

R2309 - THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE.

"Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life." – 1 Tim. 6:12.

WHILE the followers of Christ are to be peacemakers, and are instructed accordingly to "follow peace with all men," nevertheless, they are the greatest warriors the world has ever known, on the principle that "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." But, there are good fights and bad fights. A good fight is one which is in the interest of that which is good, that which is true, noble, pure, godly – a battle for righteousness; every other contest is a bad fight, for an unworthy cause.

But who are these fighters, referred to in our text, whom the Apostle Paul calls upon to fight a good fight? Does he call upon all men? or upon sinners? or upon merely nominal Christians? We answer, No; he addressed only the brigade of the "King's Own" – the body of Christ, the consecrated Church. The Apostle addresses these as the mouthpiece of our Captain of salvation, Christ Jesus, and it would be wholly out of order for a general or captain to issue orders to those who had not joined his army, and did not recognize his authority. Hence it is evident that the world in general is not addressed, and that nominal Christians who have never made a covenant with the Lord are not addressed. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." It is to these that the instructions come respecting the fight that is now on – that has been in progress since the Captain of our salvation began the war nearly nineteen centuries ago.

For whom do we fight – for God – for Christ? No, we answer. We fight for ourselves. A great mistake is made on this point by many who seem to imagine that fighting the good fight of faith is doing something for God, and deserves his thanks and reward. The Almighty God does not need that we should fight for him. He is omnipotent, abundantly able to take care of himself and his cause; he needs not our puny efforts. The claim that we are fighting for God would be as inconsistent as for the Cubans to say that they are fighting for the United States. It is the United States that is fighting for the relief of the Cubans. So it is God who is fighting for us, and assisting and encouraging us to fight the good fight of faith, on our own behalf. It is well that this feature of the case should be clearly discerned.

Against whom do we fight? We answer, our battle is not against our fellow creatures nor with carnal weapons; indeed, we can have large sympathy for even our most relentless foes, who, to the extent that modern civilization will permit, are ready and willing to despitefully use and persecute us, and to say all manner of evil against us falsely. We can readily see that they are blinded in considerable measure, either by their own prejudice and passion, or by the great Adversary's delusive false doctrines, superstitions, etc.; hence our warfare is not directed against these, and as we have opportunity we are to seek to do them good, "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." (2 Tim. 2:25.) Hence also, when dealing with these, so far from battling with them and resisting evil with evil, our Captain has commanded that we return good for evil, gentleness for rudeness, kindness for discourtesy;

and that we seek to do good to those who speak evil of us and persecute us, that thus the eyes of their understanding may be opened, and that they may discern that there is such a thing as the spirit of love, generosity, kindness, whereas they suppose all to be actuated by the same malevolent spirit of selfishness, which controls themselves.

Our fight is to be against Sin – the great taskmaster, which captured our race in the person of father Adam, and has held it as slaves from then till now – paying regularly for six thousand years the terrible penalty of death, with all its concomitants of [R2309 : page 154] sickness, pain, sorrow and trouble. Yes, this is our enemy.

Indirectly, Satan is our enemy, because he it was through whose influence father Adam first became the slave of Sin; and Satan has still pursued the same course, and is even now endeavoring to bring us back again under the dominion of Sin, and to hold us there. We are not to forget, however, that our battle is not directly with Satan, nor are we to bring against him "a railing accusation" (Jude 9); rather, we are to say, with Michael, "the Lord rebuke thee;" and we are to await the Lord's time and the Lord's way for rebuking Satan. Nevertheless, we are to resist Satan; that is we are to resist his influence and deceptions and endeavors to mislead us into error and into sin.

The Lord instructs us that "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and with spiritual wickedness in exalted positions." (Eph. 6:12.) Satan, as the great master or general of Sin, has largely to do with all the various influences with which we must battle. It is his cunning, his "wiles," that supervise the battle against us, and since he is a spirit being, and therefore much more intelligent than ourselves, the contest would be a very unequal one, if we were without an equally powerful spirit leader. But we are not thus left helpless to battle against superior wisdom and cunning. Our chief Captain, the Lord Jesus, has conquered sin, and has been glorified, and he is on our part, so that with the Apostle, we can confidently say, "Greater is he that is on our part than all they that be against us" – Satan and his cohorts of evil spirits, and his deluded earthly agents and servants.

The Apostle seems to sum up the agencies through which our great captor Sin seeks to hold us his slaves, or if we have gotten free to regain his influence over us, as three – the world, the flesh, the devil. We have seen the powerful influence of the devil, as the great chief general of Sin. We next notice in what sense the world is our opponent, and in what sense we are to battle against it. We have just seen that we do not battle with carnal weapons, nor do we in any sense of the word battle or contest with our fellow-creatures, seeing that they are blinded by the adversary, and really little, if any, accountable for their course; our battle is not to be with these. It is with "the *spirit* of the world," its influence, that we are to do battle: it is to be fought against and resisted – the world's disposition, the mind of the world, the motives which actuate the world, the ambitions of the world, the pride of life and the deceitfulness of riches – these things, these wrong views of matters as seen from the worldly standpoint, we are to resist, to fight against; – and it is a daily battle.

Finally, our battle is with the flesh – our own flesh. Ever since sin captured our race, in the person of father Adam, its slavery has been conducive to mental, moral and physical degradation. Its only tendency is towards evil, and that continually, and only as we get rid of the blinding influences, and perverted tastes and desires, ambitions and hopes and loves which sin cultivates – only in that proportion do we get to see matters in their true light, and to have even a faint glimpse of our own degraded condition. But our great Captain, who is also "the chief priest of our profession," redeemed us from this slavery to sin, with his own precious blood. He had compassion upon us, and when we realized our deplorable condition, and accepted his aid he sets us free from the yoke of Sin's slavery.

But we still have the motions of sin in our bodies, – the tendencies toward sin, which have become almost second nature to us, through the long period of nearly six thousand years of slavery. So that while we are now free, and with the mind are serving the law of Christ, and are accepted into his army as soldiers of the cross, to battle for righteousness and truth and goodness and purity, we nevertheless find our new selves harassed by the old perverted tastes and inclinations of our own flesh, toward the service of the old taskmaster. Not the least of our fightings, therefore, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, is against these perverted tendencies of our flesh, and the battle with these is a daily battle. With the Apostle Paul, one of the great soldiers in our war, we should be able to say, "I keep my body [my flesh and its desires] under [in subjection to my new will, my new self] lest after having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." – 1 Cor. 9:27.

From the time that we enlist under the banner of our Captain, that is, from the time that we make a full consecration to him, to fight the good fight, and to lay down our lives in his service – from that moment on he, under the terms of the New Covenant, reckons our flesh as dead: because our minds are renewed – alive toward God with a newness of life, and hence those **[R2310 : page 154]** motions of sin which we are seeking to bring into absolute subjection to the will of God in Christ, are not recognized by the Lord as the will or motions of the new creature, enlisted in his service, but merely recognized as a part of the general enemy, Sin, pursuing after and battling with us, which we are pledged to resist and to war against, and which he promises grace and help to overcome.

It is these enemies in our own flesh which cause us the greatest difficulties. It is these that Satan appeals to: these he seeks to encourage in their warfare against the new spirit of our minds; it is through **[R2310 : page 155]** these that the spirit of the world gains closest approach to us, and seeks to capture us, and lead us back as slaves of Sin. So to speak, the "new creature in Christ is beset, surrounded on every hand with enemies, seeking our disaster and enslavement. We must battle – battle for ourselves, battle for our own liberty, battle for victory over our own weaknesses, battle against the spirit of the world, battle against delusions and snares of the adversary, by which he would seek to make the evil things appear good, and right to appear undesirable. No wonder, then, that the Christian soldier is urged to

be continually watchful; no wonder that he is urged to "put on the whole armor of God;" no wonder that he is cautioned in respect to his various and wily foes, and especially against those of his own flesh.

Thanks be to God for the great Captain of our salvation. Thanks be to God for the great armory of his Word, from which we obtain the helmet of salvation, the intellectual knowledge to protect us from the delusions of our own perverted sense and ignorance, and from the wiles of the adversary. Thanks be to God also for the breastplate of righteousness, the merit of Christ and his great sacrifice, compensating for our imperfections, and covering our vitals, and securing thereby our life – eternal life. Thanks be to God also for the shield of faith, of trust, of confidence in him who has bought us, in realization that he who has begun the good work in us is able and willing also to complete it; for the realization that since God so loved us while we were yet the slaves of Sin, and redeemed us from his bondage with the precious blood of Christ, much more does he now love us and much more is he prepared to aid us now that we have, by his grace, become free from sin, and become the servant of righteousness. Thanks be to God also for the sandals, the *preparation* to endure hardness patiently, which the truth gives, protecting us for the walks of life from the sharp animosities of the world in our pilgrim journey. Thanks be to God also for the sword of the spirit, the Word of his truth, as a defense by which we can resist the adversary, and come off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us.

BENEFACTORS ALSO – FIGHTING FOR OTHERS.

We have seen that our fighting is on our own behalf, and on behalf of each other. We are fighting to the death in self-defense, to maintain our own liberty, and that of each other. As the Apostle says, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood [death], fighting against Sin" – we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." And we might add that, while the King does not need our fighting on his behalf, nevertheless we sometimes have great pleasure and profit in defending the honor of his name and the majesty of his righteous government from the assaults of those who wickedly or blindly misrepresent the same. But there is another feature of our warfare aside from all these. To observe this feature with clearness and distinctness, we must take an elevated position and note the entire trend of the conflict now in progress for over eighteen centuries, and the great object which the King himself has declared shall be the result of this battle. It is this: –

Not only we, but the whole world were "sold under Sin" by father Adam – the whole world, as well as we, are slaves of Sin. Not only so, but our great Redeemer who bought us with his precious blood gave it as the propitiation price also "for the sins of the whole world." Thus he bought the right, not only to release us (his Church, his army) but the right also to release from the power of Sin, the great taskmaster, *all* the slaves of Sin. And altho he has not been prosecuting the work of releasing all the slaves at the present time, but has been confining his work to the releasing of a few, a little flock, who are now of his army,

nevertheless he informs us that this present election of the little flock is merely with the intention of using these as his associates and joint-heirs in his Kingdom which he will establish at the time he is ready to take his great power and reign, for the utter overthrow of Sin, and the complete release of all from its bondage.

The Apostle Paul, one of the lieutenants under our great Captain, speaks of this coming deliverance of the world, saying, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now [under the relentless slavery of Sin, and its yoke of death], *waiting for* the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creature itself also [the world of mankind, or as many of them as will accept the liberty] shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [the bondage of death, with all its incidentals of pain, sorrow and trouble] into the glorious liberty of the children of God [the perfection of life, and all the glorious privileges which belong to the perfect sons of God on every plane – *the divine, the angelic, and the human*]." – Rom. 8:19,21,22.

We see then, that the poor world, groaning in its slavery, has been waiting for this grand event of which the Apostle spoke, saying, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The interim between the redemption and the deliverance is only a little while, from the standpoint of divine reckoning, in which a thousand years are as one day; but as yesterday, as a watch in the night. From this standpoint, the nearly nineteen centuries for the selection of the King's Own are but "a little while" – less than two days "with the Lord," – and soon will be past. [R2310 : page 156] Then, glorified with their Master and Captain, they will be liberators with him of the world of mankind, from the yoke of sin and the prison of death. (This period of two days (2000 years) seems to be hinted also in the type of Rebecca's call to be the bride of the typical Isaac, where only two days are mentioned. – Gen. 24.)

What a glorious prospect, what a benevolent ambition is thus set before us in the Gospel, in respect to the future work of all who are now called to be the sons of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, and good soldiers in his cause, – the cause of righteousness and truth. O, how anxious we are that we shall be "overcomers," that we may inherit these blessed privileges – secure this great boon of association with our Redeemer in his work of blessing all the families of the earth.

It was respecting this great work of delivering the world from the slavery of Sin, from the weaknesses and imperfections of the fallen nature, and from the prisonhouse of the tomb, that our Master referred, when quoting the prophecy relative to himself, which says, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor [meek, he hath sent me] to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives [of Sin], and recovering of sight to the blind [whose minds the God of this world hath blinded], and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18.) The little work that was done by our Lord at his first advent, in the way of healing the naturally

blind and sick and lame, and setting at liberty a few from the prison of death, was merely a foretaste of the greater and grander work which is to be accomplished by him and his glorified soldiers of the cross, at his second advent.

If the physical and temporary releases from sickness and death at our Lord's first advent were grand blessings, how much more grand and how much more blessed will be the "greater works than these," which we, as his glorified Church, in association with him, shall be privileged to perform during the Millennial age. How much greater is the work of opening the eyes of the understanding than of opening the physical eyes; how much greater the work of healing the lameness of character than of healing the lameness physical; how much grander the giving of an ear to hear the truth and to understand and to appreciate it, than the opening of the natural ear, to natural sounds; how much greater the work of loosing the tongue of the world, to speak forth the praises of him who has delivered them, than of merely loosing the tongue of the dumb to speak of natural things; how much more stupendous the work of giving eternal life to as many of the world of mankind as will accept it under the terms of the New Covenant than was the work of giving for a few years the lives of Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus. O, we praise the Lord for this glorious prospect of being associated with him in these "greater works" of the future, and we see it all comprehended in his statement that "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth." All the deaf ears of understanding shall be unstopped; they shall hear, in the sense that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. And the Master's assurance is, further, that they who hear properly, obediently, shall live – not "live at this poor dying rate," of the present time, but live in the grandly superlative sense of life – in perfection of being, with the power of life eternal, lifted completely out of sin and out of death, back to the fulness and perfection of life which God gave originally, and which was lost in Eden.

NONE BUT FIGHTERS WANTED IN THE LORD'S ARMY.

In the armies of the earth the chances are that many of the soldiers will never see a battle, that the majority of them will never lose a drop of blood; but **[R2311 : page 156]** in our army all this is reversed. All men know at the time of enlistment that they are sure to see service, and that not only in one battle, but in many battles; and that, altho there may be times of special fightings without and within, there never will be a time when there will be such a cessation of hostilities as that we may consider our enemies utterly routed, and ourselves at liberty to retire for repose. Furthermore, we are distinctly informed at the time of enlistment that there is no discharge in this warfare. We may desert, however, and indeed are at liberty to do so, since none are held in bondage in this army.

All who desire to go back to the service of sin, have full opportunity at any time and in any place. Our Captain wants those, and those only, who serve the truth with the spirit of truth; with a desire for the service; with a love for it; all others are in the wrong ranks. The

end of our service, we were informed at the time of enlistment, would be the end of the war; and further we were informed that the end of the war, so far as we were concerned, would mean faithfulness until death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Only by death can we finish our course, and only by faithfulness to the last can we be acceptable as amongst the conquerors – the overcomers.

There are many other battles than ours in progress; and many different army corps fighting on every hand; but ours is different from them all. We may be interested in some of these battles more than in others. [R2311 : page 157] Some of them may appeal to us much more closely than others, as being along lines considerably in harmony with the "good fight" which we are waging, and to that extent we may heartily sympathize with them; but we can do no more than this: because our covenant, our engagement, our battle, is the most important of all, and to it we have covenanted our every moment and our every talent. For instance, we may sympathize with those who are fighting against alcohol, and in favor of temperance; we may sympathize with others who are fighting for a general social uplift for the civilized world; we may sympathize with those who are laying down their lives for a social uplift in heathen lands, as missionaries; we may sympathize with those who are risking their lives in the cause of liberty from oppression, as in the war in Cuba.

But while our sympathies must always be on the side of everything which is making toward righteousness, goodness, truth, purity – everything either closely or remotely related to our cause of righteousness, we cannot turn aside to render aid to these other warfares. Ours is the most important, ours is the battle which the Lord God Almighty has planned, and which the Lord Jesus, as his Captain General, is carrying forward and will soon bring to glorious success; and which will secure better results, better conditions, than the various battlers for temperance and order and liberty have ever dreamed of.

But we are to beware of certain deceptions which our great Adversary brings forward, by which he would seduce us and get us into the *wrong army*: appearing as an angel of light, as a servant of righteousness, as a fighter in the Lord's cause. He has organized numerous false army corps, into which he endeavors to attract all who learn something of the liberty of Christ and desire to become soldiers of the cross. In order to make the matter more seductive and deceptive, the Adversary carefully guards against any intimation of his relationship with these. Indeed, he puts forward as leaders and under-officers in these various armies as many of the soldiers of the cross as he can get into a thoroughly deluded condition, in order that these armies may be the more attractive to those who are seeking the Lord's service. These armies are not as select as the Lord's army, and they offer very many inducements to soldiers, and attract very many who are really servants of the adversary; because they promise great rewards and little or no fighting, and a generally pleasant social camp life. These conditions of enlistment seem so much more favorable than those which the Lord holds out, and on the

whole these army corps are so large, so fine and so attractive, that many soldiers of the cross make the mistake of enlisting under wrong banners.

The banner of the King's Own is emblazoned with a cross and a crown, and on the reverse side the names of the King and the Captain, and the law of this army, briefly comprehended in one word, "Love." The other deceptive corps, which are not the King's Own, but which contain many who deludedly think that they are in the King's battalion, have various banners, with various names; and their soldiers are generally enlisted under false conceptions of the object of the warfare, as well as respecting the results of it. They are advised that by joining this army they will get to heaven and escape a hell of eternal torment. And the results of the warfare are represented in one of two lights – either that the whole number who will get to heaven will be very small, and the whole number who will go to eternal torment immensely large; or that few of the intelligent will get to heaven, and the majority of the intelligent go to eternal torment, while many of the ignorant and savages will go to heaven, and few of them to eternal torment.

Under these untrue representations these armies are immense in numbers, containing many who have comparatively little interest in righteousness or in the King's cause, but great interest in endeavoring to escape the awful reward which is represented as attaching to a neglect to enlist in these armies. And, be it noted, that these various armies are greatly in accord with each other: while maintaining a certain amount of rivalry, they nevertheless maintain a large degree of fellowship; because their hopes and aims are practically one. But for similar reasons they are greatly out of harmony with the King's Own. Its hopes, its aims, its methods, its banner, and everything pertaining to it, differ so radically from theirs that they cannot fellowship the soldiers of our army, and in order to keep the *best* of their soldiers from deserting and going to it, they are prone to say all manner of evil against the Lord's army, falsely; to misrepresent its hopes, aims, ambitions and efforts, even calling it the devil's army.

It is not difficult to recognize these large numerous armies, organized under the supervision of the great Adversary. Their names are prominent upon their banners in every direction; and their soldiers are taught that the chief battling is to battle for their respective armies and their claims and names. The banner over one of these is Presbyterianism, over another Methodism, over another Roman Catholicism, over another Lutheranism, etc., etc. The Lord's army is a "little flock," while these armies boast their millions. The Lord's statement respecting his army is that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath he chosen, but the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom." These other armies all boast to the contrary, of how much wealth they have [R2311 : page 158] accumulated; of how wise they are; of how learned; of how rich their people; of how influential in the world's affairs. There is so wide a difference along all these lines, that it is remarkable that any who desire to find the "King's Own" should be deceived. Yet, the King himself acknowledges, that some of those who are truly his, and who desire to be found in his

army are in these counterfeit armies, which he calls "Babylon." He therefore calls to them, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Nor is it sufficient that we should have the right spirit of loyalty to righteousness, and opposition to sin, in ourselves and everywhere: it is proper that our warfare against sin should be carried on in a systematic and intelligent manner. To this end it behooves every soldier of the cross to remember that he is not the director of the fight, not the commander, but is to fight strictly according to the directions of the Captain. Many, getting the idea that they are simply to fight against Sin, battle wildly and at random, and accomplish little. The Apostle spoke against this sort of thing, when he said, "So fight I; not as one that beateth the air." Beating the air, either with our fists or with our tongues, our words, is of very little avail. Our energies are to be directed of the Lord along the lines which he has marked out, and not along the lines of our own unwisdom and choice. It is one of the Apostle's admonitions to us that we should be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." We should hear the Lord's direction as to the place to put in our best efforts for the fight, and according to his direction this can best be done, not in fighting others, not in stirring up strife, not in words of anger and passion, but in fighting such a disposition in ourselves, in conquering our natural tendencies, in mortifying the flesh, with its affections and its desires, and its combativeness, and in cultivating in our own hearts the "meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great value." – 1 Pet. 3:4.

We are to fight the good fight in the putting away and utterly routing from our own hearts and dispositions "all anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, bitterness – all works of the flesh and of the devil – "perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord;" and to help all our fellow-soldiers to do the same. And we are to lift high the royal banner of our Lord, bearing his name and his law, and not a banner of our own, or of some other men's device. And we are to help to lift up this standard of the Lord in the sight of all those who are sincerely desiring to be his, and who through mistake have gotten into the wrong army corps. We are to be valiant in seeking to release them from the delusions of the great enemy, who is thus seeking to reensnare them and to deprive them of the liberty wherewith Christ made them free; and to bring them under a yoke of sectarian bondage, as being next best, for his purposes, to the yoke of sin and gross superstition. **[R2312 : page 158]** Thus doing we are not beating the air; we are not merely hammering pulpit tops nor shouting ourselves hoarse on street corners to no avail; but, like the Apostle, we are seeking to be crafty, that we may thus bring the truth to the attention of those whom our crafty enemy, Satan, seeks to ensnare. Our craftiness will be with a view to their liberty, while his craftiness is with a view to their enslavement. It is along this line that our Master has counseled his soldiers, "Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves."

A FIGHT OF FAITH.

Our text calls this good fight a fight of *faith*, and very properly; it is a fight of faith in every respect.

(1) It is a fight under an *unseen* leader, and against an *unseen* foe: only by the eye of faith do we recognize the Captain of our salvation, and only by his Word do we recognize the wily leader who opposes us.

(2) Sin is recognized by our moral sense; likewise righteousness. By faith we accept the Word of God, and under the instructions of that Word we learn that certain courses of thought and word and deed are right in his sight, according to his standard, and that other courses of thought, word and action are therefore wrong; henceforth we accept these conclusions by *faith* in the Word, – the revelation which God has given us.

(3) We fight for a liberty and a glory of the verity of which we have no knowledge, except as we accept it by *faith*.

(4) God hath promised exceeding great and precious things to them that love him – that so love him as to lay down their lives in his service. We see the crown of life and we see the Lord of glory, and with the *eye of faith*, and not otherwise.

(5) The things that are seen with the natural eye, are seeking to influence us to the contrary of our course, seeking to influence us not to lay down our lives, not to cultivate the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, love; but on the contrary, to cultivate the spirit of selfishness, ambition, pride and greed, the spirit of the world. Only, therefore, as we are able to have the faith which God inspires shall we be able to fight the good fight.

In this view of matters we see how important an item faith is. If we have it not, we can never come off conquerors. And faith means some knowledge upon which faith may rest, some promises out of which faith may be constructed. These we have in the great and wonderful divine revelation. It follows, therefore, [R2312 : page 159] that it is not enough for us to enlist in the Lord's army; but it is needful that we should go to his armory – the Word – and there painstakingly put on the whole armor which he has provided. And whoever does not follow this course is not following the course directed of the Captain, and will be sure to fail in the battle. We are not, however, to think of the armor as being all that is necessary. True, the doctrinal truths respecting the various features of the divine plan and the divine will concerning us are necessary, are absolutely essential to our victory: but the putting on of the armor is not all, and does not secure victory. It is necessary that with the armor on we should fight, along the lines which we have just examined, even unto death. Let us, therefore, not make either the mistake of attempting to fight without the armor, nor the equally serious mistake of putting on the armor and neglecting to fight.

Our Captain in encouraging us to have faith in him, and in his promises of succor, assuring us that he will not leave us nor forsake us; that he will be with us in six troubles, and in the seventh he will not forsake us; and that he is abundantly able and willing to make all things work together for good to them that love God – the called ones according to his

purpose. He declares, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Beloved, let us make sure of these things: –

(1) That we have enlisted – that we have fully consecrated ourselves to obey the Captain of our salvation.

(2) That we are seeking to obey his instructions, and to put on the armor which he has supplied.

(3) That we are fighting – resisting unto blood, striving against sin in all its various forms.

(4) That we are so loyal to the Lord and to all that are his, wherever they may be, that we are willing and ready "to lay down our lives for the brethren" – to assist them, to encourage them, to help them, in little acts of service as well as in larger matters.

(5) That we remember that there can be no victory except as we keep the faith – our trust in the Lord as our Redeemer, in his care over us, and in his willingness to help us, and in his ability to help. Thus, and thus only, shall we come off conquerors and more than conquerors through him who loved us and who bought us with his own precious blood; to whom, with God our Father, be praise and thanksgiving everlasting.

"Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" – 1 Cor. 15:57.