

JULY/AUGUST 2004

UPLOOK

• ASSESS THE NEED • CATCH THE VISION • TAKE THE CHALLENGE •

ON TARGET

HISTORY'S MOST REMARKABLE ARMY



Part Two
**LEARNING
to be a
WARRIOR**

Don't miss SPECIAL NOTE on page 14

HISTORY'S MOST REMARKABLE ARMY

We live every day behind enemy lines. No place to relax, is it!



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The Scriptures teach us that we are part of an army. Perhaps we don't often think of it that way. But maybe that's because this army is so unlike any other army in history. It is a truly remarkable fighting force.

It is remarkable in *purpose*. All other armies exist to destroy men. But the one of which we are a part is motivated by love for all men (1 Thess. 3:12), and seeks not their destruction but their salvation. We have enemies, to be sure, but such enemies aren't men; our struggle is not against flesh and blood.

It is remarkable in its *assets*. We have limitless resources (Eph. 3:8), perfect intelligence (Col. 2:3), impenetrable armor (Eph. 6:11), omnipotent weapons (2 Cor. 10:4), and our ultimate victory is certain (Rom. 8:37).

It is remarkable in *composition*. This army is comprised entirely of defectors! Every last one of us was once an enemy of the Commander we now love (Rom. 5:10). But while we were yet sinners, He died for us. His Spirit strove with us. One day our eyes and hearts were opened to see who He really is. And in a moment we switched sides! We were delivered from the domain of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). And though we were once His foes, He now calls us His friends (Jn. 15:15).

It is remarkable in *origin*. What is the source of all of the wonders of this army? Surely it's not in the soldiers themselves! What kind of people are we? Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble. In short, not the kind of people that one would choose as soldiers. But Someone did choose us!

It is remarkable in the *Captain who leads*. He is the reason this army is so extraordinary. Our purpose is from Him; He loved the lost long before we did. Our assets are found only in Him (Eph. 1:3). And as to His army's composition, He started out with no one and yet, by His own glory and excellence, has drawn to Himself an army of countless volunteers that stretches around the world and reaches across time.

But this Captain is also the pre-eminent Soldier. Every battle we face is one in which we can enjoy victory because He has gone before us. He always does, you know. God "*always causeth us to triumph in Christ*" (2 Cor. 2:14). He doesn't leave His soldiers to fight His wars. Nor does He merely join in the battle; He goes before.

The children of Israel stood on the brink of the land of Canaan. They thought that all was ready. But that night, their Joshua met our Joshua. At first he thought Him only a man. "Are you for us or for our enemies?" he asked the Newcomer. But the Visitor wasn't for anyone. He had come not as a conscript, but as Captain of the host of the Lord. And what a Captain He was! He led them into the promised land, and as long as they trusted and obeyed Him, no enemy could stand in their path. It has always been this way, and it will in the end.

Two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus met and single-handedly conquered the foes that had previously enjoyed universal victory. None could stand in His path. He now calls us to war; to a daily battle against His enemies – enemies that are more than a match for us, but no match at all for Him. If we will but follow Him, we will see every enemy melt before Him. Our Captain is The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. He is the Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory (Ps. 24:10). He is the Captain of the host of the Lord (Josh. 5:13). He is the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). And He has given us our orders: "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called...*" (1 Tim. 6:12).

Forward, march!

James Martin
JAMIE MARTIN

UPLOOK

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 - 3) by contacting our office at any time, by phone, fax, mail or e-mail.
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WORLDVIEW

THE CHURCH • THE CULTURE • THE CONFLICT

BETWEEN IRAQ AND A HARD PLACE

It's in all the newspapers these days, but did you know that while Israel is the territory most often quoted in the Bible, Iraq (using its biblical names—Shinar, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Babylon, etc.) is the second most mentioned land. In fact Iraq means “the country with deep roots.” It certainly is! Here's a sampling of its role in history (much of this information was taken from an anonymous email sent to us):

- The garden of Eden was in Iraq (Gen. 2:10-14). Adam and Eve were created there and thus Satan made his first recorded appearance in Iraq.
- Mesopotamia, meaning “the land between the rivers” was the cradle of civilization, the eastern arm of the Fertile Crescent.
- Nimrod, one of the first warriors, established Babylon; the Tower of Babel was built there (Gen. 10:8-9; 11:1). The confounding of the languages took place there.
- Noah built the ark in Iraq, with Mount Ararat thought to be up on the Turkish-Iraqi border.
- The Tower of Babel was in the plains of Shinar. Zechariah tells us that this is also the place where the great world system, the “Empire of Man” described in Revelation and called Babylon, will end (Zech. 5:11).
- Abraham was from Ur, which is in southern Iraq (Gen. 11:31; Acts 7:4).
- Isaac's wife Rebekah came from Iraq (Gen. 24:7).
- Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq; there he met and married his two wives, Leah and Rachel (plus their two handmaidens, Zilpah and Bilhah). The practice of having up to four wives continues in Moslem lands to this day. Obviously the trauma in Jacob's home was not sufficient to warn them of such folly!
- Jonah preached in Nineveh, the Babylonian capital.
- The Assyrians conquered the ten tribes of Israel.
- The first great Gentile world empire, like a head of solid gold, was in the land of Iraq (Dan. 2:31-37).
- The Babylonians destroyed the city of Jerusalem.
- Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq. In a series of showdowns with Heaven, he was humbled and convinced that the God of Israel was the only true God. He wrote out his testimony (Dan. 4:34-37) and made declaration to his whole kingdom, which at that time stretched from India to North Africa!
- Daniel was in the lion's den in Iraq.
- The Hebrew children were in the fire in Iraq. It might be an encouragement for Coalition military personnel and humanitarian workers there to remember the fourth Person who was in the fiery furnace with them!
- Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's great-grandson, saw the writing on the wall there and appears to have died unrepentant.
- The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq.
- Ezekiel preached and prophesied in Iraq.
- The greatest revival in history was there in Nineveh (Jonah 3). The book of Nahum was a prophecy later against the same city.
- The wise men may have been from Iraq.
- If this is the same Babylon, then Peter preached in Iraq (1 Pet. 5:13).
- And read WHAT GOD SAYS IN ISAIAH 19:23-25!



Detail from the Ishtar Gate

OUR THREE ENEMIES

Beneath, around and within—is there any escape route?

Colin Anderson

Historians in general agree that the American Civil War was really won at Gettysburg on July 3, 1863, though there were lesser battles in other places after that date. Those serious but relatively minor conflicts toward the end of the war only served to demonstrate the military supremacy which the North had already gained over the South.

In a similar, but much greater and more significant way, our Lord accomplished the defeat of Satan at Calvary. Since that time, whatever conflicts the servants of God have had to face are minor clashes in comparison. And whether God's servants appear to win or lose does not alter the fact that the victory must ultimately be theirs—because it is His.

“He destroyed Him that had the power of death” at the Cross (Heb. 2:14); hostile *“principalities and powers”* were spoiled in that hour (Col. 2:15) and He now has *“the keys of hell and of death”* (Rev. 1:18). We may therefore say with Paul, *“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 15:57).

So although a believer may be bloodied in conflict, he is on the victory side and can still with good reason say, *“Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise...”* (Mic. 7:8).

Nevertheless, though the chief foe has been defeated, the world has been overcome, and the flesh has been judged in our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, there are still pockets of resistance that the Christian must face. To use another military term, mopping-up operations continue in the lives of individuals until the Lord returns and we are completely conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29).

THE FLESH

Paul spoke often of the conflicts he experienced in His service for Christ. He wrestled with the natural

claims of his body when it cried unne-

cessarily for attention (1 Cor. 9:25-27). He would not allow its cravings and weaknesses to deter him from the pursuit of his goal, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14). And in the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul graphically describes a man's battles with the more illegitimate desires of the flesh. It is only Christ who can deliver (Rom. 7:24-25).

THE WORLD

The world also presents problems for the one called to be a *“stranger and pilgrim.”* Its seductive attractions are offered to the Christian at every turn. The pleasures of sin for a season are emblazoned on signs along the highway, projected on every TV screen, and shamelessly advertised in glossy magazines at the supermarket. For those with more “refined” tastes, the world offers other temptations. For the intellectual there are a host of philosophies, and before the eyes of the business-oriented it dangles transient material rewards. Such is the world, but it is not our world. We are not of it. And if we refuse to buy its wares, we will feel its hatred (Col. 2:8; 1 Jn. 2:15f; Jn. 15:19).

THE DEVIL

The two foes we have already mentioned would be active even if the devil were put in prison. It has been said, “The devil takes the blame for a lot of things for which he really is not guilty!” Of course he is responsible for tempting Adam, and so introducing sin into the world. In a similar way we could say that we would not have the flesh within us if Adam had not fallen. But we cannot shift the blame for our personal sins to the arch-enemy by saying, “The devil made me do it!”

How then does the devil attack Christians?



John Nicholson III

Because he is the “*father of lies*,” it seems his chief tactic is to delude and deceive. His propaganda is full of half-truths. In fact, the more truth there is to what he says, the better his interests are served. He knows that the most effective lies are those accompanied by the most truth. That makes them more believable. And his deceptive methods permeate the atmosphere we breathe. They are like the poison gases employed in earthly warfare.

OUR DEFENSE

In speaking of the world, the flesh, and the devil, it is wise to recognize where each of those enemies is coming from and just how it poses a threat. The defense we need against one may not be suitable for the others. Anti-aircraft guns are not designed to stop an army on the ground. Tanks will not help if the enemy is filling the air with deadly gas. There is a strategic and effective way to counteract whatever weapon the enemy is employing, but the method must be suited to the weapon. The following illustration may help.

Tony was a promising young preacher who approached the author of this article for help some years ago. He and his girlfriend Trudy were both Christians, and they realized that their dating practices were becoming too physical. After one rather steamy session, they came to the conclusion that they must find a way to handle their struggle with the flesh. What would you advise in such a situation?

In their naivete, Tony and Trudy agreed to pray about their problem together. Now prayer is a poor substitute for obedience to the war manual.

How does the Word of God tell us to combat youthful lusts? Joseph gives us an example: he fled. That is what 2 Timothy 2:22 says we should do. Tony and Trudy, however, did not follow this advice. As they prayed, they felt an even deeper sympathy with each other’s weaknesses, and fell into each other’s arms, bringing their resistance against the flesh to a tragic end.


What about the devil? How should we react to his onslaughts? The Scriptures say we should resist him. We are not to flee in this case, but stand our ground.

This is what Paul did on learning of Peter’s compromising position with the legalists (Gal. 2:11). That action probably did not seem very loving to some onlookers. Nevertheless, even when it is a brother in Christ that is being used by the enemy, you must withstand him to his face. This was not the first time the enemy had trapped impetuous Peter, either. In an earlier encounter the Lord Himself had looked beyond the Master-disciple relationship and addressed the devil who was speaking through Peter’s mouth (Mt. 16:23). In rebuking Peter, Paul was following the example of his Master.

And the world? How should we deal with that enemy? We are speaking not of the earth, of course, but of the pernicious influence brought upon us by a satanically generated system, by society itself, a world that lies in the power of the evil one. The list of its attractions is endless, but we are told not to love the world or its things (1 Jn. 2:15). Another love must take the place it has in our hearts. We are to set our affection on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Col. 3:2). As Samuel Kuster wrote:

*“O worldly pomp and glory,
Your charms are spread in vain!
I’ve heard a sweeter story,
I’ve found a truer gain.
Where Christ a place prepareth,
There is my loved abode;
There shall I gaze on Jesus,
There shall I dwell with God.”*

In dealing with spiritual battles, the best form of defense is to carry the fight to the enemy. That is not to suggest we ought to go looking for trouble, but rather that we should be prepared to fight at all times, wherever and whenever a challenge may appear. We can do this by being occupied in the work of the Lord.

The ancient Macedonians’ armor and drill enabled them to form a phalanx, or solid wall, which was almost impenetrable. And there is no substitute for aggressively pursuing the Lord’s interests in a committed partnership with fellow soldiers in the local assembly. “*Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil. 1:27). 

FRONTLINES

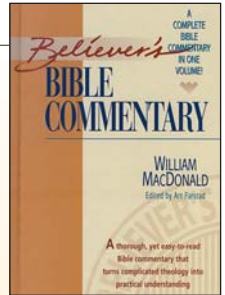
PRAY AROUND THE WORLD • PRAISE AROUND THE CLOCK

BELIEVERS BIBLE COMMENTARY UPDATE

The clear, concise and comprehensive *Believers Bible Commentary* by our esteemed brother William MacDonald is ideal as a missionary's helper. Providing one source for a full sweep through the 66 books of the Word of God, it has three characteristics that make it suited for translation work. First, it is trusted. Second, it is translatable because of brother MacDonald's straight-forward and lucid style. Third, it is provided to approved translators for no costs, including royalties. So in how many languages has it appeared besides English?

So far (with more all the time) the New Testament Commentary has been translated into Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Burmese, Chinese (two editions—Simplified, used in China proper, and Classical, used in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan), Croatian, French, German, Hungarian, Korean, Malayalam, Tomanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Urdu. Underway, but still to be completed are Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Telegu and Vietnamese. The Old Testament Commentary is being translated into French, German, Korean, Russian, Turkish and Urdu.

INTERESTED IN INVESTING? To have a practical part in this strategic work (this is the only full, dependable commentary in some of these languages), fellowship may be earmarked for the Believers Bible Commentary and sent to The Translation Fund, c/o CMML, PO Box 13, Spring Lake, NJ 07762



EAST TEXAS FALL CONF.

Golden (TX) Bible Chapel will host it's Annual Fall Conference Aug 28–29 at Mineola Conference Center, 1150 N. Newsome, Mineola, TX. Speaker expected: J. B. Nicholson Jr.

For further information, contact: Grady Dollar at 903-768-2700
gdollar7@aol.com
RVers should call 903-596-6115

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES

Pine Bush Bible Camp (NY) is planning another Men's Bible Study Seminar Aug 29–Sep 2 with Randy Amos teaching the book of Numbers: The Believers Journey Home. Begins Sunday at 6:00 PM; ends Thursday at 10:30 AM. To register, call Charlie Myers at 732-451-9444 before Jul 1; after Jul 1, call Pine Bush at 845-361-1871.

TWIN CITIES CONF.

Assemblies of the Twin Cities Area of Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN) invite you to the 93rd Annual Labor Day Conference, Sep 3-6. Location: Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1900 NW 7th St, New Brighton, MN. Speakers: Joe Reese (ON) and Warren Henderson (WI). Teen Conference and Children's Program also provided. Conference begins Friday at 7 PM and concludes Monday with lunch. Meals, housing, and nursery provided. For info, call Glen Ellis at 763-572-1379; Housing, call Steve Schletty at 763-572-2589

WORD ALIVE SOUTHEAST

Schedule for the Fall season: Main sessions from 9 AM– 2 PM. Bible readings in Col. 2 from 2–3 PM. Lunch provided. All meetings held at Wash-

ington (GA) Bible Chapel, 808 E. Robert Toombs Ave. Speakers and topics: Sep 11, CMML focus on SE Asia, Dave Johnson (Philippines); Oct 9, Johnny Gordon on 1 Timothy; Nov 13, John Heller on Pioneering a New Work; Dec 12, Rex Trogdon on 1 John; Charles Oxendine on Esther. Mike Attwood at 706-678-3180
Sam Thorpe at 706-359-6297

ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

The saints of the Atlantic, IA area invite you to their Annual Conference Sep 10–12, Lord willing. Scheduled speakers: Ken Daughters and George Farber. Contact: Stefan Johnson at 712-243-2439

AUTUMN ANNUAL CONF.

Alan Parks (SC) is the scheduled speaker at the annual Fall Foliage

conference Lord willing, Sep 20-24 at Camp-of-the-Woods, Speculator, NY. The conference will begin on Monday and conclude Friday morning. Cost of \$295 per person covers meals and deluxe accommodations. Checks payable to "Know the Word Ministries." Send to Mark Kolchin
P. O. Box 305
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734
www.knowtheword.com
knowtheword@comcast.net

NY LADIES' FALL CONF.

A weekend ladies' retreat is planned for Sep 24-25 at Camp Li-Lo-Li (NY). The speaker is expected to be Joyce Barinowski (SC). Weekend rate: \$31 by Sep 1, \$38 after that date. Saturday only: \$20 by Sep 1, \$25 after that. To register:
Lynn Johnson at 716-839-5576
510 Washington Hwy,
Amherst, NY 14226

CHALLENGE 2004

The Toronto Ladies' Annual Missionary Conference will be held Sep 25 at Don Valley Bible Chapel from 9:15 to 1:00. A program for girls grades 2 and up runs concurrently. Speakers expected from France, Pakistan and "other areas" as well as reports from short termers. Info:
Sheila Henderson at 416-784-3981
sheilahknow@idirect.com
Hilary Rennie at 416-247-2265
rennie@pathcom.com

DETROIT CURTIS CONF.

Curtis Gospel Chapel, Detroit, MI will hold its 114th annual conference, DV, Oct 2-3. Invited speakers: Joe Mikhael (ON) and Mike Attwood (GA). Begins Saturday at 2:30 PM; dinner at 5:00 PM. Evening meeting at 6:30 PM. On Sunday, Lord's Supper at 9:30 AM, Gospel at 11:00 AM;

dinner at noon. Conference concludes at 5:00 PM Sunday. Contact:
Gerald Fitzgerald at 734-425-4217

KENILWORTH ACTIVITIES

An Emmaus Faculty Seminar is to be held, DV, at Kenilworth (NJ) Gospel Chapel with a Youth Night Focus on Friday, Oct 8 at 7:00 PM. Saturday, Oct 9, seminar sessions from 2-5 PM with Dave Glock and Dave Reid. Refreshments provided. Also a special Musical Concert with guest artist Jim O'Brien on Saturday, Oct 16, 7:30 PM. All invited.
Don Dunkerton at 908-272-6131

MT. HERMON CONFERENCE

The annual Pacific Coast Christian Conference will be held Oct 11-15 at the Mt. Hermon Conference Center (75 miles south of San Francisco, CA in the Santa Cruz mountains). The conference begins with dinner Monday evening and ends Friday morning. Speakers: Ken Daughters (IA) and Alan Parks (SC). Contact:
Max Krieger at 323-256-1992
maxnbethk@juno.com.

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

The believers at East Tulsa (OK) Bible Chapel are planning, Lord willing, a conference Oct 23-24. The invited speaker is Harold Summers (BC). All are welcome. Contact:
Frank Moffitt at 918-299-5218

FL MISSIONARY CONF.

A warm invitation is extended to attend the 37th Annual Women's Missionary Conference at Park of the Palms, Keystone Heights, FL, on Oct 29-30. On Saturday, separate meetings for men and women, so husbands are invited as well. Contact:
Helen Pinches at 352-473-6393
mompinch@aol.com

FATHER/SON WEEKEND

Fathers and sons are invited to Camp Iroquoia (PA) for a Father & Son retreat Nov 12-14. The camp's new manager, Mark Thomas, will be the speaker. He brings many years of ministry experience with assemblies and camp work. Look forward to hearing some interesting stories and perhaps even a chalk talk. Contact Mark at 570-967-2577
campiroquoia@epix.net
www.iroquoia.org

SPANISH OUTREACH

An assembly in Freeport, Long Island, NY, has seen their neighborhood turn Hispanic. They called on brother Henry Sanchez and others from Evergreen Chapel (Brooklyn) to help with outreach. The work started with preaching the gospel in the chapel and teaching a free English class for Spanish speakers. Some feeling the urgency to make a real thrust into the neighborhood are planning open air preaching through the summer. They ask prayer for boldness and an open door.

PRAY FOR ZAMBIA

We have been advised that it is becoming increasingly difficult to teach Religious Education in some schools in Zambia because some officials in the Ministry of Education Department oppose it. Pray that this situation will be resolved.

NEED AT PITTSBORO

Pittsboro Christian Village is looking for a Registered Nurse. This person will work with the management of our Assisted Living and Care Unit. We are looking for a believer with a servant attitude. This is a salaried position with benefits. Contact Dave Dewhurst:

phone: 919-542-3151
 fax: 919-542-5919
 email: wdew@juno.com

GENERAL MANAGER

Greenwood Hills Bible Conference and Camps is looking for a General Manager. He must be in happy fellowship in a local assembly, with at least five years of management experience. Must have good interpersonal skills. Knowledge of computers, maintenance, or food preparation helpful. Contact: Steve Hulshizer at 717-764-5979

LEBANON OPPORTUNITY

Nestled in the mountains of Lebanon is the Constant Lighthouse High School, founded by Adib Daghfal in 1976 to reach the children of Lebanon for Christ. Licensed by the Lebanese government and offering an American curriculum, the school has grades from K–High School. The high school grades, however, are not currently in operation because of the lack of qualified Christian teachers. Opportunities for sharing the gospel with

both students and parents. Most teaching positions do not require college degree. Housing available on campus. Call 815-886-4152
 CCLHL@hotmail.com

COMMENDATIONS

Mark and Angie Hartley

The Northgate assembly in Durham (NC) informs us of their commendation of Mark and Angie Hartley who have returned from Spain for the education of their children. Mark feels directed to itinerant work and to reach out to the growing Hispanic community there.

Roy and Tracey Kosin

The Community Bible Fellowship, Florence, SC have commended Roy and Tracey Kosin to the Lord's work, primarily among youth. They are currently serving in Conway, SC.

Shawn and Hayley Cuthill

Bridlegrave Bible Chapel, Agincourt ON inform us that they have commended Shawn and Hayley Cuthill to God and to the work to which He has called them. They are

blessed with two sons; Lukas, 2 years old and Sylas, 4 months. Currently their focus is an outreach among the youth in their area.

NEW SCHEDULE

Lawrence (KS) Bible Chapel has advised of a new schedule to begin Jul 4. On Sunday, as follows:

Prayer, 9:00–9:30

Lord's Supper, 9:30–10:30

Sunday School, 11:00–11:30

Family Bible Hour, 11:40–12:30

On Wednesday, a fellowship "potluck" supper at 6:15 precedes prayer and ministry time.

UPDATE: PORT ST. LUCIE

The believers meeting in Port St. Lucie have been encouraged recently with help from the Jupiter area. They are meeting in the Community Center on Airoso Blvd in Port St. Lucie. Order of meetings:

Sunday: B of B, 9:15 AM;

Ministry at 10:45; Gospel, 6:30 PM; prayer/Bible study in a brother's home on Wednesday at 7:30 PM.

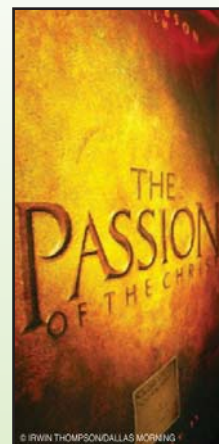
Saints visiting in the area, call:

772-464-5943 or 772-343-7305

UPDATE: PASSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Although the buzz about Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ* is dying down in North America, it certainly is causing a stir in the lands of Abraham's children by Ishmael. According to media reports, the movie set new attendance records in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. In Lebanon in its opening week, it accounted for 80% of total attendance. And although Saudi Arabia has no movie theaters, pirated DVD versions of the movie were making the rounds among curious Muslims who were wondering what all the international fuss was about. No doubt Jewish charges that the film was anti-Semitic didn't diminish the interest among Arabs.

In an Operation Mobilization (OM) report, "A Christian worker in a Middle Eastern country said that two Muslim friends asked him, 'Do you have the New Testament in Arabic? Me [sic] and all my friends want to read it!' Another asked how to find the Bible on the Internet. Their interest came from the film. This worker said, 'We have been able to give away more Arabic Bibles and Arabic *Jesus* videos in the past two weeks [since the movie opened] than we were able to give out over the past year. The openness is unprecedented...Jesus continues to be a major topic of discussion.'"



COURAGE, BROTHER!

Don't get rattled in the battle.

“ Hard pressed on my right. My center is yielding. Impossible to manoeuvre. Situation excellent. I attack. ”

—French Field Marshall Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) at the Battle of the Marne

VICTORY—AT THE LAST

Some of us have been like the tribe of Gad, of whom we read in Genesis 49:19, “A troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.” Our adversaries for a while were too many for us; they came upon us like a troop. Yes, and for the moment they overcame us, and they exulted greatly because of their temporary victory. Thus they only proved the first part of the heritage to be really ours, for Christ’s people, like Gad, often have a troop overcoming them.

This being overcome is very painful, and we should have despaired if we had not by faith believed the second line of our Father’s benediction, “He shall overcome at the last.” “All’s well that ends well,” said the poet, and he spoke the truth. A war is to be judged, not by first successes or defeats, but by that which happens “at the last.” The Lord will give to truth and righteousness victory “at the last” and, as Mr. Bunyan says, that means for ever, for nothing can come after “the last.” —C. H. SPURGEON

OUT WHERE THE BIG GUNS BOOM

I have a charm for each alarm
Out where the big guns boom,
When the shadows fall like a closing pall
Over a yawning tomb;
'Tis my Saviour dear who whispers cheer
When near the death clouds loom,
And I must stand true as He'd have me do,
Out where the big guns boom.

*Out where the guns are booming, lads,
And red death haunts the line,
When the battle clouds are looming, lads
A wondrous peace is mine;
A quiet voice steels my courage, lads,
Beneath the song of doom,
And I must stand true as He'd have me do,
Out where the big guns boom.*

My hope soars high when the troubled sky
Seems full of death and gloom,
When the war-gods grim chant their hateful hymn,
Out where the big guns boom.
For the Chart says clear He is always near,
And it seems to cheer me so,
For I oft drink deep while my comrades sleep
From the Word He left below.

I think of blood poured forth in flood
To save my soul from doom,
And I sleep at peace on my old valise
Out where the big guns boom;
For well I know, in weal or woe,
My Lord will see me through.
Let me just stand fast while the storm will last,
And do as He'd have me do. —I. Y. EWAN

Written at the Battle of the Somme, 1916

STAND FIRM

“Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able...to stand” (Eph. 6:13).

Rod Joyce

The year was 1940. Churchill had a sad message to deliver to the British people: 30,000 casualties of war and rumors of an impending invasion. On June 4 of that year Churchill delivered his now famous address to the House of Commons, which climaxed with the words, “We will never surrender!” This was a pivotal point in modern history. And we can thank Churchill’s tenacity for much of the freedom that we enjoy today. He stood firm against the enemy and, in the end, prevailed.

We have an enemy far more dangerous than any earthly foe. Peter tells us, *“Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8). Peter said this from personal experience. He had respect for Satan’s power, and so should we. Even Michael the Archangel, among the most powerful of God’s created beings, would not jeer at him (Jude 9). Satan is our enemy. He wants to see us stumble in our Christian life. He wants to bring out the worst in us. The Lord Jesus warned Peter, *“Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat”* (Lk. 22:31). Satan also wants to sift us, but he is not interested in the grain, only the chaff. He wants to destroy our testimony for God.

Paul describes Satan’s attacks as *“fiery darts.”* These are arrows that not only kill a soldier in battle, but cause further harm to those around him as the fire spreads. And this is how Satan attacks us. His design is to cause us to fall and to bring down others with us as the fire spreads. Satan is not satisfied in merely eliminating individuals; he wants to destroy whole families, churches, and ministries. Each of us has seen or experienced the impact of such attacks.



Satan is also a subtle foe. He uses small victories to gradually push us back. Slowly over time he gains ground. Perhaps it is an activity that you once thought was inappropriate, but now indulge in. The common warning about “soft drugs leading to harder ones” can be applied to many sins, and with each of these small victories Satan gains ground, pushing us backwards as his influence spreads into more and more areas of our lives.

Thank God that He has not left us defenseless against this great enemy. He has equipped us to stand against Satan and his forces. But we need to be prepared to do battle.

Paul makes use of a military metaphor in Ephesians 6. He advises us to *“put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Eph. 6:11). As he describes each component of the armor, the picture emerges of a soldier standing his ground on a violent battlefield, quenching fiery arrows with the shield of faith and resisting

the enemy’s advances with the sword of the Spirit.

Now picture that same soldier, on the same battlefield, only this time without armor. He has no shield. He has no sword. Instead it is all lying on the ground beside him. He would not remain standing for long. Sadly, some Christians are like that. God has provided the armor, but they are not using it. Paul makes it clear that in order to use the armor of God we have to both pick it up (v. 13) and put it on (v. 11).

The passage also emphasizes that it is a complete package. We have to put on the panoply, the *“whole armor”* of God. You might be deft in handling the sword of the Spirit, but it is not enough to be a student of the Word if your faith is weak, or you lack the breastplate of righteousness. We need balance in our lives, balance in order to stand firm in the fight.

It is a violent battle, and it is also a personal battle. Paul uses another metaphor briefly when he advises that we “*wrestle not against flesh and blood*” (v. 12). Here he pictures for us a gladiator fighting hand-to-hand. He fought with only one objective: to stay standing. So standing firm involves wrestling with temptation. If our Christian lives are not characterized by these battles with temptation, we should examine ourselves to see if we are still standing.

Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 10:12, “*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*” We have no power in ourselves against the forces of evil. The Word contains numerous examples of people fighting in their own strength: Israel’s first campaign into the land of Canaan (Num. 14:44); Peter’s swordplay at the betrayal of the Lord (Jn. 18:10-11) and his subsequent denial; and the Jewish exorcists in Acts 19.

Instead the Lord sets the example. If anyone had strength in themselves to overcome Satan’s temptation it was the Lord, yet, when tempted in the wilderness, the Lord used the sword of the Spirit, quoting from the Old Testament in response to each of the temptations presented by Satan. Paul advises us to be strong, not in ourselves, but to “*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*” (Eph. 6:10).

Given our three great enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil) it is interesting that where the world is concerned, we are admonished to walk (Eph. 5:2, 8, 15). Where fleshly temptation is concerned we are to run (1 Tim. 6:11; 1 Cor. 6:18). However, when facing the most powerful of these three enemies—the devil—we are to stand. And the Scriptures gives us numerous examples of godly men and women who stood firm. Consider three examples.

STANDING FOR PRINCIPLES

Daniel, a young man, went through a dreadful experience. Separated from his family, he was taken into Babylon as the spoils of war. Yet he did not resist. Nor did he resist when the Babylonians gave him a new name—Belteshazzar—a name that must have been repugnant to a Jew. However, when asked to break God’s dietary laws, he stood firm and, in doing so, God caused him to stand out in a positive way among his peers. Eventually Daniel was a great influ-

ence for good in Babylon. He would not compromise where God’s commands were concerned. People today are very focused on their own personal rights. Daniel is an example of someone who stood firm, not for his own rights, but for God’s principles. Are we following his example? Ask yourself this question, “What bothers me more; when someone violates my rights or when someone dishonors the Lord?”

STANDING ALONE

John the Baptist stood firm for God. What is striking about John the Baptist is that he preached alone. He had followers, but whom did he follow? Who were his peers? Elisha had Elijah. Timothy had Paul. The apostles had the Lord and they could also encourage one another. But John the Baptist stood alone. Do you sometimes feel alone as you stand firm for the Lord?

Paul stood alone at the end of his life as well. He wrote to Timothy, “*...no man stood with me, but all men forsook me*” (2 Tim. 4:16). But Paul knew that Christians never really stand alone. He continued, “*Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me*” (v. 17).

A SECOND CHANCE TO STAND

On human battlefields a fall will likely be fatal. In our spiritual battle, however, God forgives us and teaches us through our failures. A striking example of this is seen in Peter’s experience. Many would have written off Peter after he denied the Lord at His trial. Peter himself likely felt that he would be of no use to God again. But a few weeks later Peter was standing firm for God before the very same Jewish leaders who delivered Jesus to Pilate and demanded His death. His testimony before these men in Acts 3 and 4 is astounding. Peter learned to stand firm.

This all presupposes that we are willing to do battle in the first place. When faced with the Nazi threat, some nations succumbed without a fight. At the close of the Ephesians 6 passage, Paul exhorts us that we should be “*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*” Be encouraged to fight the good fight, and encourage others to do the same though your prayers and by your example.

THE NATURE OF OUR STRUGGLE

Reconnoitering the battlefield is key to victory.

Peter Bolton

Ephesians 6:10 leads off the classic passage on spiritual warfare: “...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” We can faithfully put on all the armor listed in the rest of the passage, but unless we know what the war is all about, where the battlefields are, and from where our strength comes, we will likely be hesitant, fearful, and even retreat. Remember the ineffectiveness of the army of Israel, all dressed in their armor opposite the Philistines and their champion? It took a young shepherd boy with a heart for God to remind them what the real issue was. As a testimony to both the believers and the unbelievers on the field, David called out to Goliath in full confidence saying,

I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's (1 Sam. 17:45-47).

Nothing has changed in the principles of spiritual warfare, even though the circumstances may be different. There are indeed various enemies, commonly referred to as “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” While we need to be aware of these enemies and strategies to defeat them, we must also know the Lord, the nature of the war, and where the battles occur.

IT'S NOT ABOUT US

It is tempting, when in the middle of an intense situation, to get caught up in the challenge of it all. This is especially true if we are feeling threatened or defeated. Rather than being overcomers, we are barely surviving—or may even be overcome. With all due respect for the genuineness of the stress, the Christian life really isn't about us.

The letter to the Ephesians starts off without ambiguity about God's purpose and, therefore, the purpose of every battle we face, whether offensive or defensive. This purpose is: “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (1:6); “that we should be to the praise of His glory” (1:12); “unto the praise of His glory” (1:14); “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace” (2:7); “that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God” (3:10); “unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (3:21).



THE BATTLEFIELD

When the Lord created our first parents, He did so with full knowledge of what would take place on this planet—including the “little” battles each of us faces on a daily basis. The physical world is temporary; the Lord will eventually create a new earth along with a new heavens. But until then, we must bear in mind that this current world is a battlefield, where allegiance to the Creator is tested in the lives of the descendants of Adam.

By the very nature of our new life in Christ, we will be in constant conflict in this world, for all other people worship something or someone else “in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:17-18). Every battle we face is a distinct challenge to see whom we will serve. For the Christian there should never be any doubt: the Lord Jesus is worthy of our full obedience and devotion.

These battles are won or lost within our minds—the real battlefield. We are exposed to numerous competing thoughts. Ephesians 2:1-3 reveals the world, the flesh, and the devil at work in concert. But later in Ephesians we are told how to daily succeed under such conditions: “be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (4:23) and “be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (5:17).

How well trained have we been prior to the battle? How intently are we listening for orders during the battle? Do we want God to be glorified as the end result of the battle?

Here is where more experienced Christians can be of immense help to newer believers as role models. Is there an absence of anxiousness and worry? much patience and forbearance? a habit of confident yet reverent prayer? All these flow from a mind and heart fixed on Christ. Are younger believers sought out and disciplined, deliberately trained in the Word of God so that it permeates their thoughts? Is hospitality shown, to provide a haven of fellowship and peace throughout the week? How are we doing in the battle of the mind?

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).


We have a choice: we either take every thought captive or we are taken captive by our thoughts. Inappropriate thoughts can come from any one of our three enemies, leading us away from God's thoughts. *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).* Do we discipline our minds so as to shun evil thoughts?

Appropriate thoughts help us to *"be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."* For example, we should deliberately remember the evidence God has given that He is fully able to uphold those who surrender to Him:

...the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:19-21, emphasis added)

It is also true that God *"hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Eph. 2:6), and so we have instant and continual access to all the strength and authority of the Lord. Do we purposefully fill and fortify our minds with the Scriptures and godly thoughts?

The various forces that would exalt themselves above God so as to take His place of glory are to be actively and confidently resisted by those who know the love and power of God in salvation. *"The battle is the Lord's."* How many of us did the Lord need in order to create the world? The answer is the same as the number of us He needed to destroy the world with a flood, or to part the Red Sea, or to scatter the Midianite army, or to defeat Satan in the wilderness, to calm the sea, or to rise from the dead. In fact it is the same number of us who will be needed to destroy the armies of the nations at the end of the Tribulation, and how many of us He will consult in making His eternal judgments. It is not about us; it is all about Him.

Let us settle the matter in our minds that there really is a battle, and that the battle is for the Lord's honor and glory. *"The gates of hell shall not prevail."* 

A SPECIAL NOTE to our Uplook readers:

We are very grateful to Jamie Martin and the brethren who, on short notice, prepared the helpful articles in this issue of the magazine. This has allowed me the time necessary to work on two important projects for the fall season: a redesign of the Uplook web site (long in need of it as many of you have communicated to us) and a SPECIAL EDITION of Uplook for September, in the will of the Lord.

The September edition will feature a detailed look at the book of Acts and the critical truths there that have been neglected or overlooked by many groups of North American believers who seek to meet as New Testament assemblies. PLEASE be much in prayer both for the preparation of these articles and for the preparation of the hearts of the Lord's people to receive these missing truths as the very oracles of God. —ed.

THE BELT OF TRUTH

Protect your vitals! The enemy isn't fencing; he's out for the kill.

Mark Anderson

Has God said...? The first recorded assault against mankind was made in the Garden of Eden, a direct attack on the truth of the received Word of God. The assault was made by one whom Scripture calls the “father of lies”—the master of distortion and confusion. The first victim of the assault was Eve, the first woman. We may be forgiven if we have occasionally smiled at her gullibility, at the ease with which she was led to abandon what God had freely and explicitly given to her; but we do well to note that the first man, Adam, willingly joined her in the first sin. We should especially note that Adam and Eve are merely the first in a nearly interminable lineup of men and women leading up to the present day—those who have listened to the voice of the serpent as he questions the meaning of God’s Word.

PILATE VS. PAUL

Pilate, quoted in John’s Gospel, is the rightful heir of the distortion and confusion that began millennia before in the Garden. Like Adam and Eve before him, Pilate had the rare privilege of speaking to, and walking with, God; Pilate heard words of truth from the Truth Himself. Like Adam and Eve before him, Pilate was swayed by the opinions and whisperings of others. Pilate had the privilege of a private interview with the Lord Jesus and left in the sway of his own fears and the designs of others. Francis Bacon wrote of that occasion: “What is truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.” Pilate’s seemingly unanswered and haunting question still rules the minds of men and women some two thousand years later. Our generation asks what truth is and yet remains largely apathetic and always unsure about the answer.

The Apostle Paul understood the problems of modern man—the instability and the fear. He knew that above all else, retaining the truth of God’s revelation, refusing to let

it slip away at any cost, was vital to a successful Christian life. In Ephesians 6, Paul speaks of the importance of truth to the believer and employs the striking and apt image of a warrior fastening a covering firmly around his midsection: “Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth.” In the physical realm we understand that a soldier would “gird his loins” for one main reason—security.

Security was the natural desire of a soldier facing conflict. He would want to be well-protected especially around his midsection—the “loins.” After all, it was a reasonable

expectation that one might return from battle with cuts, scrapes, and even severe wounds to the extremities, but those soldiers who suffered heavy damage to their vitals would surely not return at all. We might recall the sad example of King Saul who, seeking a certain demise to preserve himself from the abuse of the enemy, fell on his own sword at Gilboa and died.

Thus having “the loins girt” meant security and protection in a danger-

ous situation; it meant that the thrusts and designs of the enemy to penetrate the initial defenses could be turned aside before they inflicted a decisive and fatal blow. Properly equipping a fighter by protecting what was truly vital meant that a loyal soldier could commit himself to the struggle entirely without the recurring temptation to retreat or surrender.

TRUTH TODAY

The Lord reminds us that we have been called to a life filled with spiritual conflict as we live, work, and raise our families in a world that is opposed to God’s values and principles. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). God desires and deserves willing, joyful service to Him on the battlefield; He has given us everything we need to be successful and victorious in this life. He has provided what we need to protect what is vital when we face a world that increasingly trumpets, as a virtue, its hatred of God’s stan-



King Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria (9th c. BC)

dards. The stage is set and, as history has shown, it is altogether too easy to fail by departing from God's standards. We're sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, after all, who showed us so aptly what happens when we doubt God's Word.

So if we are among those who claim to be serious about our Christian walk in this darkening and increasingly hostile world, we will understand through Paul's letter that we cannot live by our own wisdom, applying our own well-intentioned but ultimately misguided versions of the truth to each new situation. We will consistently choose not to use our standards as the measuring line; instead we will gladly take up what God has given as our vital protection. We will take His truth and bind it firmly around all those things that are vital to us. We will entrust our families, our assemblies, our testimonies, and our very lives to the comforting security of God's protection—His revealed truth. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and John 17:17 tells us, "Thy Word is truth."

Our generation—perhaps like no other before—is hearing the echo of the Serpent's words, "Has God said?" Increasingly the answer to that question is founded less on Scripture and more upon peer pressure, media opinion, and the fear of being labeled "narrow" or "unloving." This generation of believers will face serious challenges from the enemy on many fronts.


Already the battle lines are drawn in the area of gender roles within the assemblies, biblical teaching on the subject of homosexuality, and the singular role of the Lord Jesus in the salvation of men and women. Impressionable Christians are not being asked to abandon their faith entirely, of course (the enemy would not be so blunt!). They are simply being asked to adopt a "reasonable" compromise in certain "limited" areas of doctrine. Without a firm grounding in the Scripture, without a love for God's standards above all else, Christians will be tempted to

compromise. And once the belt of truth has been removed, this vital protection is gone and a Christian is vulnerable to the enemy's fiercest attacks.

In these perilous times especially, serious Christians will take up the Word of God and make it the sole defining standard for all that is important in this life. We will understand that adopting any other standard—even with the best of intentions—will leave a gaping hole in our defenses through which the enemy has grievously wounded many who have gone before us. Serious Christians will, as Proverbs 23:23 tells us, "buy the truth and sell it not."

All believers must realize afresh that they face moment-by-moment crises. Each of us should be eager to take up every piece of equipment our Master has provided for us to wage this battle. Paul tells us that the belt of truth is critical to our health. It is long past time that young believers recommitted themselves to a study of truth, a study of God's revealed Word.

Ill-equipped soldiers—even zealous ones—risk losing the battle against superior forces, and young Christians who cannot adequately protect their core beliefs with God's Word won't hold their ground for long, either. Today you may suddenly find yourself in the conflict, when you're asked to give an answer for the hope within (1 Pet. 3:15): "How can you trust the Bible?" "Why do you say Jesus is God?" "How do you know you have a home in heaven?"

Christian, are you ready? If not, it isn't because God has left you with nothing with which you might make a strong defense. May we pray David's request today: "Uphold me according unto Thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope" (Ps. 119:116). The belt of God's truth is provided for your security and your safety; it's provided so that you won't fall as Adam and Eve fell. The truth is clear, it's available, and it's time for serious Christians to put the truth of God to its intended use. 

Without ME ... NOTHING

Not I, but CHRIST in ME

ALL things through HIM

*I cannot triumph over inward sin,
Nor rise above the rude world's strife and din;
I cannot live for Thee one single hour,
Except as Thou, O Lord, dost give me power.*

*Communion's holy path I cannot tread,
Nor feed my soul upon the living Bread,
Nor fill a humble witness-bearer's place,
But by the workings of Thy sovereign grace.*

*I cannot seek Thy will, nor love Thy Word
Nor own Thee as my Saviour and my Lord,
Nor please Thee once, in deed or word or thought,
Except as by Thy Holy Spirit taught.*

*Thy praises to the world I cannot show,
Nor serve Thee gladly though so much I owe,
Nor yet, like Mary, choose "that better part"
But as Thy mighty love constrains my heart.*

from "Weakness" by William Blane; *Lays of Life and Hope*, p. 84

THE BELIEVER'S BREASTPLATE

Facing the enemy is no child's play. We need some real weapons for the real war.

Jack Baker

Isaiah 59 should be read in any study of Ephesians 6 and the armor of God. Isaiah tells of a day when the wiles of the devil (as in Eph. 6:11) seem to have swept the field. All is sin and iniquity. Justice is not practiced. There is no man to stand up and make a difference. Then Isaiah reminds us that God's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. The Lord comes armed with a breastplate of righteousness (Isa. 59:16ff) and conquers, saving all who turn to Him. His armor is no mere external protection. It is rather His essential character. His righteousness protects His heart, ensuring victory. Who He is determines what He does.

Paul tells the Ephesians that we live in just such a day (2:1-3, 11-13; 4:14, 17-19, 22; 5:8). He reminds us of our great salvation in Christ and exhorts us to live accordingly, for the devil is still a wily character (5:3-7, 11, 15-18). We must "put on the breastplate of righteousness" with the rest of God's armor (*i.e.*, that which He wears in Isaiah 59) in order to live for God's good pleasure. A heart covered with righteousness is invincible.

TWO KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In the book of Ephesians the Church is "His body" (1:22-23; 2:15-16; 4:12-16). Because our Lord works on earth bodily in His Church, He provides His own armor (6:11). It is our place to take it up and put it on. Our hearts must be protected by this character trait of righteousness.

In Ephesians 1 we are chosen in Christ, blessed, and having an inheritance. In chapter 2, we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ. In chapter 3, this mystery was hidden in past ages but has now been revealed, so Paul prays that we might be strengthened within. For all of this we do not need the breastplate of righteousness since our Lord is our Righteousness and we are accepted in the beloved Son.

But chapter 4 tells of a walk worthy of the Lord. Such a walk needs a heart for unity. Only in this way will we exercise our spiritual gifts. Thus the whole body is built up in love. The Holy Spirit lives in us to this end. We must not grieve Him.



Chapter 5 has us walking in light, filled with the Holy Spirit. It also says our marriages are a vital part of our walk. Then in Chapter 6 we see the importance of the Christian family and of our work in the world. All this comes under the practical heading of walking worthily. For this we need the armor of God.

Paul makes this same distinction between the imputed righteousness of God and practiced righteousness in His letter to the Romans. Romans 3:21-5:21 tells of imputed righteousness. It is none of our doing. Such justification (being judicially declared right) sets us free to live according to God's purposes. Then Romans 6:13, 16 and 19 tell of practiced righteousness. We present our "members," our faculties, to live as His instruments, to do His will, which is always right.

Clearly we have not put on the breastplate of righteousness if we do not walk in the liberty of being justified. If we always try to justify ourselves, or feel the need to live up to others' expectations, we are not armed with His breastplate. Neither are we so armed if our liberty means freedom to indulge our lusts. To arm ourselves we need a heart-conviction of how justified we are in Christ. When we feel no need to "do" or "not do" in order to measure our worth, we are free to devote ourselves to His will.

This response of love to Him is the way our armor is put on our spiritual beings.

Perhaps this is the meaning of Ephesians 4:22-24. In verse 22, we put off the old man whose lusts include self-justification and selfish living. So we are free. In verse 24 we put on the new man. Here we live rightly because we live by His Word, desiring His good pleasure. We must put off in order to put on.

PUTTING ON THE BREASTPLATE

Ephesians shows that God's pleasure is to save us and reveal His will to us (1:5, 9), that we might work a different righteousness (2:10) and so demonstrate His wisdom to the very powers which we wrestle against (3:10f; 6:12). Our new man is created in righteousness (4:24) and His Spirit in us produces the fruit of righteousness (5:9). We put on the breastplate of righteousness by our settled commitment to live by His Spirit, according to His Word.

The breastplate of righteousness then consists of a heart committed to:

- UNITY (4:1-16). We are always right to edify one another. Such a heart does right by taking its proper place in the body. We confidently minister Christ to our brethren and expect them to minister to us according to their gifts. Thus the whole body is built up and we can arrive at the knowledge of the Son of God and of a perfect man (4:13).

The devil will entice us to blame our brethren for problems that exist. He will try to convince us we are better off without certain believers. He will appeal to our self-righteous flesh to think we are better than others because we do things better, or more properly, than they do. But we know the Lord (4:20) and so practice patience, forgiveness and love to one another, as given in the rest of chapter 4. The fiery darts of bitterness, pride, and self-righteousness cannot reach a heart armed with God's righteous unity.

- WORSHIP (5:19-20). We are always right to fear the Lord. A heart of worship shows our love and fear for Him. We joyfully express it in word and in music when together. It also leads us to mutual respect (5:21).

The devil tempts us to give up our first love as he did the Ephesians (Rev. 2:4). There is a danger of thinking that activity and success in other areas makes us spiritual. Happiness or success can replace the fear of the Lord.

Armed with the breastplate of righteousness, our hearts are secure in the worship of the Lord. Even an extra hour's sleep couldn't keep us from His remembrance.

- SUBMISSION (5:22-33). We are always right to submit

to Him. Such a heart shows daily in our marriages and also in the local church. Both come from recognizing and practicing the headship of Christ. The church is not a self-help group; it is Christ's body. It works correctly when we behave towards Him as a wife to her husband. So the marriage relationship is vital to successful assemblies.

The devil demands a liberty that means we don't have to submit to anyone. We can insist on our right to have everything done for us by our brothers. Or we serve others but with false humility refuse to receive help from others; even marriage must serve our ends or we walk away from our spouse. The devil is desperate to convince us that our marriages can be worldly and our assembly life spiritual.

The breastplate of righteousness keeps our hearts in a proper relationship with the Lord and with our spouses.

- OBEDIENCE (6:1-9). We are always right to serve the Lord. Such a heart is seen by godly human relationships. Our families demonstrate the obedience of love. Our master/servant relationships are also correct. Our meetings exhibit the same spirit of obedience. Is it merely eye service (6:6)? Notice that all depends on our proper relation to our Master in heaven (6:9). Only such a spirit will direct our lives in the way of His righteousness.

The devil assures us that obedience is legalism; it does not matter how we meet or live. Everything is driven by expedience: What do I get out of this? Results measure spirituality. Freedom in Christ is pitted against heart obedience. Hearts that desire to please the Lord by doing His will according to His Word cannot be touched by such fiery darts.

By wearing the breastplate of righteousness, we can act according to God's Word in every part of our lives. So, "having done all" (Eph. 6:13), we stand. Doing all means acting rightly. Such acts result from our commitment to Christ, never from a desire to justify ourselves.

The world and our flesh, our other enemies, fall easily into line with the devil. He is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). We have formidable opposition and must never lose sight of our real enemy (Eph. 6:12). A spiritual enemy demands spiritual armor.

So let us "stand" in this age of change. Modern ways, thought, and culture prevail in many believers' hearts. It is easier to achieve goals than to live righteously. Such are the fiery darts of the wicked. Let us walk freely according to His Word, by His Spirit, practicing the unity, worship, submission, and obedience that He has provided at such great cost.

If so, we can still see the world turned upside down!

PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL

If the battle is real, where are the soldiers in our Western lands?

Sam Oommen

Would a close examination of our lives reveal that we take seriously the reality of spiritual warfare in our day-to-day lives? Do we see the world—as A.W. Tozer puts it—as our playground to be enjoyed or as a battleground on which to fight? In the hour of temptation, can we draw on the Word of God to battle the enemy? Is our prayer life characterized by the intensity and urgency of one engaged in the issues of life and death? If we are honest, these questions expose the truth that we often don't take seriously the battle we are in. Unlike the lives of many early believers, we are not well-acquainted with the elements of spiritual warfare. We are unfamiliar with the struggle against *"spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."*

Many years ago, a young Jim Elliott wrote,

I do not understand why I have never seen in America what missionaries write of—that sense of swords being drawn, the smell of war with demon powers. Corresponding is the unity among Christians on the mission field, forced by the onslaught of a very real foe. Satan is not real—though we talk much of belief in a 'personal devil.' As a result, our warfare takes on this sham-fight with shadows, a cold war of weary words. There is no shouting; rather, yawning. Laughter long ago stifled sobs in our assemblings together. Woe, woe, woe unto us. We have not submitted to sacrifice. We have not guessed the power of the calling to which God has called—its power to ruin and to revive, its strength to slay.

Over half a century later many believers, having become entangled with civilian affairs, have been rendered ineffective as soldiers. We are no longer in the battle; we are spectators on the sideline. Consequently, ill-accustomed to the armor of God, our Christian walk is not characterized by victory but defeat.

It is essential that we have a growing appreciation of our involvement in this battle that pits the forces of Satan against the host of heaven. But that alone will never defeat the enemy. Daily we need to equip ourselves with the *"full armor of God."* And this armor stretches from head to toe. So in Ephesians 6, Paul enjoins us to have our feet covered *"with the preparation of the gospel of peace."*

HAVING OUR FEET SHOD

It is notable that, in Paul's description of the soldier's equipment, it is the feet that are associated with the gospel. Is the Holy Spirit drawing our attention to Isaiah 52? Here God reveals the matters closest to His heart as He looks forward in time to the spiritual restoration of Israel. *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation."* God celebrates the very feet of the messenger entrusted with the good news of Israel's bright future!

The implication in Ephesians 6 is that the believer has also been sent. Wherever the soldier's feet take him, he has been entrusted with the message of good news concerning Christ. The Lord Himself would send us out, not take us out. Even in His high priestly prayer in John 17, aware that we would be venturing into enemy territory, He prayed for our protection: *"I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one."*

Regrettably, how often have we avoided entering into the battle by failing to confess Christ, by not taking a stand or sharing the gospel with perishing men and women. In 1 Samuel 17, while his fellow Israelites cowered in fear, David the shepherd boy displayed the heart of the true soldier. His eldest brother angrily rebuked young David for his youthful curiosity: *"for you have come down in order to see the battle."* But Eliab was nowhere to be found as David ran to the battle line to meet Goliath. God is looking for men and women like David, unwilling to simply be spectators,



Do we see the world as our playground to be enjoyed...

or as a battleground on which to fight?



eager to enter the battle and confront the enemy.

Paul, in the context of his letter to the Ephesians, makes several references to the subject of the Christian walk. Our ability to stand or walk depends on the condition of our feet. The soldier engaged in man-to-man conflict must have his feet in order. In some sense, what a foundation is to a building, so are properly clad feet to a soldier.

Over the last few months we've watched our fifteen-month-old daughter make the transition from crawling to walking. Like many parents, my wife and I soon realized how helpful a well-fitted pair of shoes was. Proper shoes enabled her both to stand and to walk confidently. Similarly, in order to effectively battle, the believer's feet need to be properly shod. But with what? *"With the preparation of the gospel of peace."* What better foundation can there be than a thorough knowledge of the finished saving work of Christ in our lives? The believer whose feet are planted in a shaky understanding of the gospel becomes easy prey for the enemy. Many a person, having sincerely confessed Christ, goes on to live as if eternal life depended on his good efforts. Others are undermined because they continually question if they might lose their salvation.

I recall my first time as a junior counselor in a camp setting. Thankfully I was paired with a wise elder from my assembly. During that week we saw young men come to place their faith in Christ as Saviour. Aware that many of these infant Christians would be returning to homes where the name of Christ would not be honored, my senior counselor sat down with each of these young boys and walked them down the "Romans Road of Salvation" and equipped them with verses concerning eternal security. These verses are still highlighted in my Bible.

How imperative that mature Christians make the same investment in new believers. We should see this as a priority to ground every new believer in the teachings concerning their salvation.

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Now in Ephesians 6:15, Paul uses a rare expression—*"the gospel of peace."* More commonly the New Testament writers speak of the gospel of Christ or the gospel of God. Paul in Romans speaks of the gospel of good things (Rom. 10:15) and writes to the Corinthians of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). But in Ephesians 6, in the con-

text of spiritual warfare, the message we are to go forth with is the gospel of peace. What's the connection?


The Scriptures tell us that before knowing Christ we were allied with the rest of humanity as sinners and at enmity with a holy God. But *"being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 5:1). The world now sees us as defectors. However, we understand that we have crossed over to the winning side. But the battle is not over; it is just beginning, because God now enlists us in His army to take the terms of peace—the gospel—to the enemy. As ambassadors for Christ, we represent His interests to those still in opposition to Him: *"we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"* (2 Cor. 5:20).

PREPARATION

We must be careful to never underestimate our enemy. Spiritual warfare is no place for over-confidence. The soldier goes forth fully-equipped but with a healthy respect for the opposition. *"Let him who standeth, take heed lest he fall"* (1 Cor. 10:12). In this regard, Paul refers to the preparation that should characterize the messenger. This preparation is two-fold. Firstly, He is prepared in that his life is a display of the truth of the gospel's transforming power. He enjoys the confidence and calm assurance that comes from peace with God and therefore he can now enjoy peace with his fellow man. Secondly, he is prepared to share the gospel of peace. *"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."*

How can we become prepared? By being willing to share the gospel. By praying for opportunities to do so, and for boldness and wisdom to speak up faithfully and graciously when the Lord provides us with those opportunities. By making certain beforehand that we have an accurate understanding of the gospel and can clearly express it to others. And by filling our hearts and minds with *"the*

holy Scriptures, which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Are we prepared? Were a unbelieving friend to ask us about our hope, could we give an answer? Let us go into battle following the example of our Captain who *"preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh"* (Eph. 2:17). 



We must be careful to never underestimate our enemy.

Spiritual warfare is no place for over-confidence.





THE SHIELD OF FAITH

The one piece of armor that is highly adaptable to every need.

Steve Gonder

What is faith? Our world in this age of “enlightenment” has so twisted its meaning that the typical person has no real idea of what it is. To most, it’s a feeling. It means wishing for something extremely hard. It means putting your confidence in something, gritting your teeth, hoping it won’t fail. It’s no wonder so many people have “lost faith” in everything from their political heroes to their favorite sports icons.

Many believers have endeavored to define faith. Of course, the best Bible dictionary is the Bible itself, and we need look no further than Hebrews 11:1 to find God’s definition of faith: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” Clearly faith is more profound than just a feeling; it is substantial. Knowing our inadequacy to comprehend even this concise definition, the Lord graciously provided an entire chapter of real, historical examples of faith on display. Indeed, the entire volume of Scripture is full of people who exhibited faith.

Beyond this clear definition and numerous named examples, the Lord has given us one more method of understanding the intangible: by picture. As part of the armor of God, faith is likened to a shield (Eph. 6:16) that can be used to drive back the onslaught of the enemy. Let us consider briefly both the attack and the defense.

THE ATTACK

The Threat is Serious: To begin, we need to be reminded of the seriousness of the attack against us. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that the battle we face daily is not physical, but spiritual. The Lord Jesus warned us not to be concerned with the physical, but rather the spiritual predator (Mt. 10:28). Daniel 6 gives evidence of a very real battle that was being fought in a spiritual realm, the magnitude of which not even Daniel was aware. It would be a grave tactical error on our part to take this sphere lightly. The spiritual warfare is every bit as dangerous to a Christian as any physical danger, and should not be discounted.

The Attack is Coordinated: Twice in Ephesians 6 (vv. 11, 13), we are encouraged to employ “*the whole armor of God.*”

The devil is expressly mentioned as our foe (v. 11). However, we know there is a conflict against the world and the flesh as well. In verse 16, we’re told that we will be assaulted with “*all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” “*The wicked*” in this case is not only a reference to the devil, but to all manner of wickedness, from wherever it may stem. And we are assured that there is not only one dart to contend with; there are many. If there were a single focus, we might be content with less, or more specific armor. But the enemy is astute. As a result, a calculated, coordinated attack is launched, and the Christian will have to defend many fronts, making use of all of the armor.

The Weapon is Precise and Deadly: The only weapon of the enemy mentioned specifically for us in this chapter is the dart. We might think of it as an arrow or a javelin—an object that is thrown in such a way as to inflict harm. And let us not take its danger lightly. These are not the darts we enjoy in our basements at a family reunion. The “*wiles of the devil*” (v. 11) are not comical, practical jokes meant to cause a snicker. These darts are “fiery,” making them particularly destructive and searing to the Christian. This weapon is accurate and it is deadly. In 2 Kings 9:24 it was an arrow that was able to find its way around the armor, between the arms, and into the heart of Joram to slay him. We would do well to remember that these darts are not thrown at random; they are precise, intended not only to wound, but to destroy. We don’t often face a wide-ranging attack, devised to level large areas. Rather, it is a more calculated, measured approach. But let us make no mistake: it is not lacking in potency!

THE DEFENSE

The Defense is Appropriate: Having considered the enemy’s tactics, one might feel disheartened or apprehensive. The danger is certainly considerable. However, the Lord has abundantly equipped His soldiers to deal with this attack. Specifically, the shield of faith is an undeniably important component of the armor of God. In fact, the entire battle centers on faith. The Scriptures would exhort

us to “*fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Tim. 6:12).

We realize that the attack will be coordinated. The shield is not used in isolation. It is to be taken up in addition to the rest of the armor listed. The other pieces (the helmet, the breastplate, etc.) would serve defensive purposes as well. These sections are so closely associated that they are spoken of somewhat interchangeably. Indeed, we not only have the shield of faith, but also the “*breastplate of faith*” (1 Thess. 5:8). The attack is coordinated; so the armor must be comprehensive enough to protect against this multi-faceted attack.

The weapon used against the Christian soldier is precise and deadly. But the shield of faith allows us to block the darts launched against us. Other defensive pieces would provide a certain measure of safety for attacks that are launched unsuspectingly. We won’t always know where the ambush is coming from. But a well-placed arrow can find a way through or around our “inactive” armor. The shield is primarily beneficial when we know where the arrow is coming from and are prepared to use it effectively. It is not a passive defense, but an active one.

The application of these points is clear. As we march through the battlefield, we will be ambushed by temptation and sin. We are protected by our helmet (salvation), breastplate (righteousness), and belt (truth) to a certain extent in these circumstances. However, when we’re conscious of the attack, and we know the temptation that is upon us, the shield of faith is most effective. It is a precise defense against a precise attack.

The Defense is Strong: The beauty of the shield of faith is that when employed properly, it completely quenches the enemy’s darts. There is no ricochet, no grazing or wounding; the fiery darts are extinguished. Not only so, but it defends against all shapes and sizes of darts. Faith is required every step of the way. As temptation rears its ugly head, faith wards it off. When doubts and fears arise, faith subdues them. When the fiery darts of tribulation speed toward us, the shield of faith quenches them all. And what of the arrows of discouragement, loss, tragedy, or mourning? They are all repelled by faith. We are justified by faith. We are sanctified by faith. We have access to God by faith. We walk by faith. We live by faith. And in the end, it is by faith we will stand (2 Cor. 1:24).

Displaying faith is effortless in trouble-free times. It is during times of war that our faith is tested and must remain strong. How many times has a young Christian soldier seen a veteran fight through the battlefield of life, besieged from every side, and come through rejoicing?

They’ve seen the example of faithful Christians who have been called to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). They have witnessed those who have been tried, and whose faith has stood strong. And as younger believers have seen the reality of faith lived out in others before them, they too can march through the battle by faith.

Our faith can only be strong because the Object of our faith is immovable. The work of Christ is finished. And so our faith is firmly grounded. The cross of the Lord Jesus is not only sufficient to save us from sin and judgment, but to pilot us through the on-going battle. He is our Commander and Chief. He is the Captain of our Salvation. All others will disappoint, but when the Almighty God leads us into battle, we have One who is abundantly worthy of our faith. What confidence this gives!

The Counter-Attack: The most skilled combatants used all of their armor to its fullest potential. Of course, the sword was the primary offensive weapon. The sword was in one hand, but the shield was in the other. And in the heat of the battle, the great warriors would have used both in an offensive way. The shield would allow them not only to absorb the blows and the darts of the enemy, but also to charge forward in counter-attack.

So often it is the case with us. Although much of the armor we are provided with focuses on defense and standing firm, we realize that the Christian’s lot isn’t just to hold on in the face of danger until we eventually triumph in the end, but rather to press forward and take new ground. Faith is what helps us go forth. Let us “*cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light*” (Rom. 13:12). Let us follow the example of those of old “*who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in the fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens...of whom the world was not worthy*” (Heb. 11:33-38). And let us set our own example for others to follow.

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above
With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith they, like a whirlwind’s breath,
Swept on o’er every field;
The faith by which they conquered death
Is still our shining shield.

Faith is the victory! —JOHN H. YATES



THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Right thinking about salvation is the mind's preservative.

Randall Amos

A helmet covers the mind, a vital area, in times of warfare. The mind reaches the heart and the heart produces attitudes and actions. “*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*” (Prov. 23:7).

A Christian’s mind must be firm in the truth of God’s salvation to withstand the satanic lies of religion, philosophy, and culture. Otherwise a Christian could have a wrong view of himself and of the Lord. He could be deceived and found to be working against God. Let’s consider four areas of the doctrine of salvation.

GOD’S VIEW OF MANKIND

Sinners by Practice. God’s Word in Romans 1 sees mankind under the wrath of God and worthy of death and judgment. This wrath is not “a bad mood” but the offending of a holy God when mankind’s practices “*such things*.” The list of offenses are found in verses 29-31.

But sometimes a person’s wrong actions is perceived as not premeditated—an ignorant mistake. If so, do “*such things*” deserve God’s judgment? For example, suppose you installed a new white rug but did not tell the children to be careful with it, and they walked across it with their dirty shoes. Would you be just in punishing them? But if you told them to be careful with everything in the house and they said, “Who cares?” walking on it anyway, would they now be deserving of punishment? This is the way a person careless of God’s claims is dealt with in Romans.

Sinners by Choice. God’s Word shows that because of creation, conscience, and His commandments, mankind is not ignorant of God. Yet with this knowledge of God and His basic morality, it is revealed that “*when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God neither were thankful*” (Rom. 1:21). Thus man is not innocent because he is not ignorant. Man is not simply one who falls short because of weaknesses, but a rebel against God. Regardless of whether he has God’s religion (the Law) or not, man

knows and sins anyway. So Romans 3:12 and 19 conclude that there is “*none that doeth good*” and all mankind is “*guilty before God*.”

This evaluation by God flies in the face of the majority opinion. Man is basically good, they say, and through proper training and values, can be pleasing to God. This satanic lie makes man in need of a teacher, not a Saviour.

Sinners by Birth. Romans goes on to reveal the source of our sin. What good is salvation if it only treats the symptoms? In Romans the source of sin is not culture, class, a dysfunctional family, or a chemical imbalance. It is racial, for there is only one race: the human or Adamic race. Humanity is connected to Adam from whom sin entered and then death followed. Therefore, death comes upon all, for all have sinned. We are wrong by birth; it is a racial defect.

Thus sin cannot be solved by political changes, religious reform, psychological therapy, or prescription drugs. Nothing short of a new birth

or adoption into a new race will suffice to solve the problem. This is another salvation truth that flies in the face of popular opinion, which holds that each person is a child of God and all are part of the equal brotherhood of the family of God. For, the reasoning goes, all share the same human source in Adam—whom God created. However, this common Adamic connection is not the solution but the problem (5:12-19). The human link to Adam constitutes one a sinner under the condemnation of death.

Thankfully, God’s Word speaks of the head of another race, a spiritual one. And its head, or progenitor, is God’s Son, Jesus the Christ, “*the last Adam*” (1 Cor. 15:45). It is only in union with Him that we live and are the sons or children of God (Jn. 1:12).

In God’s eyes, it’s the family you’re in that makes you one of His, not how many bad or good things you do. Simply put, in the words of God in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*.” It’s not what you do but who you are. For example, a cherry tree is still a cherry tree whether it has ten cherries or a



thousand on it. And whether the majority of cherries are good or bad does not change the type of tree.

THE WORTH OF JESUS

Since man needs nothing short of a Saviour and a new life, God in love and wisdom has provided such, coming Himself in the Person of His Son. Romans 1:3 speaks of His Son's human heritage: "*the seed of David*"—God's chosen line to rule His people. Thus Jesus has worth, a legal claim to God's throne. He is royalty.

Romans 1:4 reveals Jesus' divine heritage: "*the Son of God*." Thus He is also eternal and divine, though taking a human body. The Creator has become like the creature. Because He is God, He was sinless and pure to His Father. Christ Jesus stands alone among the billions of humanity: He is a king who is pure (bypassing Adam's sin nature by the virgin birth). He is God who is a man. As a man who has overcome death, He is the head of a new race.

The worth of Christ goes against the satanic lies—lies that postulate that He was only a good moral teacher, or just a reformer for freedom of choice from the tyranny of corrupt religion and politics, so man could reach his full potential. If Jesus is less than the seed of David, then there is no rule of God over man in a coming kingdom. If He is less than the Son of God, then His death is not effective for salvation, and man is either hopelessly lost or good enough to save himself. If we are not worthy of death then we don't need a Saviour. If He is not the Saviour then he is not worthy to reign (Rev. 5:9). The satanic attack against God's salvation fights on the ground of worth: man or the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE WORK OF JESUS

The Lord Jesus said to His Father, "*I have finished the work*" (Jn. 17:4). The reason His work as a Saviour counted was because of His worth. One might offer one's favorite roller ball pen as payment for a million dollar debt. The pen, of course, will not count as a satisfactory payment because of its lack of worth.

Thus the Lord Jesus' death was unlike any other. It was not a consequence of His sin, for He had none. His death had value and power to it. It would be accepted by God as a substitution for sinners. In biblical language, His blood was a propitiation (Rom. 3:25). That is, it was a satisfactory sacrifice in God's eyes. It fully paid the great debt of death our sin had incurred against a holy God.

His death goes against the popular thought that it was simply a love statement to show how much we are worth

loving—because Jesus went through such passion to show us. Rather, His death was a substitutionary payment proving that mankind must stand in need of a Saviour. Christ's cross verifies that we are guilty sinners by practice, rebels or enemies of God by choice, and born inherently wrong. The purpose of the work of Christ on the cross is connected to the condition of man.


It is God Himself who has the final word on the death of Jesus. Man (religious and political), though finding no moral charge against Jesus, had Him crucified as a religious blasphemer (a mere man claiming to be God) and a political rebel (an insurgent king). Crucifixion was man's evaluation of Christ. The prophet said, "*We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*" (Isa. 53:4). But God disagreed with that verdict and revealed that Jesus did not belong in a criminal's grave, removed from society. He raised Him from the dead! Then He ascended to the right hand of God, honored by God Himself.

TERMS OF GOD'S SALVATION

Resurrection declares that His death was not His punishment, but salvation for us. "*But He was wounded for our transgressions*," says the prophet (Isa. 53:5). Now do we agree with God's verdict or man's (even religious man)? Can one be right with God and disagree with Him over His beloved Son? When one agrees with God from the heart concerning God's evaluation of Jesus as Lord by resurrection, then he is saved, made right with God (Rom. 10:9).

It is faith (trust) in Christ that saves, apart from human works or deeds of the Law (Rom. 3:28; 4:5). God's terms are not Christ plus what I do, but faith in Christ alone. If one can contribute to one's salvation then man must not be totally bad or Christ's work must not be totally sufficient. Obeying God by faith takes away our right to boast before Him—guilty sinners have no grounds to boast—except in God's grace through the cross (Rom. 3:27).

Peter argues concerning the terms of salvation that when they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ because of grace, the Holy Spirit came in them instantly. This proves that faith alone in Christ purifies the heart or else the Spirit would not have come in (Acts 15:8-11). God's salvation is the very basis that causes saved man to now live right, Romans 6-8, but that is not the scope of this teaching.

To battle successfully we need to have our minds protected. Our beliefs and thinking must be defended from the lies of the Enemy. By wearing this helmet of salvation one can be preserved from satanic doubts that discourage and satanic lies that deceive. 

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

There's no weapon like it, but little good it will do us if left in the scabbard!

Gary McBride

The Christian is not to live life as a consumer but as a combatant. There is a real adversary who seeks to destroy the testimony and effectiveness of believers. This enemy is not of flesh and blood but is spirit, and operates in the heavenlies. To withstand him, a believer must have spiritual armor and resources that only God can supply. Today is certainly *"the evil day,"* and God's people need to be strong in the Lord. Believers must arm themselves with the sword of the Spirit if they are going to experience victory on a daily basis.

There is a common misunderstanding, and thus misconception, about the imagery of the sword used in Ephesians 6. Many believers read the phrase *"which is the Word of God"* and assume that Paul is referring to the Bible that they have in their hands. This thought has been reinforced in childhood through "sword drills" as well as through some children's choruses. One often hears expressions such as, "Where is my sword?" or "Here's my sword!" when people refer to their Bibles.

The *"sword of the Spirit"* is indeed the Word of God, not the word in your hand, but rather, the word in your heart. Waving a Bible at Satan will not deter him or defeat him in the hour of temptation. It is the word that is hidden in our hearts that can be drawn from its sheath and used to thwart the schemes of the enemy; but, even more, it is the word that is obeyed and put into action.

SPIRITUAL SWORDSMANSHIP

The proper use of the *"sword"* is seen in the response of the Lord Jesus to Satan during the temptation. He answered each of Satan's temptations with a quotation from the book of Deuteronomy. Each response was prefaced by the phrase, *"It is written."* It was the word in His heart and, thus, on the tip of His tongue.

To use the Word as a sword involves more than the recitation of words as some kind of mantra to ward off evil. The sword is drawn when one is confronted with a situation or circumstance used by Satan to bring temptation into our path. The sword is used when one chooses to be

obedient to the Scripture that has come to mind. That is what the Lord Jesus did: the Scripture verses were quoted, but He was also obedient to the truth contained in them and consequently Satan was defeated.

Two negative examples from the Old Testament might help us to grasp this concept. These illustrations are given against the background of Peter's statement that *"the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is on the prowl, seeking Christians who are not alert, burdened with the cares of life and full of pride.

The first illustration comes from 1 Kings 13 and is about the man of God sent from Judah to Bethel. The Word of God was very clear to him, *"For so it was commanded me by the Word of the Lord, saying, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water nor return by the same way you came'"* (v. 9). An old local prophet convinced this man to return to Bethel and to have a meal. Thus the young prophet willfully disobeyed what he knew God's Word to be, as in his own words he said, *"For I have been told by the Word of the Lord"* (v. 17). While they were eating, the old prophet said, *"Because you have disobeyed the Word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you, but came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water,' your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers."* So it was that on the way back to Judah, the prophet was met by a lion and killed. The man was defenseless because he knew God's Word but chose to disobey.

The second story illustrates the same point. In 1 Kings 20:35 a prophet *"said to his neighbor by the Word of the Lord, 'Strike me, please,' and the man refused to strike him."*



The prophet then said to him, “*Because you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, surely, as soon as you depart from me a lion shall kill you.*” Not surprisingly, the disobedient man was met by a lion and killed.


Although both of these men knew the word of God, their lack of obedience led to their downfall. The only two recorded cases where the lion won the victory occurred because God’s word, though known, was disobeyed. In both cases these men would have been spared if they had properly used the “*sword of the Spirit*,” that is, had they simply been obedient.

A New Testament application can be drawn from 1 John 2:13-14. Here John is writing to young men who are growing in Christ and progressing towards maturity. The commendation in verse 13 is that “*you have overcome the wicked one.*” This statement is expanded in verse 14, “*You are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.*” The source of their strength is the Word of God, which abides in them. To abide means to be at home or remain where placed. They have fed on the sincere milk of the Word and have developed an appetite and an ability to consume the meat of the Word. The Word of God has allowed them to overcome the wicked one. Positionally, all believers are overcomers; but, practically, the

Word of God is the resource given so that “*you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*” (Eph. 6:11).

The Psalmist in Psalm 119:9 asked the question, “*How can a young man cleanse his way?*” The answer is “*by taking heed according to Thy Word.*” It is not enough to know the Word; there must also be obedience to the truth contained there. This leads to purity of life and victory over the wicked one and his assault on our faith.

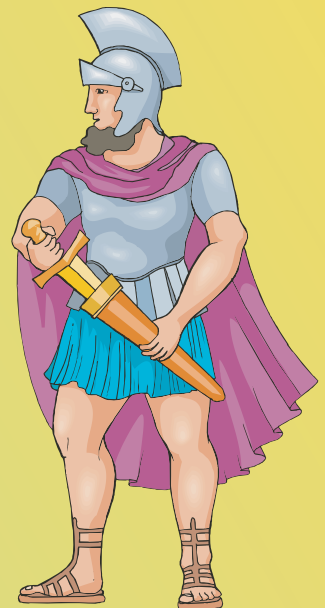
Paul, in Ephesians 6, says that the armor is something we must “*put on.*” Each item is something we must appropriate, that is, take it for ourselves. We must do more than merely pick up the Bible; it must be read and the Word must be hidden in our hearts. It must be more than mere head knowledge but must also be lived out in obedience.

In our own battle, it is insufficient to know where the armor is mentioned in the Bible or to be able to recite each piece by memory. A believer must be obedient and put on the breastplate of righteousness, which is to live a life characterized by righteousness. One responds to the fiery darts of the enemy with the shield of faith, which is a faith that is living and founded on God’s Word. That is how we take up the “*sword of the Spirit.*” The Holy Spirit can bring to mind scriptures that have been read and applied, so that, in the time of need, we too can defeat the wicked one. 

THE MAN IN THE ARENA

It is not the critic who counts,
 not the one who points out
 how the strong man stumbled
 or how the doer of deeds might have done them better.
 The credit belongs to the man
 who is actually in the arena,
 whose face is marred with sweat and dust and blood:
 who strives valiantly;
 who errs and comes short again and again; who knows
 the great enthusiasms, the great devotions,
 and spends himself in a worthy cause;
 who, if he wins,
 knows the triumph of high achievement;
 and who, if he fails, at least fails
 while daring greatly,
 so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls
 who know neither victory
 nor defeat.

—*Author Unknown*



TRUESTORY

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee” (Mk. 5:19).

CAPTAIN BEN’S CONVERSION

Twelve years ago, I was reading a bi-monthly gospel magazine I receive (Moments for You, published in Bedford PA) and I was startled to read there the story of the conversion of my great-grandfather and his closest friend, Captain Ben Demeritt. I want to share that story with you as it appeared in Vol. 30 No. 6 of Moments for You, and authored by A. E. Booth, the designer of his well-known Dispensational Chart. —DICK GORGAS

Captain Ben Demeritt was in the fishing business off the coast of Key West, Florida. He was highly regarded in his trade by all around as one of the most able and reliable fishermen in the area.

In his early days, Ben had imbibed atheistic ideas and was zealous in circulating atheistic literature. On the docks and in the sponge sheds, when numbers were gathered together, he discussed these questions, asserting there is no God and we need no church or Bible salvation. It was generally recognized in those discussions that he held up his side of the argument fairly well. He was a man with a tender heart and genial disposition, and was generally loved by the people. Yet, underneath these atheistic theories Ben was not satisfied. He did not have peace of heart, conscience nor mind.

One evening he heard a man preaching in the open air, and when he saw a company gathered around him, he joined them to hear also. This man preached the gospel, and Ben realized that he had never heard a man speak like this before. The preacher emphasized that all men were sinners by nature and practice. Then he made plain the fact that God was a just God, both in judgment and in mercy. This was all something new to Ben. In the closing part of his message, the preacher pressed the great fact that, notwithstanding all his previous statements concerning man, yet God loved men, and that salvation was extended now to all men freely. He urged his hearers not to neglect this salvation. Then at the close of his message he announced another meeting in a small hall the next evening.

Ben returned home from this street meeting and recognized that this discourse gave him something different and more real than he had ever heard before. He attended the little meeting the next evening and sat in the back. The preacher again presented the gospel message and at the close pressed upon his hearers the great reality of God’s love in the gift of His Son. He repeated again and again the well-known verse of Scripture, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). Then, turning to the young man in the back seat, he said, “Young man—God loves you.” This message went home as an arrow to his heart, directed by the Holy Spirit, and Ben entered a new world of thought and deep conviction.



That night was a dreadful one for Ben as he tossed on his bed. Sleep fled from him. Hours passed as he contrasted the great difference between the sophistry of atheism, which he had imbibed and advocated, and what he had so recently heard in the gospel.

At 4 AM, when most people were still asleep, Ben fell on his knees and sobbed out his confession of sin before God, imploring God for mercy and salvation. The Lord heard his prayer, and he arose from his knees a saved man. He had been born again, with John 3:16 a key factor in his conversion.

After breakfast that morning, he started as usual for the docks to begin another day of fishing. On his way he met an old friend, Copeland Johnson. They exchanged greetings, and then Ben told Cope all that had taken place that night, and that John 3:16 was a great reality to him. This testimony that early morning was also an arrow straight to Cope's heart and conscience, and both men wept together and then parted for the day. Later they met again and when Ben unfolded to him more fully the salvation he now possessed, his friend was also brought into the light and present possession of eternal life.

These men were close friends for many years. They read the Word of God together and prayed, and preached hundreds of times together on the fishing docks and in the sponge sheds. Open air preaching was Ben's delight. He took joy in distributing gospel tracts and from his hands thousands upon thousands were given away as seed scattered for a golden harvest bye and bye. He was used of the Lord to influence many people in his work as fishing guide, some of them also being of great service to the Lord. Ben's last words, "Lord, take me!" were uttered on his death bed. Shortly after, he was present with the Lord.

Needless to say, reading this account was a thrill to my soul. In 1936, my parents took my younger brother Jack and me to Key West for a visit to the Johnson's. While I was only 5 at the time (Jack was 3), I have lovely memories of Great-grandfather Copeland Johnson, and I will never forget meeting "Uncle" Ben, as we called him. Later that same year, the terrible hurricane of 1936 struck the Florida Keys and Cope Johnson was washed out to sea by a tidal wave while preaching in a converted lighthouse.

Grace! Grace! God's grace! How wonderful!



HOLY WARFARE

Horatius Bonar

*Sounds the trumpet from afar!
Soldiers of the holy war,
Rise; for you your Captain waits;
Rise, the foe is at the gates.*

*Arm! the conflict has begun;
Fight! the battle must be won;
Lift the banner to the sky,
Wave its blazing folds on high.*

*Banner of the blessed tree,
Round its glory gather ye!
Warriors of the crown and cross,
What is earthly gain or loss?*

*Life with death, and death with life
Closes now in deadly strife;
Help us with Thy shield and sword,
King and Captain, mighty Lord!*

*King of glory, Thee alone;
King of kings, Thy name we own;
With Thy banner overhead
Not ten thousand foes we dread.*

*Spare not toil, nor blood, nor pain,
Not a stroke descends in vain;
Wounded, still no foot we yield
On this ancient battlefield.*

*More than conquerors even now,
With the war-sweat on our brow,
Onward o'er the well-marked road,
March we on, the host of God.*

*Royal is the sword we wield,
Royal is our battle shield,
Royal is our victory,
Royal shall our triumph be.*

PRAYER & VIGILANCE

The “apostle of prayer” shares some helpful insights for the battle ahead.

E. M. Bounds

The description of the Christian soldier given by Paul in Ephesians 6 is compact and comprehensive. He is depicted as being ever in the conflict, which has many fluctuating seasons—seasons of prosperity and adversity, light and darkness, victory and defeat. He is to pray at all seasons, and with all prayer, this to be added to the armor in which he is to go forth to battle. At all times he is to have the full panoply of prayer. The Christian soldier, if he fights to win, must pray much. By this means only is he enabled to defeat his inveterate enemy, the devil, together with the evil one’s manifold emissaries.

“Praying always, with all prayer” is the divine direction given him. This covers all seasons, and embraces all manner of praying.

Christian soldiers fighting the good fight of faith have access to a place of retreat, to which they continually repair for prayer. “Praying always, with all prayer” is a clear statement of the imperative need of much praying, and of many kinds of praying by him who, fighting the good fight of faith, would win out in the end over all his foes.

The Revised Version puts it this way: “With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplications, for all saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me, in opening my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel...” It cannot be stated too frequently that the life of a Christian is a warfare, an intense conflict, a lifelong contest. It is a battle, moreover, waged against invisible foes, who are ever alert, and ever seeking to entrap, deceive, and ruin the souls of men. The life to which Scripture calls men is no picnic, or holiday junket. It is no pastime, no pleasure jaunt. It entails effort, wrestling, struggling; it demands the putting forth of the full energy of the spirit in order to frustrate the foe and to come off, at the last, more than conqueror. It is no prim-

rose path, no rose-scented dalliance. From start to finish, it is war. From the hour in which he first draws sword, to that in which he removes his harness, the Christian warrior is compelled to “endure hardness as a good soldier.”...

The Christian soldier wrestles not against flesh and blood but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Or, as the margin reads, “wicked spirits in high places.” What a fearful array of forces are set against him who would make his way through the wilderness of this world to the portals of the celestial city! It is no surprise, therefore, to find Paul,

who understood the character of the Christian life so well, and who was so thoroughly informed as to the malignity and number of the foes which the disciple of the Lord must encounter, plainly urging him to “put on the whole armor of God” and “to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Wise would the present generation be if all professors of our faith could be induced to realize this all-important and vital truth, so absolutely indispensable to a successful Christian life.



**The Christian soldier,
if he fights to win,
must pray much.**

It is just at this point in much present-day Christian profession that one may find its greatest defect. There is little, or nothing, of the soldier element in it. The discipline, self-denial, spirit of hardship, determination, so prominent in military life, are largely lacking. Yet the Christian life is warfare all the way....

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

All these directions end in a climax; and that climax is prayer. How can the brave warrior for Christ be made braver still? How can the strong soldier be made stronger still? How can the victorious battler be made still more victorious? Here are Paul’s explicit directions to that end: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Prayer, and more prayer, adds to the fighting qualities and the more certain victories of God's good fighting men. The power of prayer is most forceful on the battlefield amid the din and strife of the conflict. Paul was preeminently a soldier of the cross. For him, life was no flowery bed of ease. He was no dress parade, holiday soldier, whose only business was to don a uniform on set occasions. His was a life of intense conflict, the facing of many adversaries, the exercise of non-sleeping vigilance and constant effort. And, at its close—in sight of the end—we hear him chanting his final song of victory, "*I have fought a good fight,*" and reading between the lines, we see that he is more than conqueror!

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul indicates the nature of his soldier-life, giving us some views of the kind of praying needed for such a career. He writes: "*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea*" (Rom. 15:30f).

Paul had foes in Judea—foes who beset and opposed him in the form of "*unbelieving men*" and this, added to other weighty reasons, led him to urge the Roman Christians to strive with him in prayer. That word "*strive*" indicated wrestling, the putting forth of great effort. This is the kind of effort and the sort of spirit which must possess the Christian soldier.

Here is a great soldier in the great struggle, faced by malignant forces who seek his ruin. His force is well-nigh spent. What reinforcements can he count on? What can give help and bring success to a warrior in such a pressing emergency? It is a critical moment in the conflict. What force can be added to the energy of his own prayers? The answer is in the prayers of others....

The Christian soldier is to pray at all seasons, and under all circumstances. His praying must be arranged so as to cover his times of peace as well as his hours of active conflict. It must be available in his marching and his fighting. Prayer must diffuse all effort, impregnate all ventures, decide all issues. The Christian soldier must be as intense in his praying as in his fighting, for his victories will depend much more on his praying than on his fighting. Fervent supplication must be added to steady resolve; prayer and supplication must supplement the armor of God. The Holy Spirit must aid the supplication with His own strenuous plea, and the soldier must pray in the Spirit. In this, as in other forms of warfare, eternal vigilance is the price of victory; and thus watchfulness and persever-


ance must mark every activity of the Christian warrior.

The soldier-prayer must reflect its profound concern for the success and well-being of the whole army. The battle is not altogether a personal matter; victory cannot be achieved for self alone. There is a sense in which the entire army of Christ is involved. The cause of God, His saints, their woes and trials, their duties and crosses, all should find a voice and a pleader in the Christian soldier when he prays. He dare not limit his praying to himself. Nothing dries up spiritual vitality so certainly and completely; nothing poisons the fountain of spiritual life so effectively; nothing acts in such deadly fashion, as selfish praying....

The Christian soldier is compelled to constant picket duty. He must always be on his guard. He is faced by a foe who never sleeps, who is always alert, and ever prepared to take advantage of the fortunes of war. Watchfulness is a cardinal principle with Christ's warrior: "*watch and pray*" forever sounding in his ears. He cannot dare to be asleep at his post. Such a lapse brings him not only under the displeasure of the Captain of his salvation, but exposes him to added danger. Watchfulness, therefore, imperatively constitutes the duty of the soldier of the Lord....

Rest assured that the devil never falls asleep. He is ever "*walking about, seeking whom he may devour.*" Just as a shepherd must never be careless and unwatchful lest the wolf devour his sheep, so the Christian soldier must ever have his eyes wide open, implying his possession of a spirit which neither slumbers nor grows careless. The inseparable companions and safeguards of prayer are vigilance, watchfulness, and a mounted guard....

When will Christians more thoroughly learn the twofold lesson, that they are called to a great warfare, and that in order to get the victory they must give themselves to non-sleeping watchfulness and unceasing prayer?...

Christian experience will be sapless, and Christian influence will be dry and arid, unless prayer has a high place in the life. Without prayer the Christian graces will wither and die. Without prayer, we may add, preaching is edgeless and a vain thing, and the gospel loses its wings and its muscle. Christ is the lawgiver of prayer, and Paul is His apostle of prayer. Both declare its primacy and importance, and demonstrate the fact of its indispensability. Their prayer directions cover all places, include all times, and comprehend all things. How, then, can the Christian soldier hope or dream of victory, unless he be fortified by its power? How can he fail, if in addition to putting on the armor of God he is, at all times and seasons, "*watching unto prayer*"? 

COMBINED ARMS

Cooperation and coordination is the path to victory



Alexander, one of the greatest military commanders in history, inherited the throne of Macedonia from his father Philip in 336 BC and proceeded to conquer Asia Minor, Egypt, and Persia right to the borders of India. He fought great battles at Granicus, Issus, Gaugamela, and Hydaspes. What is seldom realized is he fought most of his battles outnumbered by his enemies. But Alexander had one considerable advantage: he understood the principles of combined arms.

Combined arms refers to using all the different types of forces you have in a unified manner. Before Alexander, cavalry fought cavalry, light infantry fought light infantry, and then the heavy infantry fought heavy infantry—and decided the matter. Alexander learned to use all of his forces together. The light infantry would hold the flanks and pin down the enemy infantry along the front. Then the cavalry would batter a hole in the enemy lines, allowing the heavy infantry to pour through and defeat the enemy. Superior numbers were a poor substitute for a general who understood combined arms.

It seems that every generation's generals must learn the lessons of combined arms over again. Between World War I and World War II a British army Captain by the name of Basil Liddell-Hart wrote a book on the use of tanks as part of a combined arms attack. His book received little recognition at home; only the German General Staff really understood its worth. They fashioned Liddell-Hart's principles into the Blitzkrieg. The French army had more tanks than the Germans, and their tanks had heavier armor and heavier guns. But in the end the combined arms tactics of the Germans carved through the superior French and British forces in a matter of weeks.

But what does this have to do with spiritual warfare? Why is this important for us? The answer is simple. There are some who think that numbers mean everything, and that a big church will always accomplish more than a small church. True, the big church may have a wider range of programs, but does this always translate into results for the Lord? What if a smaller church really understood the lessons of combined arms? What if we used all of our spiritual gifts in a unified manner to accomplish unified goals? God has given a variety of spiritual gifts to each church (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Pet. 4). If the evangelists are all doing one thing and the teachers are doing another and the people with the gift of mercy are pulling in a third direction, what will we accomplish? Very little of eternal value. But if we are working in harmony towards unified goals, with all of our forces (i.e., our spiritual gifts) working together, we will surely accomplish the work of the Lord has set out for us.

How can we achieve such harmony? In some cases our elders will provide leadership towards specific goals. In other cases we as individuals need to be sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit. How will this guidance show itself in a local church? If the evangelists have been used in the salvation of a number of people, the teachers must be ready to teach them the basics of the Christian faith. If a church has seen a number saved in the recent past but the numbers coming to salvation are dropping off, perhaps the evangelists need to devote more of their time to training others for evangelism. But regardless of how the Spirit's guidance comes, we will accomplish more in the Lord's service if we seek to use our gifts in harmony with others gifts.

Is the military concept of combined arms a far-fetched idea for us to apply in the church? Just ask Paul who in three of his epistles (Philippians, 2 Timothy, and Philemon) spoke of Christian workers as soldiers. Without question we are in a fierce battle. If we are wise, we will use the gifts of the Spirit in a unified manner.

SHAWN ABIGAIL

TO WIN CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 3:8; PHILIPPIANS 4:9; GALATIANS 2:20

Leslie S. Rainey

Philippians nestles between two mountain peaks of truth, Ephesians and Colossians. The striking phrase, “*that I may win Christ*” (Phil. 3:8) is the focal point in the spiritual experience of the Apostle. Paul knew the Lord; indeed, for almost 30 years he had sought to know Him in a richer, deeper way. What then does he mean by winning Christ? Paul had learned to evaluate that which was natural and that which was spiritual. This knowledge can come only through the Holy Spirit, for spiritual things are worthless to the natural man.

In Paul’s day, as in ours, men boasted in rites, race, religion and self-righteousness. The things which had seemed great gain to him were now—in the light of eternity—investments completely depreciated and yielding no lasting dividends. So he lists these on the side marked “*loss*.”

The more one seeks to win Christ, the more one realizes the worthlessness of all things apart from Him.

Paul then points to the knowledge of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the sufferings of Christ as those profitable things to which he longs to be conformed. It is to experience the life-giving work of the Spirit of God. To know Christ impels us to make Him known, and buy up every opportunity of furthering His kingdom here on earth. It is to enter into His sorrows, His sufferings and His sympathies in this world of grief.

More and more as we follow Paul (Phil. 4:9) in the Christian life and learn to say “*no*” to self and “*yes*” to God, we shall learn what it means to win Christ and woo others to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20), the Lord Jesus Christ.