armor of God, which is the Christian soldier's uniform, is accomplished by being clothed by faith in the beautiful robe of the righteousness of Christ. It is therefore called "the armour of righteousness." A well-known writer said, "Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict." It is then that the church militant will appear, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

## *The Girdle of Truth*

**A**FTER describing the relentless foe against whom the soldiers of Christendom must contend in the spiritual warfare, the Apostle Paul urges them to put on the complete armor of God as the only means of protection and final victory. In view of the crisis faced and the battle equipment provided, the Christian is admonished to stand his ground and fight valiantly until victory is assured. The apostle then describes in detail the protective armor and battle weapons which are both necessary and fully adequate to meet all the onslaughts of the great enemy with his hosts of wicked spirits and to stand unflinchingly and uncompromisingly to a triumphant end. See Ephesians 6:10-18.

In the past the church militant has too often compromised with the world and even retreated before the attacks of the great antichrist and his army of evil angels and wicked men. Little by little the battlefield has been yielded to the enemies of

righteousness, until they have been in complete possession. The field of battle has changed hands altogether too often in the long conflict between good and evil. Surely the time has come for the army of the Lord to make a brave and determined stand that knows no compromise or retreat. The advance of the enemy must not only be checked, but the lost ground regained. The church, which according to one writer has been "steadily retreating toward Egypt," must cease her backsliding, or losing ground, and face about and begin a triumphant advance Zionward all along the line. It is high time for a counterattack that will turn the tide of war to the Christian victor and begin a victorious march to the Promised Land.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth," is the counsel of the Captain of the Lord's host to the Christian soldier. "Hold your ground, tighten the belt of truth about your loins," is the James Moffatt translation. The girdle was a very important part of the attire of both men and women in Paul's day. Labor or travel with long, loose, flowing garments flapping about the limbs was difficult, making the girdle necessary to bind them about so as to permit the free movements of the body. The belt was especially important to the soldier who did most of his fighting in hand-to-hand combat, which made agility and quick movements a necessity. In fact, it was a matter of life or death. The well-fastened girdle kept the sol-

dier's uniform together as does the belt of the modern soldier.

A prophecy of Christ made seven hundred years before His first advent declared that "righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." See Isaiah 11:5. The "reins" is the means by which a horse or team is guided and controlled and is an appropriate symbol of the motives. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins," is a declaration of Scripture. (Jeremiah 17:10.) Jesus was controlled at all times by pure and righteous motives, which was the secret of His victorious life. His heart and motives were pure because He was guided and controlled by truth. In fact, He was "the truth."

Truth is placed first in the description of the Christian armor because it is the first in importance as a defense against the attacks of the enemy. Jesus said, "I am the truth," and one of the prophets said, "Thy word is true." Christ and His Word are inseparable. Because He is the Source and Author of all truth, He is called "the Word," and "The Word of God." He is the spokesman of the Godhead. He is truth incarnate. Jesus said that He came into the world to "bear witness unto the truth." On every battlefield He stood His ground with His loins girded with truth. In the wilderness of temptation He defeated the enemy with appeals to the Scriptures. "It is written" was His defense against every attack.

On the other hand, Satan is the author of all error and falsehood, and his counterfeit system of religion is divinely called "the mystery of iniquity," and "Babylon the Great." It is darkness, deception, and confusion. His is the kingdom of darkness, and his followers are called "the children of darkness" and "the children of disobedience." Satan is called "the prince of darkness." Error is the girdle of his loins, and deceit the girdle of his reins. His motives are insincere and his tactics cunning and crafty. He cannot stand before truth, for Jesus said of him, "There is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

The Word of God constitutes the first line of defense against the antichrist and his army, as well as the great weapon for aggressive warfare, for in the Scripture under consideration it is called "the sword of the Spirit." Luther said, "I set the Word of God running to and fro in the earth, and kingdoms fell and thrones trembled." This was the mightiest of all weapons used against the powers of darkness in Reformation days.

Although the truth has often been upon the scaffold and wrong upon the throne during this long, dark reign of sin, yet truth is eternal and unchangeable, and will eventually triumph over error. It has been hated, attacked, and maligned down through the ages; but reproach and contempt have never dimmed its luster or caused its

light to flicker. It has ever marched steadily and unwaveringly on toward final and complete vindication. Every genuine discovery of modern science tends to dispel the darkness of error and corroborate the truth contained in the Scriptures. True science never contradicts the Word of God. All who reject and attack the Scriptures of truth will eventually be compelled to acknowledge their mistake or hang their heads in shame before a source of information that has been proved to be dependable.

Christ, the Author of truth, has provided the Christian armor at an infinite sacrifice, for the center of all truth is His atoning death on Calvary. He has sufficient war equipment in His great arsenal and is never caught off guard or unprepared as nations sometimes are in times of sudden emergency. But the statement "having your loins girt about with truth" indicates that it is the duty of the Christian soldier to put on the provided armor, or uniform. The soldier does not provide his own uniform or means of defense or weapons for attack. But he must learn to use them efficiently. Christ has made available to us His Word of truth, but it is useless and powerless until it is studied and made a part of our own lives and appropriated to our own use. In order to be able to say, "It is written," and thus make use of the girdle of truth when attacked by the enemy, Jesus had to be acquainted with the Scriptures through previous



diligent study. This knowledge was not the result of a miracle. When He was in need of defense, the Holy Spirit brought to His remembrance what He had already studied, and the same help has been promised to us.

It is by the study of the Scriptures that we put on the girdle of truth. This is what is meant by the admonition to "gird up the loins of your mind." (1 Peter 1:13.) The ancient soldier could put on his armor and the modern soldier can don his uniform in a few moments of time, but the putting on of the complete armor of God is the work of a lifetime. The truth of the omniscient God is infinite, and to acquaint oneself with it requires time and effort. Jesus said that when "the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth"; but guiding or teaching is a process. No phase of truth has yet been fully explored. The inexhaustible mines of truth are filled with undiscovered gems which must be sought for as "treasure hid in a field." What can be more pathetic than a person who boasts of his intellectual attainments and thinks he knows it all!

After telling Job that he "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge," the Lord said to the champion debater who had silenced his three companions and wanted to debate with God, "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." Job 38:1-3. The Lord then asked him eighty-four questions, none of

which he could answer. Humbled and silenced and with his former egotism deflated, Job declared that he was vile. He said, "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; . . . yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 40:4, 5; 42:5, 6. A vision of God ensures meekness, makes pride impossible, and gives man a proper perspective of life.

The members of the modern church need an experience similar to that of Job in order to take away their boasting of being "rich, and increased with goods" and having "need of nothing" more in spiritual experience and Scriptural knowledge, when in God's estimation they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and in desperate need of the very things they boast of possessing. (Revelation 3:14-22.) This is the love letter of Christ to His church in the last days. How much His people need to put on the girdle of truth and, in fact, "the whole armour of God."

In the light of the severe rebuke of Christ because of the present-day attitude of His people, how refreshing was the statement of the great scientist Sir Isaac Newton, who, after all his marvelous achievements said that he felt like a little boy playing with a few pebbles on the shore of a vast ocean of undiscovered knowledge. It is the

truly wise who are sincerely humble, because they have caught a glimpse of the unlimited fields of truth which require an eternity to fully explore.

We can be comforted by the joyous fact that those who love truth and diligently seek for it and walk in its increasing light will be able to stand through the final crisis, so that when Christ returns He will find them waiting for Him with their "loins . . . girded about" and with their "lights burning."

In putting on the girdle of truth, it is the spirit and attitude which are of greatest importance. We should never forget that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," and "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (Proverbs 4:18; 1 John 1:7.)

According to Paul's description of the armor, our first duty is to put on the girdle of truth. Jesus declared that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church whose foundation is the eternal Rock of faith in "the Son of the living God" and the writings of "the apostles and prophets" of which He is "the chief corner stone." Let us not neglect any opportunity to read and study and hear the Word of God, so that we will be able to stand our ground in the day of battle and "having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field."

## *The Breastplate of Righteousness*

THE SECOND part of the armor of the Christian soldier in the warfare with the hosts of evil is "the breastplate of righteousness," which is closely related to the girdle of truth and is another part of the invulnerable defense of the Christian against his implacable foes. "Wear integrity as your coat of mail," is another rendering. Righteousness and integrity are inseparable in a godly character.

A breastplate or coat of mail constituted a very important part of the armor of the ancient soldier, as it protected the vital organs of the heart and lungs from the darts and spear and sword thrusts of the enemy. The breast has been the chief target of soldiers and criminals in all ages, including our own. As the brilliantly uniformed British soldiers approached the defensive line of cotton bales behind which the American soldiers were entrenched during the battle of New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson told his men to hold their fire until they could see the whites of their eyes and at his com-

mand they were to aim at the spot where the two shoulder straps crossed on the breast. When the battle was over, it was discovered that there were but few wounded men and that the many who fell before the murderous fire were shot through the heart. All duelers, gunmen, and officers of the law have learned to turn their sides toward their antagonists as a safety measure.

Likewise in the warfare against the enemy of our souls the heart is his chief target, as it is the seat of the affections and emotions as well as the vital center of all of life's forces, both spiritual and physical. The lungs are of almost equal importance, since they function in such close co-operation with the heart in purifying the blood before it is pumped through the body. In the Scriptures, prayer is symbolized by breathing, which must be continued "without ceasing" if we would live spiritually. "I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry" (see Lamentations 3:54-56), declared Jeremiah while in prison.

In view of the supreme importance of the heart, the inspired counsel of the wise man should be heeded by every Christian: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23. According to the James Moffatt translation the heart must be guarded "above all things," and the Revised Standard Version says it

should be kept "with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." It is the fountain of both physical and spiritual life. How often the Bible writers emphasize the importance of the heart as the vital center of godly living. The breastplate of righteousness is therefore of paramount importance in the building of a Christian character.

Having on the breastplate of righteousness does not necessarily indicate that the person has arrived at perfection. It does mean, however, that he has an eye single to the glory of God and is no longer discouraged and disheartened by past failures or present weaknesses, because his hope and strength and refuge are in God rather than in himself. He no longer suffers with an inferiority complex as he faces superhuman forces, because through Christ he can confidently stand his ground. Such Christians can courageously say, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. They thus become fortresses impregnable to all the attacks of the enemy.

This part of the Christian armor is called "the breastplate of faith and love" in 1 Thessalonians 5:8. Faith is declared to be the very substance of all we hope for and the evidence of things invisible, or out of sight. It is confidence in the Word of God, or in the girdle of truth, because it is trustworthy and dependable. Love is the motivating power that impels us to do what is right and re-

strains us from doing what is wrong. "The love of Christ constraineth us" expresses the motivating principle controlling the lives of the apostles. Paul declared that faith and love are two of the heavenly graces which will outlive the transitory things of this life and abide through all eternity.

Prophecy declared that Christ would "put on righteousness as a breastplate," and therefore in His contests with the enemy, "his righteousness, it sustained him." See Isaiah 59:16, 17. His righteous character was the secret of His strength and victory. It made Him invulnerable to all the attacks of Satan and his angels and human agencies. He was able to stand His ground without flinching or retreating. He never lost a battle, which made it possible for us to be more than conquerors through faith in Him. The same armor He used is available to us and will make it possible for us to triumph "always" and in "every place." See 2 Corinthians 2:14. On every battlefield the victory has already been won and is ours as a gift by faith.

Righteousness is defined in the Bible as obedience to divine law, which is the summary of all truth. This is indicated in the following texts: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us." Deuteronomy 6:25. As the spokesman of the coming Messiah, the ancient prophet said, "I delight to do thy

will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. . . . I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart." Psalm 40:8-10. Here is the secret of the nobility of the character of Christ and of the effectiveness of His preaching. "All thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172), declared the psalmist. The gospel prophet wrote, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." Isaiah 51:7.

It is therefore to be expected that the conclusions of Bible students and others would be in harmony with these and many other scriptures. The following are samples of many similar statements which could be quoted: "Righteousness is the keeping of the law, and is the natural result of faith."—*The Cambridge Bible*. Webster declared that "righteousness is purity of heart and rectitude of life; it is conformity of heart and life to divine law." Another wrote, "Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God; and 'God is love.' It is conformity to the law of God; for 'all thy commandments are righteousness'; and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' . . . The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers

... to receive it."—Mrs. E. G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 34.

It is evident therefore that true righteousness has to do with the heart as the motivating power of obedience. Only heart obedience is acceptable to God. The principles of the law must be written in the heart and practiced in the life. In fact, this constitutes the new or everlasting covenant, without which salvation is impossible. The divine promise is, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

That all Christians belong to the true Israel of God is evident from Paul's statement, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29. As the result of his night of prayer, Jacob's name was changed to Israel because he had become a prince or son of God and had prevailed with both God and man. See Genesis 32:27, 28. All genuine Christians are therefore Israelites, and all genuine Israelites are Christians. The fact that the Book of Hebrews was written more than thirty years after the ascension of Christ, soon followed by the failure and rejection of literal Israel, is sufficient proof to show that the apostle is speaking of spiritual Israel.

The new covenant relationship begins with the new birth, which makes an individual "the epistle of Christ" who is "known and read of all men." The writing of the law in the mind and heart is the work of the Holy Spirit. The writing is done, "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." See 2 Corinthians 3:1-3. All know that it was the Decalogue that was written on tables of stone, and both the law and the entire Bible have been written with ink. But this is not enough. Only when they become a part of us can we "do by nature the things contained in the law." This is Christianity, and without this experience there is none worthy of the name.

This emphasizes the importance of the breastplate of righteousness as the protection of the heart, the seat of love. The apostle Paul declared that "he who loves his fellow man has satisfied the demands of Law," and that "love avoids doing any wrong to one's fellow man, and is therefore complete obedience to Law." See Romans 13:8-10, Weymouth. While he is speaking here especially of the second table of the law, which defines our duties to our fellow men, the principles apply with equal force to the first table regulating man's duties and relationships to his Creator. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15, A.S.V.), and the apostle of love declared that "he that saith, I know him, and keep-

eth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4), and also, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. Nothing written in the mind and heart can be grievous.

Jesus severely rebuked the religious leaders of His day who thought that His advent and teachings nullified or abolished the law, and His condemnation applies with equal force to modern ecclesiastical leaders who make the same claim: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:17-19. The smallness or greatness of an individual depends on his attitude toward the law of God.

In answer to the tempting question of the scribe as to which is the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two

commandments hang all the law and the prophets." See Matthew 22:35-40. Jesus here summed up the two tables of the Decalogue which embrace in principle all that is written in the Scriptures.

The law and the gospel are inseparable in the plan of redemption. We are told that "sin is the transgression of the law," and therefore "by the law is the knowledge of sin." In fact, "where no law is, there is no transgression," and "sin is not imputed when there is no law." If the law has been abolished, there can be no sin, and therefore no need of the gospel. There would also be no need of a Saviour, and the death of Christ would have been in vain. The greatest confirmation of the eternal nature of the law of God was the Cross of Calvary. Christ died to atone for the sins of the world and to provide a way of escape from the guilt and consequences of sin.

Victory is assured only to the Christian soldier who has on "the whole armour of God," and the armor is not complete without "the breastplate of righteousness," which is obedience to the law of God, the standard of His righteousness, the transcript of His character. War correspondent William T. Ellis climbed to the summit of Mt. Sinai on June 11, 1909, and from there tried to understand the basic cause of the perplexing problems of men and nations. After searching for the answer, he thus wrote down his conclusions: "I find myself led straight to the Mount of the Law. Here

is the answer to every question. Things have gone wrong because nations and people have departed from this law. They will never go right until nations and people have the clarity of vision and the courage to return to the keeping of the ten words spoken on Sinai." In recent years many others have come to the same conclusion.

Calvary is effectual only in the lives of those who get a vision of their own unrighteousness by beholding the righteous character of the Lawgiver, who is also the Redeemer. This is all involved in the putting on by the individual of "the breastplate of righteousness."

## *The Armor of Righteousness*

SO IMPORTANT is the breastplate of righteousness in the defense of the Christian soldier in the warfare against the hosts of evil that in 2 Corinthians 6:7 the entire armor is called "the armour of righteousness." Since Christ is our defense and hope of victory, we are told that if we abide "in Christ Jesus" He "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30.) In fact, He is the "all, and in all" of Christianity; and the prophet declared that when the Messiah came into the world "he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jeremiah 23:6.)

Indeed righteousness through faith in Christ is the everlasting gospel in verity, the very core of the plan of redemption, and the foundation of the Christian religion. It is what makes the gospel good news, glad tidings of great joy, and the sweetest story ever told. In preaching the message of salvation it is the one subject that should swal-

low up every other, because it is absolutely necessary to our present and eternal welfare. This great truth will play a vital part in transforming the church militant into the church triumphant. A well-known writer said that "clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict."—Mrs. E. G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

The Scriptures describe two kinds of righteousness, one being false and the counterfeit of the true and genuine, therefore as worthless as counterfeit money. It is attempted obedience to the law of God written only on tables of stone, or to divine instructions written only on paper with ink, and constitutes self-righteousness of the old covenant variety. It is therefore worthless as far as righteousness and salvation are concerned. It is the legalistic religion of the Pharisee which Jesus severely condemned in the statement: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20.

"In no case" indicates that God can make no exception to this rule. A legal religion based on human works and credit, forms and ceremonies, has no value, and in fact is an offense to God. Legalism is always Christless, loveless, and useless. True righteousness is the fruit of faith and love. When the Holy Spirit transfers the law and

word of God from the tables of stone and the Scriptures to the mind and heart, obedience becomes a delight. Christ, the Word of God, and the living Law, lives out His life of perfect obedience in the one in whom He abides. Righteousness is therefore first of all right-being, which always produces right-doing. When the heart is right, the conduct will be right, and the person can say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Galatians 2:20.

Paul, the most outstanding preacher of righteousness and antagonist of legalism, contrasts the false and the true in the following texts: "To what conclusion does this bring us? Why, that the Gentiles, who were not in pursuit of righteousness, have overtaken it—a righteousness, however, which arises from faith; while the descendants of Israel, who were in pursuit of a Law that could give righteousness, have not arrived at one. And why? Because they were pursuing a righteousness which should arise not from faith, but from what they regarded as merit." "For I bear witness that they possess an enthusiasm for God, but it is an unenlightened enthusiasm. Ignorant of the righteousness which God provides and building their hopes upon a righteousness of their own, they have refused submission to God's righteousness." Romans 9:30-32; 10:2, 3, Weymouth.



"You and I, though we are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that it is not through obedience to Law that a man can be declared free from guilt, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. We have therefore believed in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of being declared free from guilt, through faith in Christ and not through obedience to Law. For through obedience to Law no human being shall be declared free from guilt." Galatians 2:15, 16, Weymouth. "Free from guilt" is translated "justified" in the Authorized Version, and they mean the same.

To what law does the apostle refer, the moral or ceremonial? To either or to both. Any attempt to obtain righteousness through obedience to any law by human effort is legalism and therefore of no avail. The previously quoted writer said, "There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing. . . . A profession of Christ without this deep love, is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 49.

There are two kinds or phases of faith-righteousness, and it is important that we be able to distinguish between them. The righteousness by

which we are justified, or declared free from the guilt of sin, is imputed and gives man a title to heaven, while the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted and gives man a fitness or preparation for heaven. This distinction is clear when we remember that justification or imputed righteousness deals only with the past, while imparted righteousness or sanctification has to do with the present and future. The first is the work of a moment and the second the work of a lifetime and is the same as Christian growth.

Justification is the only method by which a person can get rid of sin. There is no sin until it is committed, and then it is in the past. Since sin is a completed transaction, there is nothing left to do but to repent and confess and rely upon the divine promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

Through the exercise of faith the sinner is instantly forgiven and completely freed from all guilt and condemnation, just as if he had never sinned.

The blessed results of justification are described in the following scriptures: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and

death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1-4. "He pronounced sentence upon sin in human nature; in order that in our case the requirements of the Law might be fully met. For our lives are regulated not by our earthly, but by our spiritual natures," is the Weymouth translation of the last part of this scripture.

This leaves absolutely no room for human boasting or credit on the basis of good works. Paul wrote, "No distinction is made; for all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by His free unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is found in Christ Jesus. He it is whom God put forward as a Mercy-Seat, rendered efficacious through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness—because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed—with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus. Where then is there room for your boasting? It is for ever shut out. On what principle? On the ground of merit? No, but on the ground of faith. For we

maintain that it is as the result of faith that a man is held to be righteous, apart from actions done in obedience to Law." Romans 3:23-28, Weymouth.

Justification is again beautifully set forth in 1 John 2:1, 2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

This is not an indulgence to sin, or an excuse for sinning, but a provision in case we do. Life-boats and lifebelts on board a ship are not evidences that it is planned to have a shipwreck, but a provision in case of an accident. The best of saints have sinned, and were saved through the only provision for sin. The word "advocate" means an added voice who speaks in our behalf in court, one who knows the Judge and the Law and as the Son of man is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" because during His earthly sojourn He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We are therefore invited to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:15, 16.)

Imparted righteousness, sanctification, and spiritual growth are the same. They are always gradual and therefore a lifetime development. They give us our fitness or preparation for heaven. It

is the process by which we are made righteous through the Word of God and the indwelling of Christ. Our lives are brought into harmony with the law, and the image of God is restored. Growth is always slow and gradual. Under some conditions it may be more rapid, but there are no short cuts to maturity.

Spiritual life begins with a spiritual birth and then as in physical life develops gradually. Peter said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter 2:2. Paul declared that the spiritual gifts were given to the church "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:12, 13.

We are told that we are changed by beholding Christ "from one degree of radiant holiness to another" until we reflect the image of Him whom we behold and adore. See 2 Corinthians 3:18, Weymouth. This is the purpose of the gospel, and if it fails in this it fails in everything. This is imparted righteousness by which Christ "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24.)

Experiencing the imputed righteousness of

Christ by faith to take care of the past, and His imparted righteousness to produce character development into His likeness, are what is involved in the putting on of "the breastplate of righteousness," and being clothed with the beautiful robe of the righteousness of Christ. It is "the armour of righteousness" by which the Christian soldier is enabled to triumph gloriously.

## *The Gospel of Peace*

**A**S A FURTHER protection for the soldier of Christ in "the good fight of faith," he must have his "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The Captain of the Lord's host instructs him to put on "the shoes of the Good News of peace—a firm foundation for your feet." It was especially important for the soldier of Paul's day to have a firm footing, as he contended with his antagonist in hand-to-hand combat. Any slipping or stumbling could easily prove fatal.

In all ages the leaders of armies have been very particular in regard to the footwear of their soldiers. The Roman soldier did not wear sandals only, but his legs were covered and protected by greaves, or brazen boots, which reached to the knees. Protection for the feet and legs was an important part of the armor. A foot or leg wound made it difficult to stand firm in battle, to dodge the spear and sword thrusts of the enemy, to pursue one's foe, or to flee from danger.

In this connection it is interesting to notice the armor of the giant Goliath as described in 1 Samuel 17:4-7. He had "an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders." "He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore a bronze breast-plate of scaled armour," and "he had bronze greaves on his legs, and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders," is the James Moffatt Translation. A javelin is a light spear thrown by hand. But the armored giant was no match for David, who had on the armor of God.

In Revelation 12:1 the church of Christ is symbolized by a woman "clothed with the sun," representing the righteousness of Christ, and standing on the moon, which in Psalm 89:37 is used as the symbol of permanence and stability. The church is therefore able to withstand the attacks of the great red dragon, representing the earthly government of Satan down through the ages, while he is "the prince of this world." The calmness and confidence produced by the peace of God are essential to courage and steadfastness. Sin is the cause of restlessness and uncertainty. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57:20, 21.

The sinner is therefore unprepared to meet the attacks of the great antichrist and his evil hosts. He needs that righteousness which produces peace and banishes all fear and makes a person quiet, serene, trustful, and confident. Said the prophet: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32:17. This experience makes it possible to be at peace even in the midst of battle. There is a divine arrangement in the putting on of the armor of God. The girdle of truth is naturally followed by the breastplate of righteousness, and this makes the gospel a message of peace.

Peace is one—if not the greatest—of the longings of the human heart. Ever since sin entered the world, mankind has been nervous and restless. Men and nations have cried, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." This hope of humanity has been a will-o'-the-wisp that has been constantly pursued but never attained. Trouble and distress have ever been the order of the day. Never has there been so much anguish, perplexity, and disillusionment among the peoples and nations of the earth as at the present time. Jesus declared that the fear of anticipated future events would cause the hearts of men to fail just before His return, and that there would be "upon the earth distress

of nations, with perplexity." This would come as the result of the restless and roaring waves of the great sea of humanity. These conditions should give evidence to God's people that it is time to look up and lift up their heads because their "redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:9-11, 25-28.)

The great Leader of the forces of righteousness is "The Prince of Peace," and therefore "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." See Isaiah 9:6, 7. It is fitting that, when He came into the world, the angel chorus should sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14), or, "among men with whom he is pleased." (Luke 2:14, Revised Standard Version.) It is therefore appropriate that His gospel be called "the gospel of peace." The prophet Isaiah doubtless had special reference to Him when he wrote: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isaiah 52:7), although it also applies to all of His messengers. Their feet are beautiful because they are shod "with the preparation of the gospel of peace." (Ephesians 6:15.)

The language of our text also indicates a readiness to march at the command of Christ to the ends of the earth in obedience to the great gospel commission. Such readiness and preparedness is an essential quality in a good soldier, who must be ready to march at a moment's notice.

Marching is an important part of a soldier's work, both in training and in warfare. He must therefore be well shod and toughened by long and wearisome marches. The most successful generals have been those who have moved their armies quickly in order to strike the enemy suddenly and unexpectedly. This was the chief secret of the success of Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte. Even in these days of mechanized warfare, soldiers are trained to endure long and rapid marches. In the closing campaign of the church militant, the movements of the forces of righteousness will be rapid ones to keep pace with the rapidity of modern events, which Lloyd George said seem to be "covering the space of centuries in a year."

There is evidence on every hand that the agencies of evil are combining and consolidating their forces in preparation for the last great crisis. Present-day conditions, considered in the light of prophecy, forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude and that great changes will soon take place in our world, and that the final movements will be rapid ones. The same will be true of the progress of the message of salvation under the refreshing showers of the latter rain of spiritual power when "the earth [will be] . . . lightened with his [God's] glory." (Revelation 18:1.) The divine promise is: "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short

work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans 9:28. What God can do through the power of the Holy Spirit is indicated by the fact that as the result of the Pentecostal outpouring the gospel was preached in a few years "to every creature which is under heaven." (Colossians 1:23.)

The rapid progress of the gospel message leading to its final triumph is graphically pictured in Revelation 14:6-14. Here it is symbolized by angels flying in the midst of heaven, preaching "the everlasting gospel" to "them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The climax is the coming of Christ to reap the harvest of the earth.

Those who fulfill this great prophecy will be world-minded but not worldly minded. They will embrace the whole world in their thinking and planning. They will be the most farsighted and broad-minded people in the world, including in their vision all mankind as well as eternity. A world-encircling gospel movement alone can carry out the great commission and meet the expectations of the Saviour of men. The commander in chief of the forces of righteousness will be satisfied with nothing less than world conquest. We are told that He will continue the campaign "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Corinthians 15:25.)

Let us not forget that the putting on of the shoes of the gospel of peace, as with the girdle of

truth and the breastplate of righteousness, and in fact all other parts of the Christian armor, is a progressive work requiring time and diligence on the part of the soldier of Christ. Though the peace of justification, or imputed righteousness, which takes care of the sins of the past and assures us of reconciliation with God, comes in a moment, or at least begins in a moment, it continues to increase with the experience of sanctification, or imparted righteousness, which is the work of a lifetime of spiritual growth.

We are assured that, when the Prince of Peace takes the government of His people upon His shoulders, of the increase of "peace there shall be no end." Just before Jesus ascended to His Father to begin His priestly ministry in the sanctuary in heaven, He bequeathed His own peace to His followers: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. What a legacy—a peace that casts out all fear! It is not the peace of the world, which is always temporary, but the peace of Christ which brings permanent results. It made Him calm and serene and composed under all circumstances. He has been called "the Majesty of calmness."

Like the love of Christ, the breadth and length and depth and height of the peace of Christ cannot be fully measured or comprehended. It can

be known only by experience. The Apostle Paul wrote: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7. While this peace cannot be fully measured or understood, it can be increased through acquaintance with Christ and His Word. In fact, it can become a dominating power in our lives. The divine counsel is, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Colossians 3:15.

Only those who know the sovereignty of love and peace in the heart can wear the shoes of the gospel of peace and become peacemakers, reconciling others to God. The apostle said that God "hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation," and because "we are ambassadors for Christ" we are commissioned to say to all sinners, "Be ye reconciled to God." (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.) "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9), is one of the beatitudes of Jesus. Only those who know the peace of God in their own hearts can be successful peacemakers.

"Happy are the peacemakers" is another translation. The word "blessed" is defined as "the state of being happy, joyful, and peaceful, as the result of the full enjoyment of the divine favor; unalloyed prosperity and contentment in heart and life." Peace and happiness drawn from earthly sources are as changeable as varying circumstances, but

the peace of Christ is constant and abiding. It does not depend on the amount of earthly possessions, or the number and prominence of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of all spiritual blessings, and peace and happiness drawn from Him can never fail.

All this is involved in the putting on and use of the shoes of the gospel of peace. Soldiers with such a spiritual experience will be happy warriors whose faith and confidence will assure them of victory, so that they can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us."

## *The Shield of Faith*

THE NEXT part of the Christian soldier's spiritual armor is the shield of faith. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," or "all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Revised Standard Version). Ephesians 6:16. "The evil one" is identified in verse eleven as the devil.

The shield here described is believed to be that used by the Roman infantry. It was oblong, being two and a half feet wide and four in length, and served as an important protection to the whole body. It was made of metal or thick, tough rawhide. It was fireproof as well as arrow-proof in order to stop and quench the fiery darts of the enemy. "Flaming darts," "burning darts," and "fire-tipped darts" are other translations. The ancient warriors used what were sometimes called "fire-arrows" which carried fire and served as firebrands to ignite the victim's clothing, tent, home, or fortress.



"Fiery" may also refer to the poisoned arrows used in ancient warfare and also by the American Indians. The Romans called these poison-tipped arrows "scorpions" because of their painful and deadly effect. The serpents that attacked the children of Israel during their wilderness journey were called "fiery serpents," not only because of their copper color, but also because of their deadly sting which caused inflammation and death.

"Above all" probably has more than one meaning. First, it was above all other parts of the armor in importance because the shield was movable and could be used to protect any part of the body in danger. When placed between the enemy and any part of the regular armor, it provided a double protection to that part of the body. With the shield on his left arm and his weapon in his right hand the soldier was able to protect his whole being from darts, spears, stones, and sword thrusts. With shields over their heads the ancient soldiers marched up to the walls of cities and dug their way through, safe from the weapons and stones that rained down from above.

"Above all" therefore also means over or outside of all the other armor. "Over all things" seems to be the idea in the Greek. The statement could also be translated "besides all things," that is, besides the regular armor as an extra precaution and protection. In fact, it is so rendered by Weymouth's Translation: "And besides all these take

the great shield of faith, on which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the Wicked one." It also carries the meaning of "on all occasions," or in every battle or emergency. This is indicated in the Twentieth Century New Testament, which reads, "At every onslaught take up faith for your shield; for with it you will be able to extinguish all the flaming darts of the Evil One."

The protection provided by the shield of faith is therefore complete. It stops and quenches "all the fiery darts of the wicked." The promise is that "ye *shall* be able," and not "ye *may* be able." The protection is certain and adequate. Any failure is not the fault of the shield, but of the one who uses it. A lack of faith will make it ineffectual. In fact, without faith there is no shield, for it is "the shield of faith."

"The wicked," or better, "the wicked one," refers chiefly to the devil, the great antichrist, the enemy we face in this spiritual conflict. He is not a mere myth or imaginary foe. We do not fight merely the spirit or principle of evil which some believe the devil symbolizes. He is as real a being as is Christ Himself and the soldiers of His army. Before he was transformed into a devil, Satan was the mighty cherubim Lucifer, who was virtually the prime minister of the government of heaven, ministering before the throne of the Eternal. The cause of his fall is graphically pictured in Isaiah

14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:13-19. He was joined in his revolt by one third of the angelic host. See Revelation 12:3-9.

"The fire-tipped darts flung by the evil one" (from *The Bible: A New Translation* by James Moffatt; copyright 1922, 1935, and 1950 by Harper and Brothers; used by permission) are to be checked, the destroying fire quenched, and the poison counteracted before they scorch or poison the character. Sin is a deadly poison that is on the tip of every dart flung by the enemy of our souls. James said of the vicious and uncontrolled tongue, "It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." James 3:8. The same can be said of all the agencies used by the devil.

Speaking of the human agents of Satan who fling his arrows through piercing and wounding words that cut and sting, Paul declares that "the poison of asps is under their lips." Romans 3:13.

"The works of the flesh," or of the lower nature, are pictured in Galatians 5:19-21 and are some of the weapons used by Satan in his temptations to sin. One writer said, "Satan showers his burning arrows upon the soul of the Christian, either in the shape of blasphemous suggestions, or unholy thoughts, or dark despair; but faith makes the soul impenetrable to such destructive missiles."

The darts of the enemy prove a blessing in disguise to those who endure and quench them with

the shield of faith: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:12-15.

What is the mighty shield of faith which is declared to be so important to the Christian soldier, and how is it obtained and used? How may we become skillful in handling this dart-quenching device which brings such complete victory? In other words, what is faith? Let us notice the well-known definition of the apostle: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. "Now faith is the well grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and the conviction of the reality of things which we do not see," is the Weymouth translation of this verse.

Faith is belief and trust and confidence in the Word of God. It is taking God at His word, or depending on the Word of God. It is evidence with no other evidence in sight. When God speaks, the genuine Christian asks for no other evidence. This is the attitude toward God of the person who has

surrendered to Him and is determined to believe and obey Him. The darts of doubt, discouragement, selfishness, envying, jealousy, disloyalty, passion, appetite, and the desire to run our own lives according to our own pleasure cannot penetrate the shield of faith, but fall broken and lifeless at our feet.

Because of the importance of faith in the warfare against the evil one, the battle of the Christian soldier is called "the good fight of faith." At the close of his career as he was facing martyrdom, Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, . . . I have kept the faith." The battles between men and nations in this world are never good. The apostle asked the questions: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" James 4:1. Here is the basic cause of all wars, national and personal. Peace in the world can come only through peace in the heart of the individual citizen.

Faith is the mightiest of all weapons. The Apostle John wrote, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:4, 5. How then can the person who questions the virgin birth and the deity of Christ know victory over sin and the prince of this world? A merely human Christ cannot atone for, or save from, sin. The following

promise is very precious to genuine Christians: "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God; and every one who loves the Father loves also Him who is the Father's Child. We know that no one who is a child of God lives in sin, but He who is God's Child keeps him. We know that we are the children of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the Evil one." 1 John 5:1, 18, 19. Weymouth's Translation. Therefore it is imperative that we have on the whole armor of God.

We are told that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. It is the result of hearing and believing the Word of God. Faith and the Word therefore cannot be separated. Without the Word we cannot exercise faith. A great deal called faith is nothing but presumption.

Peter knew from many years of experience as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee that it would be presumption for him to attempt to walk on the water without an invitation from Christ, so he called out to Him, "Bid me come unto thee on the water." Above the roar of the wind and waves the answer came back, "Come." It was only one word, but it was enough on which to build faith, for all of God's commands are enablings. Peter jumped out of the boat, not on the pliable and yielding water, but on faith in the word of his Master that was "the substance of things hoped

for," and the evidence of things invisible. Faith was the substance, or groundwork, or foundation, that held him up. When he took his eyes off Jesus and looked back at the boat and the other disciples, he began to sink. He recovered his faith, however, and walked back with Jesus to the ship, a wiser and more humble man.

In the Christian warfare presumption is a broken reed that will fail in the time of crisis. During Christ's battle with Satan in the wilderness of temptation, it was His use of the shield of faith that brought Him the victory. Satan shot his arrows from three different directions, and each time Jesus swung the shield of faith and stopped the dart with "It is written." The Son of God rested the outcome of the battle on His confidence in the Written Word which He Himself had previously spoken through the prophets. He told Satan that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

During the last and most desperate phase of satanic warfare, the Christian warrior is given the promise, "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." To Abraham the Lord said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." He has defeated Satan on every battlefield and is invulnerable to all his attacks. His victory is ours by faith. He is the One who has "delivered us" in the past, who "doth deliver" us at the present time, and "in

whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" in all future battles with our relentless foe. See 2 Corinthians 1:10. For what more could we ask?

Clothed with the armor of God, the Christian can say with the psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle; my rock and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take my refuge." Psalm 144:1, 2, R.S.V.

## *The Helmet of Salvation*

**A**FTER taking the shield of faith, the next part of the Christian soldier's defensive armor is "the helmet of salvation." "Put on salvation as your helmet" is the James Moffatt translation. In another of his epistles Paul said, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thessalonians 5:8. The importance of faith, love, and hope is here emphasized as absolutely essential in the defense of the Christian. In fact, the three are so important that they abide the changing scenes of this life and continue through all eternity. "And so there remain Faith, Hope, Love—these three; and of these the greatest is Love." 1 Corinthians 13:13, Weymouth.

That the use of this helmet was an essential part of the armor of Christ when He came into the world to meet the enemy on his own battleground in order to win back a revolted world to the sovereignty of God is evident from Bible

prophecy. We are told that He not only "put on righteousness as a breastplate," but He also put "an helmet of salvation upon his head." See Isaiah 59:17. Is it any wonder that He "did no sin" and was victorious in every contest with the enemy of all unrighteousness? His command "Get thee behind me, Satan," had to be obeyed by the cringing foe who tempted Him with the offer of the sovereignty of the world in return for one act of obeisance indicating his superiority.

Along with the heart, the head is a very vital part of the body and in all ages has been a target of military combatants. It would be aimed at more often by soldiers and criminals if it were not smaller and harder to hit than the breast or chest. In hand-to-hand fighting the head was usually the objective of swordsmen. It was only because Peter was an inexperienced swordsman that he failed to cleave the skull of the servant of the high priest rather than to cut off his right ear. His intention was to kill rather than to merely cripple. The purpose of the helmet was to protect the head from the weapons of the enemy. When the head was thus protected by the helmet armor, the blows of the battle-ax or the strokes of the sword were in vain. It is interesting to note that the helmet is the only part of the ancient armor still in use in modern warfare.

In the spiritual warfare the protection of the head is of paramount importance, as it is the seat

of our thinking, seeing, and hearing, all of which are essential to success. The hope of protection and victory in battle depends on a clear vision, keen hearing, and quick thinking. The approach of the enemy with his weapons must be seen and heard so that the mind can direct the arm to swing the shield of faith into its proper position to protect the endangered portion of the body, or the soul. The Christian's hope of victory and conquest is in the helmet, which protects the head and its organs from the deadly blows of the mighty foe. He can say with the psalmist, "O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle." Psalm 140:7.

The divine counsel is, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2. A renewed mind is the first step in character transformation. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to conversion, which is a change of life and character. "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin," is the call of the Lord recorded in Ezekiel 18:30. A sinner decides in his mind that he is going in the wrong direction, in a path that leads to ruin and eternal death. He repents of his course and goes in the opposite direction in the narrow way that leads to eternal life.

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," is the

statement of Solomon concerning man, indicating the powerful influence thoughts have in the formation of character. In fact, character is determined by the thoughts. Everything, both good and evil, in the character begins with the thinking. "Sow a Thought, and you reap an Act; Sow an Act, and you reap a Habit; Sow a Habit, and you reap a Character; Sow a Character, and you reap a Destiny," is a true saying. This is an enlargement of the Bible statement "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is especially true in regard to the sowing of the seeds of thought. It is because of the powerful influence of right thinking on our characters that Paul wrote, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8.

If one desires to build a true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and virtuous character, it is accomplished by thinking these kinds of thoughts. What a beautiful harvest results from right thinking! The person who is supercritical of the faults of others either already has the same defects of character or will soon develop them, for we are all changed into the likeness of that which we behold. It is therefore dangerous to scrutinize any human being too closely. Christ alone is perfect.

How wonderful the promise that if we behold the glory or character of the Lord, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory," or "are being transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another." (2 Corinthians 3:18, Weymouth.) Jesus said, "For this is my Father's will, that every one who fixes his gaze on the Son of God and believes in Him should have the Life of the Ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day." John 6:40, Weymouth. Since Jesus is invisible to the natural vision, we must gaze on Him through His Word, through study, prayer, and meditation.

Knowledge and good judgment are of supreme importance in the great spiritual conflict in which we are engaged. Our minds therefore need to be protected so that we do not become confused in our thinking and irrational in our conduct. Extremists and fanatics are the product of wrong thinking. They become unreasonable, inconsistent, impulsive, and illogical. They strain at gnats and swallow camels. They place great stress on minor matters and neglect "the weightier matters of the law." Their sense of values is so impaired that they go about seeking for motes or splinters in the eyes of others, when they are themselves blinded to their own faults by great beams in their own eyes. It is wrong thinking that unbalances the mind and produces insanity, which is increasing so rapidly that some mind specialists believe that

if time would last the world would someday be a madhouse.

Just as Christ is the Head of His church, which is called His body and in which His will should be done, so the head or mind of the individual is the deciding and ruling factor in the physical body and is the means by which Christ controls the spiritual life. It is therefore vitally important that the seat of government in the personal, physical, and spiritual life be protected from the darts of the enemy by the helmet of the hope of salvation.

Conviction is also essential to salvation and is based on knowledge rather than feeling or emotion. Decisions on the ground of emotional reactions are unsafe. Emotions may come as the result of knowledge and faith, but must always occupy a secondary place. Proper convictions come out of an informed mind. The Lord said through the prophet, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." Hosea 4:6. The uninformed mind is not capable of making right decisions. This is another important reason for the head covering.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," is the secret of putting on the helmet of hope of salvation. With His mind we will think His thoughts, and His decisions will be ours. We will therefore become like Him in character. His mind and thoughts are revealed in His Word;

and if we would have His mind, we must be diligent students of the Scriptures, of which He is the Author. He is "The Word of God." By reading and studying and obeying His Word we become "the epistle of Christ" which is "known and read of all men."

Education is really the making up of our minds, and they are made up of what we put into them. When we read books or articles, we get the minds of the authors on the subjects considered. Collecting the thoughts of others through their teachings or writings constitutes education. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding," is a Bible statement. The highest form of education therefore is in collecting the thoughts and thus obtaining the mind of Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Becoming like Christ by thinking His thoughts after Him through the reading and study of His Word and through the new covenant, having His Word and law written in the mind and upon the fleshy tables of the heart, is a wonderful protection against all the attacks of the enemy of all righteousness. The dart-proof helmet will help make effectual the divine promise "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," and the Christian soldier may with confidence say, "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry

with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Isaiah 54:17; Psalm 7:10-13. God is here pictured as a warrior fighting in defense of His people.

The giant Goliath went out against the shepherd boy David, clothed in armor from head to foot and equipped with shield and weapons of war. David refused to fight in the armor of Saul, knowing that no person can successfully fight in the armor of another, unless of course it be the armor of God. David was clothed with the armor of God, but it was invisible to the giant. From a human viewpoint there was no vital spot where a stone from the sling of David could reach Goliath, and it was impossible for such a weapon to pierce the heavy armor that protected him. But the giant became angry when he saw that his antagonist was a mere lad with no armor protection and with a sling as his only weapon. In his rage he pushed back his helmet and thus inadvertently exposed a vulnerable target, into which the stone sank with deadly effect.

Anger is one of the many sins which remove the protecting helmet from the Christian soldier and expose to the darts of the enemy one of the most vital of all targets. Satan is especially anxious to get possession of the citadel of the mind,



knowing that whoever rules there will be the victor. By girding up the loins of the mind with the protecting helmet of salvation, the Christian is safe from the many appeals Satan makes to the intellectual faculties.

Let us not forget that hope is one of the triple Christian virtues which has to do in a special sense with the putting on of the helmet, which is called "the hope of salvation." Like faith, hope has to do with the future, and therefore with things invisible. The Apostle Paul wrote, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Romans 8:24, 25.

Another apostle declared that Christians are begotten "unto a lively hope" and "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for them. (See 1 Peter 1:3, 4.) Paul summed up the entire gospel in the statement that the riches of the glory of the gospel "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." After the statement that "it was impossible for God to lie," the assurance is given that we "have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Hebrews 6:18-20.

It is hope that inspires faith and courage to face the issues of life. It gives the Christian soldier buoyancy of spirit as he faces the seemingly overwhelming forces of unrighteousness, which at times "come in like a flood" to deceive and destroy. He can meet these attacks with confidence and fortitude, for "hope maketh not ashamed." He can say with the intrepid warrior Paul, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"; and again, "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:12.

## *The Sword of the Spirit*

THE NEXT part of the Christian's spiritual war equipment is "the sword of the Spirit," which is interpreted as being "the word of God." The various parts of the armor we have been considering are for defense and protection against the blows of the enemy. The Word of God is the only weapon described. Therefore, it is the only means of carrying on offensive and aggressive warfare. The girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation—all are chiefly protective. By them the soldier of Christ is able to stand his ground against all the attacks of the enemy, but he must also advance against the strongholds of his antagonist. He must not only ward off the blows intended for his destruction, but he must return them with the only weapon that can resist evil and destroy error.

The Scriptures constitute the great sword by which the church militant, under the leadership of

the Holy Spirit—the Vicegerent of the Son of God, who has been sent down to direct the battle in Christ's stead—goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." Although the warfare is mostly defensive against the fiery darts of the relentless foe, the church must make counterattacks and advance in an aggressive campaign of conquest until the great Conqueror and Emancipator has "put all enemies under his feet" and returns the rebel world to the sovereignty of His Father. The prince of darkness must be eventually driven from the battlefield and the repossessed earth "given to the people of the saints of the most High," for whom it was created.

The Apostle Paul declared that Christians "do not war after the flesh," and that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" and the "casting down" of "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," and the "bringing into captivity" of all evil "imagination" and "every thought to the obedience of Christ." See 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. What an effective weapon therefore is the Sword of the Spirit! How applicable are the words of the ancient prophet: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." See Zechariah 4:6. The victory is not attained by human might and power, because we are dealing with supernatural forces.

The Word of God is both a defensive and an

aggressive weapon. By the thrusts of the sword the soldier defends as well as attacks. With the Sword of the Spirit, the weapon of Scripture, the church carries on an aggressive campaign against Satan and his army, and by the same means defends herself against all their attacks. Christ used this weapon with telling effect against Satan and also against the scribes and Pharisees who were his agents in trying to defeat the purpose of Christ. The apostles also made their appeals to the Written Word, which always reveals the living Word.

The Sword of the Spirit is a mighty weapon that is double-edged so that it cuts both ways. It is as quick as lightning in its movements, omnipotent in its power, and sharp and cutting in its results. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12.

In the first apocalyptic vision the revelator emphasizes the importance of the Scriptures in the priestly ministry of Christ in the statement, "And out of his mouth went a sharp, twoedged sword." The illustration is believed to be that of the Thracian (Greek) broadsword, or of the Roman double-bladed sword. It literally means two-mouthed. The Word of God in the hands of the Spirit performs a double service. It cuts both ways—convicting and converting one class, and condemning

and destroying the other. In the description of the second advent of Christ in Revelation 19 it is said that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."

The penetrating Sword of the Spirit pricks the hearts and consciences of sinners. It appeals to men to surrender as did Saul of Tarsus, who kicked against its pricks until he finally yielded near the gates of Damascus and became a meek and humble follower of the Nazarene after having persecuted Him in the person of His saints. As Peter preached his sermon on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wielded His mighty sword in the great congregation. When they heard the word, "they were pricked in their heart" and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Three thousand of them surrendered and were baptized. On that occasion the Sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through doubt and unbelief, and glorious were the results. This experience will be repeated during the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter rain.

But we must remember that this mighty sword is not a human or man-made weapon. It is "the sword of the Spirit," and not the sword of man. It is a divine rather than a human weapon and can be wielded successfully only by the Holy Spirit through those who proclaim the Word. Our part is to "preach the word" so that the Spirit can use

His sword. The most effective fighters in the army of Prince Emmanuel are the men and women who have the best knowledge of the Scriptures and whose faith and confidence in them is unquestioned.

The Spirit and the Word are inseparable in the proclamation of the gospel. The Word is called "the sword of the Spirit" because it was given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is made effectual by His presence and power. We are told that God's Word "came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." See 2 Peter 1:21. He is both the author and the interpreter of the Scriptures and is therefore called "the Spirit of truth." He alone can enlighten our understanding and make the Word effective in our lives.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to the memory of His people the very scriptures needed in times of temptation and trial. He Himself had experienced this during His contest with Satan in the wilderness and met every attack with a quotation from the Inspired Word. Someone has said that "He unsheathed the Sword of the Spirit and put to flight the prince of devils." It shows that He had been a diligent student and was, therefore, able to select the very scriptures needed for the occasion. The Spirit cannot call to our remembrance what we have never studied or known in the past.

Jesus told Pilate that He came into the world to "bear witness unto the truth," and that "every one that is of the truth" would hear His voice. This is also the mission of every Christian. In one of the Messianic prophecies Christ is made to say, "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword" and "[hath] made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me." See Isaiah 49:1, 2. A sharp two-edged sword proceeded out of His mouth as He preached the Word, and it had effect. The same mighty weapon has been made available to us.

In the following prophecy the Messiah is pictured as a conquering warrior: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Psalm 45:3-7.

Christ Himself is "the Word" and "The Word of God." He is "the truth" with which we are girded for battle. He is "our righteousness" and therefore our "breastplate." He is also "our peace" and our "shield" and "the helmet of salvation." In fact He is "all in all." He is declared to be our

"victory," and therefore to Him should be ascribed all praise and glory. This is indicated in the following scripture: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Deuteronomy 33:29.

Speaking of the conquests of the Promised Land by the Israelites, the psalmist wrote: "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them." Psalm 44:3. Here is the secret of victory over the enemies of the soul, but it is a hard lesson for human beings to learn. The desire for praise and credit is predominant in human nature.

Separated from Christ, the living Word, the Scriptures are powerless to convince and convert. It is the presence of His Spirit and power in the Written Word that makes it spiritual and effectual. The rebuke of Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees is greatly needed in modern Christendom: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." John 5:39, 40, American Standard Version. The very purpose of the Scriptures is to reveal Christ, and those who do not

find Him in their searching do their studying in vain. Jesus rebuked the unbelief of the men on their way to Emmaus the evening after His resurrection with these words: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. . . . And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:25, 26.

Writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, the Apostle Paul said: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15. The purpose of the Scriptures is to place the reader and student near to Christ, who is revealed therein, for salvation is possible only through Him. A mere knowledge of the Scriptures does not bring salvation from sin. This is possible only through a Person, the Son of God, who, as the Lamb of God, paid the redemption price with His own blood.

The modernistic philosophy that makes Christ a man like other men, and the Scriptures the product of human intelligence, would rob the world of a Saviour and deprive the Holy Spirit of His only weapon for bringing conviction and conversion. The Christian soldier would therefore be helpless before the enemy. Unbelief dulls the edge of the sword and diminishes its potency as a weapon of war. The preacher who is skeptical of the divine origin and inspiration of the Scriptures cannot

proclaim a message with certainty and authority, and he cannot be the spokesman or mouthpiece of the God of truth.

The statement "The just shall live by faith" has been the keynote of the gospel in all ages. But faith is belief and confidence in the Word of God. It is full and complete dependence on the Scriptures as the infallible guide and invulnerable defense of the Christian. Jesus declared that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" the church that is built upon the solid-rock foundation of revealed truth, and Paul said that the "household of God" is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." The importance therefore of the Sword of the Spirit as the only defensive and offensive weapon of the Christian soldier cannot be overemphasized. Skill in its use will increase with practice.

## *No Victory Without Prayer*

IN THE sevenfold description of the armor and weapons of the Christian soldier recorded in Ephesians 6:10-19, prayer is set forth as the power that makes effective every part of the battle equipment. The apostle says: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." No genuine Christian can question the efficacy of prayer in the spiritual contest with the hosts of evil.

Fervent prayer for help from an outside source is proof of a feeling of helplessness and that the petitioner knows that in himself he cannot cope with enemies of his soul. In calling for divine aid, we indicate that without Christ we "can do nothing," but that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us. Because the relentless

foe makes his attacks at all times and in all places "in season, out of season," we need to be constantly on guard, obeying the instruction to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

The Christian must therefore make his prayer appeals "with all perseverance," or "at all times" (Moffatt's Translation). At every time and on every occasion of need, his mighty Helper, the Captain of his salvation, proves to be "a very present help in trouble." We must learn to pray "without ceasing," or, "without intermission," because the wicked spirits make their attacks without ceasing or intermission. For this reason Paul prayed night and day, knowing that the devil and his angels never sleep nor take a vacation. They give the saints no opportunity to relax or cease their vigil. "Pray with unceasing prayer and entreaty on every fitting occasion in the Spirit, and be always on the alert to seize opportunities for doing so, with unwearied persistence and entreaty," is the Weymouth translation.

But prayer in order to be effectual must be offered "in the Spirit." As Christ's representative He is directing the earthly warfare in His stead. The mighty weapon is the Sword of the Spirit, and He alone can wield it. We are told that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood" to overwhelm us, "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard

against him" to put him to flight. (Isaiah 59:19.) Again we read: "In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what prayers to offer nor in what way to offer them. But the Spirit Himself pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words, and the Searcher of hearts knows what the Spirit's meaning is, because His intercessions for God's people are in harmony with God's will." Romans 8:26, 27, Weymouth's Translation.

The expression "in the Spirit" does not mean a flight of feeling or an emotional ecstasy, but rather divine guidance and control. Prayer is spiritual communion and fellowship of the human with the divine. It is talking with God as with a friend. Conversation between friends is not characterized by shouting or emotional excitement. Especially in prayer "a meek and quiet spirit" is "in the sight of God of great price." Likewise the Lord speaks to us through His Spirit in the "still small voice." We pray for help with the assurance that the Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20.

When John was praying in his Patmos exile, he described himself as being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." On the Sabbath he was praying according to God's will as revealed in His Word through the Holy Spirit.

"All prayer" indicates a complete prayer pro-

gram and experience. The vehement attacks of the enemy can be met only by earnest prayer. Partial and indifferent praying is not sufficient to bring victory. "Supplication" means persistent asking and strong pleading such as Elijah offered on Mount Carmel, and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Of Him we read: "Jesus during His earthly life offered up prayers and entreaties, crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank." Hebrews 5:7, Weymouth's Translation.

"All perseverance" is a still stronger term, indicating intensity of earnestness to the extent of never giving up till the answer comes. "Watching" is often connected with prayer in the Scriptures. "Watch and pray" is divine counsel. It means to keep awake and be constantly on guard against surprise attacks by a persistent foe. Watchmen, or sentinels, constitute an important part of an army, and the Christian soldier must keep wide awake as he faces a sly, cunning, and tricky foe. For this reason the genuine saint will include in his prayers "all saints" who are contending with the same adversary. Christians should spend more time praying for each other.

In respect to the place of prayer in the Christian life, the Apostle Paul spoke from years of experience. The grand old missionary and warrior

stands out in history as a matchless example of godly living and nobility of character. Along with his fervent love, ardent faith, indomitable courage, and unbounded confidence, his prayer life was an important secret of his success. It accounted largely for his unflagging zeal and enthusiasm in service for the Master. His close communion and intimate fellowship with Christ carried him triumphantly through trials and persecutions and hardships perhaps unequaled by any ambassador of God before or since, and ended in martyrdom. His sermons and writings were vitalized by the breath of prayer.

From the altar of his devotional life, the prayers of the Apostle to the Gentiles ascended like sweet incense to the throne of grace. He never permitted any circumstances to interfere with his prayer program, which was carried forward with the regularity and continuity of breathing. He therefore prayed "without ceasing" and was "instant in prayer." This prayer habit never diminished.

One of the chief secrets of Paul's success as a soul winner was his fervent and unceasing prayers for his converts. He sowed the seeds of gospel truth under the influence of prayer, and then watered them with the tears of intercessory prayer.

The apostle urged the believers to give prayer a prominent place in their lives, saying, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."



In view of the coming judgment Paul charged the ambassador for Christ: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:2-4. It is easier for the watchman on the walls of Zion to do his duty when he is conscious of the mighty influence of a praying congregation.

The antichrist and his cohorts cannot stand before the Christian who maintains his connection with the living God. The person who asks for and continually receives directions from his Commander in chief, the Captain of the Lord's host, is impregnable to all the assaults of Satan and his angels.

Throughout this book we have traced the need for the Christian to put on the whole armor of God. Only when he does this can he hope for victory in the day-by-day struggle with the forces of darkness. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:10, 11.