

March 31

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

WHETHER our warfare be of the more public kind or of the more private sort, there must be warfare; and, more than this, there

R3272 "The Lord's soldiers...war against selfishness, avarice, covetousness and all unrighteous, all unloving methods, all sin."

R3857 "A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER'S BATTLE -- GAL. 5:15-26; 6:7,8..."

Their chief fight is against the fallen tendencies of their own beings. They find that, through the long centuries of the fall, sin has become inbred and entrenched in their flesh to such a degree that it necessitates a warfare in the new mind...

To his surprise he finds himself a slave to his own weaknesses, and that he must battle daily, hourly almost, for victory, in order to attain fully the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed."

R5404 "THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD 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..."

(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 experiences 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."

R2309 "THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE" *"Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life."--1 Tim. 6:12.*

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

Against whom do we fight? We answer, our battle is not against our fellow creatures nor with carnal weapons; indeed, we can have large sympathy for even our most relentless foes, who, to the extent that modern civilization will permit, are ready and willing to despitely use and persecute us, and to say all manner of evil against us falsely. We can readily see that they are blinded in considerable measure, either by their own prejudice and passion, or by the great Adversary's delusive false doctrines,

must be progress and victory, else we can never be accepted of the Lord as "overcomers."

Another thought should be borne in mind by us all...The Lord in making His estimate will take knowledge of the spirit which actuated us, rather than of the results secured by our efforts...In view of this, let

superstitions, etc.; hence our warfare is not directed against these, and as we have opportunity we are to seek to do them good, "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." (2 Tim. 2:25.) Hence also, when dealing with these, so far from battling with them and resisting evil with evil, our Captain has commanded that we return good for evil, gentleness for rudeness, kindness for discourtesy; and that we seek to do good to those who speak evil of us and persecute us, that thus the eyes of their understanding may be opened, and that they may discern that there is such a thing as the spirit of love, generosity, kindness, whereas they suppose all to be actuated by the same malevolent spirit of selfishness, which controls themselves.

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

Satan, as the great master or general of Sin, has largely to do with all the various influences with which we must battle. It is his cunning, his "wiles," that supervise the battle against us, and since he is a spirit being, and therefore much more intelligent than ourselves, the contest would be a very unequal one, if we were without an equally powerful spirit leader... "Greater is he that is on our part than all they that be against us"...

We next notice in what sense the world is our opponent, and in what sense we are to battle against it. We have just seen that we do not battle with carnal weapons, nor do we in any sense of the word battle or contest with our fellow-creatures... Our battle is not to be with these. It is with "the spirit of the world," its influence, that we are to do battle: it is to be fought against and resisted--the world's disposition, the mind of the world, the motives which actuate the world, the ambitions of the world... It is a daily battle.

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

us see to it, not only that we do with our might what our hands find to do, but also that our every sacrifice and gift to the Lord and His cause is so full of love and devotion that the Lord will surely approve it; as done from love for Him and His, and not from vain glory. Z. '03-91R3166:3

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

BENEFACTORS ALSO--FIGHTING FOR OTHERS

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

Not only we, but the whole world were "sold under Sin" by father Adam -- the whole world, as well as we, are slaves of Sin. Not only so, but our great Redeemer who bought us with his precious blood gave it as the propitiation price also "for the sins of the whole world." Thus he bought the right, not only to release us (his Church, his army) but the right also to release from the power of Sin, the great taskmaster, all the slaves of Sin. And altho he has not been prosecuting the work of releasing all the slaves at the present time, but has been confining his work to the releasing of a few, a little flock, who are now of his army, nevertheless he informs us that this present election of the little flock is merely with the intention of using these as his associates and joint-heirs in his Kingdom which he will establish at the time he is ready to take his great power and reign, for the utter overthrow of Sin, and the complete release of all from its bondage...

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

What a glorious prospect, what a be-

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

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

If the physical and temporary releases

from sickness and death at our Lord's first advent were grand blessings, how much more grand and how much more blessed will be the "greater works than these," which we, as his glorified Church, in association with him, shall be privileged to perform during the Millennial age. How much greater is the work of opening the eyes of the understanding than of opening the physical eyes; how much greater the work of healing the lameness of character than of healing the lameness physical; how much grander the giving of an ear to hear the truth and to understand and to appreciate it, than the opening of the natural ear, to natural sounds; how much greater the work of loosening the tongue of the world, to speak forth the praises of him who has delivered them... "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth." All the deaf ears of understanding shall be unstopped; they shall hear, in the sense that the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. And the Master's assurance is, further, that they who hear properly, obediently, shall live -- not "live at this poor dy-

ing rate," of the present time, but live in the grandly superlative sense of life--in perfection of being, with the power of life eternal, lifted completely out of sin and out of death, back to the fulness and perfection of life which God gave originally, and which was lost in Eden."

OTHER BATTLES THAN OURS

R2311 "There are many other battles than ours in progress; and many different army corps fighting on every hand..."

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

R3166 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

REVIEW LESSON

--MARCH 29--

Golden Text.--"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"--Matt. 28:20.

REVIEWING the lessons of the quarter, showing the missionary labors of the Apostle, and introducing to us a number of his collaborators, our principal thoughts may well be that the same gospel is still being preached--Jesus and the resurrection; --that the privilege of being ministers of this gospel, and collaborators with our Lord, is still open to us; that the rewards of such ministry may still be won by us; indeed, it is well that we get the thought that every member of the Church glorified will have been an active member of the Church militant--warring against the Adversary and his works, and influence. ⁽¹⁾Whether our warfare be of the more public kind or of the more private sort, there must be warfare, and more than this, there must be progress and victory, else we can never be accepted of the Lord as "overcomers."

Another thought should be borne in mind by us all; viz., that while we have gifts differing one from the other, and are, therefore, able to contribute to the Lord's cause relatively larger or smaller amounts of energy or service or wealth, the Lord in making his estimate will take knowledge of the spirit which actuated us, rather than of the results secured by our efforts; so that of some small talent it may be said, as it was said of the poor widow who cast in the two mites into the Lord's treasury--that the smaller gift was more appreciated by the Lord than some of the larger ones. In view of this, let us see to it, not only that we do with our might what our hands find to do, but also that our every sacrifice and gift to the Lord

and his cause is so full of love and devotion that the Lord will surely approve it; as done from love for him and his, and not from vainglory.

The Golden Text of this lesson contains a precious thought,-- that the Lord has been with his representatives in all their labors of love and self-denial, throughout the entire age, noting their efforts, assisting, encouraging, sustaining them, and surely watering and refreshing all who are making his service their special object in life,--ministering his grace to others, watering and feeding them. And if this has been true in the past, all through the age, how specially true we may realize it to be now, in the end of the age, in the time of harvest, in the time of our Lord's second presence! How we may realize that he is with us, in sympathy, in cooperation, in assistance, in sustaining grace,-- able and willing to make all of our experiences profitable to us, and to use us abundantly in showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light!

Let these thoughts quicken us to fresh and greater energies, and to an appreciation of the fact that the things of this present time are but transitory (both its joys and its sorrows); and that the ambitions and hopes of the world are not worthy of comparison with these noble and laudable ambitions to serve and to please our Master, and to have his rewards--the chief of which will be fellowship with himself in glory, and the privilege of being collaborators with him in the blessing of the world,--the grand fulfilment of the heavenly Father's gracious plans for the world of mankind.

⁽¹⁾ Mar. 31 Manna, 1Tim 6:12

R3273 "Our good fight of faith, as the Apostle explains, consists in a considerable measure in our defense of the Word of God, which includes also our defence of the character of God. This is implied in the Apostle's words, "Contend [fight earnestly] for the faith once delivered unto the saints." This will mean our willingness to stand for the Truth at any cost and against any number of assailants--against the creeds and theories of men, which would misrepresent the good tidings of great joy which the Lord and the Apostles have announced, and which shall, thank God, yet be unto all people. As the Apostle again says, "I am set for the defence of the Truth." We can do no less than defend the Truth. The Truth is God's

representative, Christ's representative, and hence our standard, and as true soldiers we must defend our standard, even unto death."

R3273 "Many of the soldiers, without waiting to learn the rules and commands of the Captain, without waiting to study the proper use of the sword of the Spirit, spring courageously into the fight and begin to wound their neighbors, their friends, and sometimes their fellow soldiers in the Lord's army. This is a great mistake: this is an attempt to use the spiritual weapons in a carnal manner and is contrary to the example and word of our Captain. All such would do best to put up their swords again--to refrain from using the word of God in a belligerent manner, in a

smiting way against those with whom they have to do. We must learn who is our foe, and not recklessly and blindly smite down any and everything opposing us.

But some one inquires, Are we not to smite down error, and does not this mean the smiting of those who uphold the error? We answer that those all about us who are upholding error, and those who despitefully use us and persecute us because we are on the Lord's side, are blinded by ignorance, and it is not the Lord's intention that we should fight against them;--rather we would fight for them to lift them out of their ignorance and blindness, their superstition. So the Lord expressed it when he said, "The Son of man came not to destroy men's

lives," but that they might have life, and that more abundantly. He has not changed in the interim; he still has the same generous sentiment toward the poor world that he had when he died, when he tasted death for every man. The Apostle will instruct us who are our foes. He says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in exalted positions." -- Eph. 6:12...

Those who fight with anger and malice and strife, who fight carnally, misrepresent the Captain, however unintentionally, and do injury to his cause. There are many of these fighters who are not warring a good warfare, not fighting a good fight, and who will consequently fail of the chief reward--the glory, honor, immortality and joint-heirship with the Lord in the Kingdom.

It may be inquired, then, How can these soldiers expect to have any battle if they abstain from carnal warfare either with their hands or their tongues, speaking only that which is good, and endeavoring so much as lieth in them to live peaceably with all men? How can such soldiers have any battle at all? who would contend with them? Surely, says one, it is not supposable that the world would battle or in any wise injure or oppose those who seek only its good, its welfare, its blessing, its peace. Nay but, we answer, the Master suffered for his fidelity to the faith once delivered, and forewarned us, saying, "Marvel not if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"... When the Master said that the world hated him, we perceive that it was not the heathen or Gentile world, but the religious world... It was the same professedly religious world that through the dark ages persecuted the light and the Truth even unto death, and it is the same nominally religious world, deficient in the Spirit of the Lord surely, and more or less blinded by the god of this world, which will continue to be the persecuting power against the soldiers of the cross down to the very close of this dispensation--until the last soldier of the cross shall have proven faithful unto death and the elect company shall be finished."

R3857 "True, our battles extend beyond ourselves sometimes when, either amongst the Lord's brethren and the Church, we need to battle for the Truth, the right, or in our contact with the world we may sometimes find hostilities necessary.

"IF YE BITE AND DEVOUR"

Amongst the Lord's people, even in the apostles' day, there was a tendency at times to fight each other rather than to fight the devil and the spirit of the world and the weaknesses within. The organs of combativeness and destructiveness, which would serve a Christian soldier in good stead if directed against his own weaknesses and blemishes, are sadly out of place when, ignoring his own weaknesses, he merely becomes contentious with the brethren--often over nothing, or over questions whose importance he exaggerates, because of his contentious spirit. Such should remember the Scriptural statement that greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city. (Prov. 16:32.) The Apostle refers to that misdirection of Christian energy which bites and devours one another, and tends to the destruction of all that is spiritual amongst the Lord's people. Not that the Apostle favored slackness as respects the

important principles of the divine revelation, for he himself urged that we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. (*Jude 3.*) But this earnest contending is not to be done in a biting and devouring manner -- it is to be with patience and long suffering, brotherly kindness, love."

R1040 Highlights: "FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT" "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called.*" -- 1 Tim. 6:12.

If we are naturally combative, we may see, or think we see cause for a continual warfare from the cradle to the grave, and a little warping of sound judgment may give this disposition a seeming religious turn and deceive such a one into the idea that he is fighting the good fight above referred to, when in reality he is only cultivating a quarrelsome disposition, out of harmony with that spirit of meekness and temperance which is a most essential feature of the Christian character. Again, many of an opposite disposition are inclined to ignore the fact that the Christian life is to be a warfare, and to regard only those scriptures which counsel meekness, forbearance, patience, gentleness, etc.

Here are two extremes, both of which must be guarded against; and in order to help us to rightly judge and balance ourselves, the Apostle recommends us to mark, to observe closely, those who walk circumspectly, according to the rules laid down in the Scriptures, and counsels us to beware of the influence of those who do not so walk: "For," he says, "many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things," which they covenanted to sacrifice. -- Phil. 3:17-19.

Let us then mark some worthy examples that we may see how they ran for the prize and notice if there is any indication that they ran successfully. First, we mark the perfect example of our Lord, our leader and forerunner, in whose footprints we are invited to follow. We notice that his course in the "narrow way" of sacrifice, began with an entire consecration of himself to the will of God. His consecration was made with simplicity and sincerity, and included all that he had--"Lo I come to do thy will O God." (Heb. 10:7.)

He did not say, Father, I will give thee a tithe of my time, my service, and my means, and retain the remainder for myself and for the pursuit of my own ambitions and plans. He did not say, Father, I have chosen this or that special work, and I trust thy blessing will attend it... No, his consecration was simply to the doing of the Father's will, whatever that will might prove to be. And then he earnestly applied himself to the study of the Law and the Prophets, that he might know the will of God concerning him. When tempted to change his course he replied, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be"... "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink shall I not drink it?" (Matt. 26:54; John 18:11.) He laid aside his own will and carried out the will of God, though it cost him privation at every step and finally a death most painful and ignominious. From this

course of sacrifice he never wavered even for a moment...

But while Christ was much more to us than a perfect example for our imitation, which under our present infirmities we cannot fully duplicate, we have other examples furnished among brethren of similar infirmities with ourselves. Let us mark them, and see how they followed the Master.

There was Peter with his quick impulsive nature, always loving, yet so vacillating--now defending his Master at his own peril, and again disclaiming and denying him; now boldly contending for the faith, and again compromising with Jewish prejudices, calling forth and justly meriting Paul's faithful reproof. Yet rightly exercised by reproof and discipline, and endeavoring to rule himself, his Christian character ripened and beautified from year to year as evidenced by his grand and noble epistles to the church, written by inspiration and handed down from generation to generation for nineteen centuries; and he had many evident marks of the Lord's loving approval.

Before he had time to express in words his regret of his denial of the Lord, he was assured of his acceptance with him and of the continued favor of feeding his sheep; for the Lord knew the sincerity of his love and that through weakness and fear he had sinned. Mark too, Peter's affection for his "beloved brother Paul" (2 Pet. 3:15,16) who had so plainly reproved and rebuked him; and for the Lord, who had said "Get thee behind me Satan (adversary): thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but of men. (Matt. 16:23.) Poor Peter; it was an up-hill road for him, but he seemed to consider and appreciate his own weakness and to put his shoulder to the wheel in a more determined effort to overcome the propensities of his old nature, and to cultivate the graces of the Christian character.

But did he finally overcome? and was he accepted as one of that glorious company which shall constitute the Bride of Christ? Yes truly; for the risen Lord himself declared that his name is written with the others of the twelve apostles in the very foundations of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God. (Rev. 21:14.) See what poor weak Peter gained by his meekness and patience under painful discipline.

Paul was a stronger character by nature. He had evidently made a life-business of ruling himself, though he was naturally positive and firm; and when the truth reached Paul he had a great advantage at once, both in his natural disposition, and in his early culture, so that he could walk more firmly and steadily; and using all his energy in this direction he furnishes a noble example for our imitation of steadfastness and endurance, of untiring zeal and sincerest devotion. See and ponder well, 2 Cor. 11:23-33 and 12:10,15.

John was loving, gentle, and meek naturally and that very disposition would make it difficult for him to sever the many ties of human friendship which such dispositions always draw about them. Yet John was faithful to his Master regardless of the human ties. He was a patient faithful teacher of the doctrines of Christ, and willingly suffered banishment to the lonely isle of Patmos for his faithful witnessing to the truth.

And similar was the course of all the apostles: they were bold faithful advocates of the truth, and examples of its power to sanctify them wholly, as they gradually grew in grace submitting themselves to its transforming influence. They were men of similar and varied dispositions like ourselves. Mark those who so run and do likewise...

As we thus mark the course of the faithful ones, we see that their warfare was one largely with themselves. It was their endeavor to keep their own human wills down while they carried out the divine will. And even in the one case of our Lord, where the human will was perfect, it was a hard thing to do, as evidenced by his words, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

But there is another side of this warfare which we have not yet considered, and which we dare not overlook if we would be faithful overcomers. The truth has its enemies now, as well as in the days of the Apostles, and we are set for the defence of the truth; hence the forces against which we must contend are not only those within, but also those without. To be listless and indifferent under such circumstances as surround us, is certainly no evidence that we are fighting the good fight of faith.

To fight the good fight of faith, implies, first, that we have a faith to fight for. No man can fight this good fight therefore who has not come to some knowledge of the truth--a knowledge sufficient to awaken his sympathies and enlist his energies in its propagation and defence.

Now look at the warfare on this side and see how the faithful soldiers of the cross from the beginning of the age to the present time have contended for the faith delivered to the saints. Did they calmly and comfortably rest in luxurious ease, enjoy what they knew of the truth themselves, and say nothing about it where it would cause a ripple of opposition, and then flatter themselves with the idea that their lazy do-nothing tranquility was an evidence of their growth in grace? By no means. They endured hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake. They proclaimed it boldly, and took the consequences of public scorn and contempt, the loss of earthly friends, the sacrifice of business interests and earthly prospects, together with stripes, imprisonments, and perils to life on every hand, and met violent deaths in many cases. They not only enjoyed the glorious prospect of future blessedness, but they became active to the extent of their ability in carrying out God's plan for securing that end. Had they done otherwise they would have been proving themselves unworthy of the high honors to which they were called. And so it has been throughout the entire age, and is still.

When the great Mystery of Iniquity, or Papal system had reached the height of its power and the very depths of its corruption, and the eyes of a few faithful children of God were opened to see its true character, noble reformers stepped out and boldly declared their convictions in the face of most violent persecution. And many other noble souls encouraged by their example, braved the same dangers and endured great hardships while contending for the truth,

and gave evidence of their zeal and consecration by their faithfulness even unto death by violent hands, and unto persecution and torture of the most revolting and fiendish character.

It is well that we should consider frequently such examples, that they may serve to spur our own zeal, and that we may the more lightly esteem the comparatively light afflictions which we are now called upon to endure, in our efforts to disseminate and defend the truth to-day. We have now no bloody persecutions, though it is still true that they who will live Godly shall suffer persecution. To live Godly however, implies earnestness and consequent activity in God's service.

Remember too, that the Apostle refers to these last days of the age as the most perilous times of all. Why? Because the errors and temptations of this day come in more subtle forms than heretofore. This is emphatically the age of reason; an age of advancement in almost every direction; many are running to and fro and knowledge is increasing on every hand. And yet, human conceit and presumption is running vastly ahead of knowledge; and reason, unguided by the Divine Revelation, is falling into many foolish and hurtful errors, which are passing current among those who profess to be the children of God, who are deceived by these errors and are falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints. And though the great Babylon system is crumbling into decay, multitudinous errors, far more injurious than the formalism and slumber of Babylon, are at work, to build upon its ruins other systems of iniquity in which even the foundation principles of Christianity find no place whatever.

These errors must be met by the faithful few who are armed with the truth,--others cannot detect or defeat them. It is for these armed with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, to show by its profound reasonings the difference between truth and error, and that God's plan in God's way is superior to all the plans and ways of human arrangement. To escape falling into these errors, and being deceived by their subtle sophistries, and by the professions of loyalty to God on the part of the deceived deceivers who advance them, the children of God must keep close to their Father's Word, and be filled with his spirit; and when they see the truth they must be bold and fearless in its defence regardless of all consequences."

R5557 "TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." -- Colossians 2:6,7...

The Apostle Paul urged those to whom he wrote to continue in this faith, and not to try to combine earthly philosophy with this Heavenly Message. As they had received Christ as God's Anointed and their Sufficiency in all things--the One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"...

As the roots of a tree push themselves downward and imbibe the nutriment of the soil, while at the same time the trunk and

the branches reach up into the atmosphere to obtain through the leaves the necessary elements of growth, so the mentality of the Christian takes hold of the great and precious promises of the Word of God, while at the same time he is building character through his heart appreciation of these promises, in connection with the experiences of life. The roots of faith push down deep into the knowledge of the Divine Plan, while the tree of character grows higher and higher, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit of God...

A tree that is well rooted in the earth is hard to uproot... So it is with the Christian whose faith has been properly established; he should be so fixed, so established in the promises of God's Word, that no wind of doctrine could overturn his faith."

A FIGHT OF FAITH

R2312 "Our text calls this good fight a fight of *faith*, and very properly; it is a fight of faith in every respect..."

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

By faith we accept the Word of God, and under the instructions of that Word we learn that certain courses of thought and word and deed are right in his sight, according to his standard, and that other courses of thought, word and action are therefore wrong; henceforth we accept these conclusions by *faith* in the Word,--the revelation which God has given us...

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

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