

March 28

Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:3

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it and defies contradiction of it. He is ready to spend all and be all spent in its defense.

It is glorious to serve Christ in honesty and in fullness of fidelity. There is an ineffable joy in being on the right side, in knowing that beyond the field of blood and the valley of shadows is an abundant entrance

into the joys and peace of the triumphant King of kings. For that hope none should shrink from the hardness of battle, none quail before the rage of the enemy, and none tremble before the certainty of hunger, thirst, nakedness, wounds or death. Z.'03-84 R3162:6; 3163:1

R3162 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER ANCIENT TABLETS AGREE WITH THE BIBLE

IN view of the fact that most lecturers on the Babylonian excavations are endeavoring to prove that their findings date back thousands of years before the flood, and hence are in total disagreement with the Bible narrative, the following testimony to their corroboration of Scripture is the more appreciated. Excavators seem prone to "magnify their office" and to make their services and findings more wonderful than they really are.

"Dr. Albert T. Clay, curator of the Babylonian department in the museum of the University of Pennsylvania, lectured in Widener hall yesterday on 'The Old Testament in the Light of Recent Excavations.'

"'Accounts of the creation and deluge,' he said, 'have been deciphered from early Babylonian monuments. No direct account has been found referring to the fall of mankind, although engraved rocks representing a man and woman sitting under a tree, with a serpent near by, have been found, which undoubtedly refer to it.'

"The lecturer went on to show that the events recorded in the Bible had taken place contrary to what had been contended by critics of the Old Testament in the past few years. He presented a photograph of an engraved rock referring to the deluge and translated it. Although the period of time which elapsed while Noah was in the ark did not exactly correspond to the number of days given in the Bible, yet the historical significance of the event was corroborated. Dr. Clay presented many such photographs, all of which had been excavated in Babylonia, and are now in the museum. The translations of these were parallel accounts to passages found in the Bible.

"He further said: 'This work is yet in its infancy. Research has not yet come to a limit. The lowest excavations show civilization in advanced stages and there is every reason to believe that future excavations will bring to light the majority, if not all, the history recorded in the Old Testament.'--*Philadelphia Times*.

A STATESMAN'S VIEW OF EUROPE'S FUTURE

A Philadelphia *Ledger* correspondent writing of the eminent correspondent of the *Times*, M. de Blowitz, deceased, says:--

"Blowitz believed that his own forecast of events was more accurate than that of any living statesman. He not only placed himself on an intellectual level with Bismarck, but he spoke of himself as belonging to the same rank. I am not at all sure that he was not right, and that if his early lot had been cast in high places Blowitz would not have been a greater man than Bismarck. He had his faults and vanities, but he was a man of extraordinary capacity.

"His opinions about the future of Europe are interesting, because his predictions were so often fulfilled, and his views, therefore, on the subject are worth consideration. As far back as ten years ago de Blowitz held that in the course of a generation Europe would be a congeries of bankrupt states; that all the national debts in Europe would be repudiated, with the exception of Britain's, and that vast social changes, involving bloody wars and reigns of terror, would come to pass in many countries. He took a pessimistic view of the future of Britain, though he admired the qualities of persistence and freedom, which form part of the British character.

"He believed that the twentieth century would be a century of struggle, and that in Germany and Russia especially the development of the industrial idea would lead to the evolution of new surfaces of society, just as the iceberg which has changed its centre of gravity presents a new profile to the spectator. If these predictions had been made today no great power of discrimination would be credited to the prophet. To have formed such views ten years ago implies the possession of great analytic power, coupled with imaginative faculty."

* * *

This is interesting, as showing how the wisdom of this world corroborates the forecast of prophecy--the revelations of the divine Word. "We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn."--2 Pet. 1:19.

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERSHIP

We are pleased to credit the following article to a secular journal--the *Atlanta Constitution*:--

"Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."-- 2 Tim. 2:3.

"The service of Christ resembles no other so much as that of a soldier. There are few life-calls among men that demand such absolute self-surrender from the recruit as that of the soldier....

"In the decision to be a soldier one subordinates all other considerations--those of self-will, family supremacy and the varied opportunities of the freeman. It is to go under a vow of complete, unquestioning obedience to the orders of superiors. It is to abandon home for the camp, to forego the right of first serving the interests of father and mother, wife and children, business or friends. It means the entire suppression of every selfish interest for the advancement of the supreme cause one has contracted voluntarily to serve, to follow and for which, if need be, to die.

"It seems hard to some minds to compare the service of Christ with that of a good soldier. Nine-tenths of those who call themselves Christians refuse to give their service that significance, and mutiny outright when called upon to act upon that principle. The weakness of the church universal as the leader of morals and life culture in the world is due to the fact that most Christian men and women serve Christ as independent camp followers. They are unattached, or uncommanded, or disobedient to the duty of discipline, and do as they please rather than as they are obligated by the commands and principles of Christ.

"Goethe said that 'earnestness is eternity,' and the spirit of God is the spirit of earnestness. He who is informed and inflamed by that spirit will be filled to overflowing with zeal, courage, daring, fortitude and the faith of conquest. In the fervor and forcefulness of these feelings he will serve his Master, as the soldiers of Alexander followed unquestioning where he led; as the soldiers of Leonidas, who died rather than retreat; as the soldiers of Napoleon, who believed him invincible always; and as the soldiers of Lee, who felt that he could not lead them wrongly or to defeat.

"If Christ possessed in this world today an army of men and women one-hundredth part the figures of official Christendom, who would follow him--who would labor, fight and endure as do the soldiers of our American armies--he could not long be kept from his world-wide conquest.

"But he has few real soldiers in his service. Most of his followers are pensioners, pleading always that he will do something for them--ease their pains, disperse their enemies, smooth their paths, increase their fortunes and bed them in places of plenty and comfort. They are a hungry and a helpless host.

"One would expect naturally to find in the pulpits stalwart captains of the army of our Lord. And yet how few are they who do not look more closely to their hire than to their opportunities to endure hardness? They are eager for rich and easy pastorates, they dwell in luxuries and preach as those who make pleasant music on a lute. Transfer them to posts of poverty, scant rations, hard service among the poor and the sick, and they become broken-hearted over their lot as soldiers!

"⁽¹⁾The true soldier does not debate his cause. He is rightly supposed to have settled upon its justice and righteousness before he enlisted to serve it. Thereafter he avouches it and defies contradiction of it. He is ready to spend all and be all spent in its defense. He does not fight for the rations that are doled to him, but for the great principles and great purposes of the cause to which he is committed....

"No man should deceive himself in a matter so plain and serious as the service of Christ. If he doesn't mean to abandon himself to the commands and demands of his Master, he ought to be honest enough not to offer a hypocritical profession and a treacherous or abortive promise of service. The causes of Christ on earth need men who are strong in will, courageous of heart and hardened to self-sacrifice, sufferings and the perils of conflict and death. None other can do the work that is needed to pull down the strongholds of sin, rout the enemies of righteousness and set forward in hostile territories the standards of the Kingdom of Christ.

"⁽²⁾It is glorious to serve Christ in honesty and in fulness of fi-

⁽¹⁾ ½ Mar. 28 Manna, 2 Tim 2:23

⁽²⁾ ½ Mar. 28 Manna

R5403 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)
ENDURING HARDNESS AS GOOD SOLDIERS

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."--2 Tim. 2:3.

THERE are many illustrations used in the Bible, and all of them very forceful. The one which represents the Christian as a soldier, has a great deal of meaning. We are not to suppose that the angels in Heaven are soldiers, nor that that term would be applicable to them. There is no war going on in Heaven, but there is a war going on here on earth.

Six thousand years ago our first parents became entrapped, and the whole race was sold under Sin--became the servants of Sin and Satan. More and more this influence has prevailed--not that all willingly surrender to Satan, but that he puts darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus deceives mankind and leads them captive at his will.

All who desire to be in harmony with God would be out of harmony with Satan and Sin. And they might at times have resisted these, and have tried to do God's will. But there was no organized undertaking for the overthrow of Sin until Jesus came. His mission was to overcome Satan, overcome Sin, and to bring everything into full harmony with God's arrangement. Earth, this province of God's great Empire, being in a rebellious state, needed to be conquered and restored, and Jesus undertook the work, with Divine backing.

The first step was laying down His own life as a Ransom-price for the sin of the whole world, and thus making good for the original transgression. But before taking His power and exercising it in the overthrow of Satan and Sin, Jesus, according to the Father's will, began the selection of a Church class, variously styled members of His Body, His Bride, His companions and brethren in the Kingdom, His Royal Priesthood, under Himself as the great Royal High Priest. All those who have heard the Message, and whose hearts have been responsive, who have recognized the wrong conditions here prevailing, and who have felt sympathy for the race that is here sold as slaves of Sin and Death--all these have been invited to become members of this select class.

TERMS OF WARFARE STATED AT BEGINNING

These were informed at the very beginning that it would be necessary for them to fight a good fight. They were invited to enlist in the army to battle against Satan, and instructed that they should have full confidence that ultimately faith would have its victory. They were also told that they must suffer, laying down their lives as their Head and Forerunner laid down His life--not living for the world, but contrariwise, accepting His arrangement and living altogether for the purpose of carrying out their consecration with Him.

The final honor to which God has invited them is to a share in His great Kingdom, with His Son. This implies a change of nature to all who have become soldiers of the Cross, followers of the Lamb;

delity. There is an ineffable joy in being on the right side, in knowing that one's service is toward victory and that beyond the field of blood and the valley of shadows is an abundant entrance into the joys and peace of the triumphant King of kings. For that hope none should shrink from the harness of battle, none quail before the rage of the enemy, and none tremble before the certainty of hunger, thirst, nakedness, wounds or death!"

THE EVOLUTIONISTS' TREND

The *Western Recorder* tersely expresses the truth, thus:--

"When a man starts on the line of evolution and higher criticism he gives up more and more, and he has no logical stopping-place till he has given up everything. The frantic efforts of those who start on this line to hold to 'what is vital,' while giving up more and more, are pitiful. Their claiming that 'after all we have this or that much left' is simply whistling to keep their courage up. They have surrendered everything, and have left themselves at the mercy of the enemy. As George Adam Smith says, it is left only for the critics to fix the indemnity, and to take all they want, and everybody ought to have learned that they want everything. With them 'progress' means to deny more and more. And their work will not be done as long as any belief is left."

for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." These are called to forego the rights and privileges of the present time, and by their lives to leave their mark, for a testimony to the world, for the benefit of mankind, and especially for the glory of God and for the calling out of others who might desire similarly to walk in the narrow way.

The warfare that these are called upon to wage is a warfare against sin and the powers of darkness. (Eph. 6:11.) They are pledged to the Lord for right, for truth, for goodness. They are thus to fight the good fight. These soldiers will find, too, that some of their greatest difficulties are right in their own person. They have tendencies toward sin, because of being members of the human family, children of wrath, of sin, even as others. Their relationship to the Lord is as New Creatures.

SELF OUR SPECIAL FOE

The New Creature is obliged to fight against and to control the flesh. This is a great battle which each fights for himself. Each soldier may more or less assist and set an example to the other soldiers, but the chief battle is with *himself*. It is a *hand-to-hand* conflict. Although he is expected at all times to be on the alert against the wiles of Satan and the world, yet his special fight is with the enemies in his own flesh. St. Paul himself had taken the shield of faith--wherewith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked--and the helmet of salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Timothy was a young soldier, and the Apostle was encouraging him with advice. He had already come into the Lord's company, under the Lord's standard.

THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD SOLDIER

St. Paul intimates that any one of us may be a good soldier, or contrariwise, a bad soldier, a poor soldier. We can imagine some soldiers who would be very disregardful of orders, not prompt to obey the command of the Leader. We can see that a good soldier is (1) one who is very much in sympathy with the Captain of his Salvation. He is an intelligent soldier, and sees that he has on the proper armor, that he wears it properly and that he gets the very best possible use out of this armor. He sees that in his walk he has a soldierly bearing, as a proper representative of the King, and of the great Kingdom so near at hand.

(2) He is not ashamed of his flag, nor of the garment of Christ's righteousness. He is to lift up the standard of righteousness everywhere. He enlists in this warfare, knowing that it means his death--the death of the flesh, of the human nature. He is to be a good soldier--not merely outwardly loyal, merely wearing the uniform, but having the full spirit of the Cause. This means that whatever experi-

ences come to him he is to receive these thankfully, and be glad to have the privilege of enduring something for His Captain and in the interests of the Kingdom to which he has sworn allegiance.

The thought which the Apostle is impressing is that all good soldiers should endure hardness--hard, distressing conditions, circumstances that are quite unpleasant, difficult. Earthly soldiers are obliged to tramp through water and mud, enduring long, wearisome marches. Sometimes they are short of rations, sometimes obliged to sleep on the ground. Sometimes their battles are waged in the face of

great opposition.

So the soldier of Christ is to endure whatever experiences may come to him, under the guidance of his Captain, not only willingly, but gladly, rejoicing that he has been permitted to enter this army of the Lord, knowing that these experiences are working out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." These various hard experiences of the Christian are designed to work out for his good, that he may "lay hold on eternal life," and gain a share in the Kingdom with his Redeemer.

R4484 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)
CHRIST'S AMBASSADOR A PRISONER

--ACTS 21:27-39.--OCTOBER 3.--

*Golden Text:--"Thou, therefore, endure hardness,
as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."--2 Tim. 2:3.*

ST. PAUL, accompanied by Luke and Trophimus of Ephesus, Aristarchus of Thessalonica, Sopater of Berea, Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timotheus of Lystra and Tychicus of Ephesus, arrived at Jerusalem Friday, May 27, A.D. 57. He was returning from his third missionary tour amongst the Gentiles. He had been absent seven years. As we have seen, the Lord had permitted fore-warnings to reach him that he might expect trouble-- bonds and imprisonment--in the Holy City. However, this noble ambassador for Christ, undeterred, had now arrived. He and his associates, it will be remembered, brought with them money collections from the Churches in Asia Minor for the Church at Jerusalem, which, apparently, was in a measure of financial distress.

Their reception on their first day was apparently of a private and personal character, but on the next day, which was probably the Day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16), the Apostles and leading brethren came together to receive St. Paul and his company in a more formal manner. St. James, brother (or cousin) to our Lord, was apparently the recognized leader in the Jerusalem Church. No mention is made of the other Apostles. Probably some of them were absent, engaged in the work at other points. St. Paul recounted his missionary tour amongst the Gentiles and the Lord's blessing upon his ministries of the Truth, notwithstanding the tribulations permitted. We may presume also that at the same time the collections were turned over.

THE FEAR OF MAN--A SNARE

The brief record indicates that the brethren at Jerusalem were considerably perturbed by St. Paul's presence with them. Not merely did they fear for his personal safety, but also lest his coming might stir up persecution against them all. His activity and persistency made him well known to the Jews in the influential part of the world in which he had been laboring. The Jewish custom that the zealously religious come frequently to Jerusalem to celebrate religious festivals kept the Jerusalem Jews in touch with the religious interests of the whole world. St. James and his associates realized that in all probability Jews from Ephesus, Athens, Thessalonica, Berea, etc., might be present celebrating the Pentecostal feast. They knew that St. Paul's activities had already been reported, and that some, even of the Christian believers, were troubled at his reported teaching--that the Law was dead and that no one needed to pay any further attention to it. They urged St. Paul to contradict these partial misconceptions by going into the Temple and associating with some brethren who had taken the Nazarite Vow. They did not suggest that St. Paul take this Vow, but that he be present with these brethren, as a recognition of the propriety of what they did, and that he bear their expenses, which included not only the shaving of their heads and burning of the hair, but also the cost of sacrificing for them four animals each.

St. James and the leaders of the Church evidently understood St. Paul's position properly enough. He taught the Gentiles that it was not necessary for them to become Jews nor to obey the Jewish ritual, but that, instead of looking for God's favor through the types and shadows, they should look to Christ and his antitypical fulfillments of the requirements of the Law. He taught that the Law could not save either Jew or Gentile, but that only faith in Christ could bring the soul into relationship to God. He taught that while certain blessings of God yet remained for the Jew (Rom. 11:37), God during

this Gospel Age is selecting a Spiritual Seed of Abraham from both Jews and Gentiles. He taught also that if any one, Jew or Gentile, attempted to keep the Law, with a view to thus meriting eternal life, such would surely lose it; because "by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." Nothing in all this, however, really interfered with St. Paul's doing just what St. James and the others urged him to do for the four men under the Nazarite Vow. The shaving of their heads and the offering of sacrifices in demand of the Law governing their Vow, in no sense of the word interfered with or attempted to add to the merit of Christ's sacrifice. Nevertheless in our judgment a more courageous course might have been pursued. Apparently the very method taken to ward off public opposition merely served to arouse it. Let us not forget, however, that the Lord could have ordered the matter otherwise; could have overruled the matter differently had he chosen. Let us remember that the Lord foreknew that tribulations would assail the Apostle Paul, and had foretold them. Those who are in close relationship to the Lord have his assurance that all their steps are ordered of him and that all things shall work together for good to those who love God and who have been called according to his purpose. What a comfort! What a consolation this is to all of the Lord's people! No wonder such may have quiet, rest, peace, even in times of storm and trouble!

CONCESSION TO PREJUDICE UNSUCCESSFUL

The scheme to have St. Paul appear as partially endorsing the Law seemed successful for several days, but when the seven days were nearly expired he was recognized by Jews who had come from Asia. They had seen the Apostle with the Greek, Trophimus, and jumped to the conclusion that the latter was one of the four men whose heads were shaved. This would have been a grievous offence from the Jewish standpoint. Only Jews were allowed within the sacred precincts of the Temple, outside of which was a Woman's Court and also a Court of the Gentiles. A stone fence separated these two apartments and constituted what the Apostle elsewhere alluded to as the "middle wall of partition." (Eph. 2:14.) This wall was four and one-half feet high, and on it was a tablet which has recently been found by the Palestine Exploration Society which reads, "No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade and fence that goes around the Temple. If any one is taken in the act, let him know that he has himself to blame for the penalty of death that follows." St. Paul was charged with this offence and not the Greek who was supposed to have been misled by the Apostle. It was on this score that St. Paul's life was in danger from the mob which speedily gathered at the cry of the Asiatic Jew that the Temple was being profaned.

While the mob was beating the Apostle, seeking to kill him, a chief Captain or Colonel of the Roman soldiers in the Castle Antonio close by the Temple became aware of the tumult and hurried to the scene with a troop of soldiers. The beating ceased. The people, who had not learned to respect the majesty of the Roman Law, had become amenable to its military forces.

The Apostle was chained by each arm to a soldier. The commandant, endeavoring to ascertain the cause of the tumult and unable to understand the conflicting testimonies, remanded the prisoner to the castle. But the mob, disappointed that they had lost the opportunity of taking his life, made a mad rush to get him from the sol-

diers or to kill him while under their charge. What a spirit of murder can be aroused, and suddenly, too, in the hearts of not only Jews, but Gentiles! And how often we find in the pages of history that such violence and unreason have been manifested in the name of and in defense of various religions! How utterly foreign to all of this is what St. Paul designates "the spirit of a sound mind"--the spirit of reason, justice--not to mention the spirit of generosity, loving kindness and tender mercy! As the seeing of the foolishness and the brutishness of a drunken person should act as a great temperance lesson in every right-minded man and woman, so such a scene as this, whether recognized by our natural eyes or mentally seen through the printed page, should be a lasting lesson against anything so brutish and unreasonable. Let every instance of religious bigotry and fanatical violence speak to our hearts a lesson in the opposite direction, and fix in us resolutions that, by the grace of God, we will never be thus foolish, thus wicked; but contrariwise will become the more gentle and kind and Christ-like, as the days go by.

The oncoming of the mob led the soldiers to press one against the other so as not to lose their prisoner, and thus the Apostle was lifted off his feet and carried by the soldiers up the stairway.

The courage of this ambassador of Christ and his readiness to take advantage of every opportunity to tell the message of his Master was here wonderfully exemplified. We might have supposed that from the beating received from the mob and the more or less rough treatment in getting to the castle door any ordinary man would have been cowed with fear and excitement. But it was here that St. Paul, cool and collected, requested of the commander the privilege of speaking to the people, intimating, no doubt, that they had misunderstood what he was doing and that in a few words he might be able to pacify them. The officer was astonished, for the Apostle spoke Greek fluently. He thought likely that he was "that Egyptian" mentioned by Josephus, who, a short time before this, had gathered a large body of discontented Jews, to whom he represented himself as Messiah, and who, as his followers, gave the Roman authorities considerable trouble. St. Paul answered that he was a Jew of an honorable city and requested again the privilege of speaking to the people, which was granted. Promptly the Apostle preached Christ. No doubt he considered his thrilling experiences well repaid by the privileges of that moment--the privilege of telling a considerable concourse of people about Jesus; that he was the Messiah promised in the Law and the prophecies; that his sacrificial death constituted the redemption sacrifice for father Adam's forfeited life, and, incidentally, the redemption price for all of his children, who died under his sentence. Surely also he noted that now Messiah is calling a spiritual class of "first fruits" to be his associates in the Millennial

Kingdom and that shortly Israel and all the nations will experience the privileges and blessings of that Kingdom. Surely he pointed out, also, that *now* is the acceptable time; that now is the time to make our calling and election sure to the chiefest, the spiritual part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Paul proceeded to tell them of his missionary tours and how many of the Gentiles were receiving the message gladly and giving their hearts to the Lord in full consecration. But so strong was the Jewish prejudice that the mere mention of the going of this great blessing upon equal terms to the Gentiles re-enkindled the flame of hatred and violence, and their shouts and jeers rent the air. The Roman Colonel, perplexed at the situation, concluded that where there was so much opposition there must be some grounds for it. "Where there is much smoke, there must be some fire." And so he commanded that the Apostle must be whipped until he confessed what he had done wrong that created such a tumult and promised reformation. At once the command began to be fulfilled. They began to bind St. Paul to a bent whipping post. But the latter brought the proceedings to a quick termination by inquiring, "Do you think it lawful to punish a Roman citizen before he has had a trial?" The Colonel ordered him released at once, for already he had exceeded the law in the matter. He took the Apostle's word for it that he was a Roman citizen; for to claim this and to have it found to be an untruthful claim would have meant sure death. The Apostle was held a prisoner for trial.

There are several further lessons for us here. While not condemning the Jews harshly for their selfish, bitter feeling of opposition to the Gentiles, let us notice how much injury this bitterness and selfishness worked to the Jews themselves. Had it not been for this wrong spirit doubtless many others of that time might have been quite ready to hear the Gospel. The lesson to us, therefore, should be to put away meanness, selfishness, enmities, bitterness, out of our hearts, out of our minds, out of our conduct and words; and instead to put on the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ--a spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

Another lesson for us is that when undergoing trials and difficulties, however unjustly and however much we realize that they could not come to us without the Lord's permission, nevertheless we are at liberty to use any legitimate means for our own assistance and deliverance--even as St. Paul took advantage of his Roman citizenship. God had provided him in advance with that measure of protection and it would have been culpable negligence on his part not to have used it and to have expected the Lord to deliver him in some miraculous manner.

[R4485]

REST IN GOD'S WILL

How **sweet** to feel God's will is best,
And in this precious thought to rest;
To **know**, whatever may betide,
'Tis **best**, for **He** is by our side!

Oh, how it helps us bear the pain,
Oh, how it makes us strong again!
The cold and gloom of darkest night
It fills with warmth and heavenly light!

To those who take His will as best
He grants His perfect peace and rest,
And ever gives them day by day
His grace sufficient on the way.

Then why should hearts grow weak or faint?
Why should we ever make complaint?
Let us press on with upturned face,
And **follow** where we cannot **trace**!
--G. W. SEIBERT.