

Our Sunday Hour

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WE have chosen as our motto for the year, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life," and we would that this two-fold message might come as a trumpet call to each of our hearts, summoning us to conflict, to action, to service. The acrostic in our almanac speaks to us of the armour wherewith the Christian must be girt for the conflict, and it is as fighters for the truth, as sworn foemen against the power of evil that would enslave, corrupt, ensnare and would ultimately destroy our lives, that we would enter upon the New Year. Most of us are still in the morning of life. Its sternest battles, its severest struggles, are still in the future. We are young soldiers in the King's service, but the more need that we should be alert and watchful, that our lights should be burning, our banner uplifted, and the more we should banish from our minds the thought of sloth, of faltering, of yielding to the foe. Life is a warfare, and the battle ground is in the heart of each individual of the human race. "I came not," says Christ, "to send peace on earth, but a sword." To know Christ is not so much to find present peace as ever present war. To seek to follow Christ is at once to array against us the forces of evil, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. It is to discover that when we would do good evil is present with us, that all our efforts to do right and live right are confronted by an enemy that watches ceaselessly every unguarded point, that inflames our passions, that binds our wills, that presents temptation to us in the most alluring forms, that weakens our resolves, that assails us with doubts, that incites us to rebellion against the laws of God. We find that our natural desires are not for good, but for evil, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, that to do wrong is easy, to do right is difficult. We realize that if we would purge our lives from un-

cleanness, if we would shun iniquity, if we would be temperate in all things, if we would put away from us all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour, if we would abhor lying, and be true and upright in all our dealings, that we have to meet and contend against an enemy within, a relentless, ever-wakeful, ever-active foe, fierce in his onslaught, manifold in his devices. We have to acknowledge to ourselves that we must either resist the devil or must be led captive by the devil at his will. And at the beginning of another year of the conflict we take as our motto and inspiration this injunction of the aged champion of the cross to his own son in the faith, to whom he was committing his last charge before the crown of martyrdom closed and sealed his labours. He who had himself fought so good a fight and now realized that the time of his departure was at hand, who through perils and persecutions, through torture and trial, through loneliness and betrayals, through hardships and sufferings, before howling mobs and hostile tribunals had borne witness to his Lord, bids Timothy fight the good fight of faith, grasp and hold fast the ever-blessed hope of eternal life, that had been won by the sacrifice of the cross, that could alone be attained by a living trust in the Son of God. May each one of us take this as our bidding for the New Year, and go forth to the daily and hourly conflict in the strength and spirit of St. Paul's command.

The foe is near and about and within us, each in his own sphere of life, in his daily calling, in his personal experience. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Many a man may say, "If I had been born under different circumstances, if I were not subjected to such special temptations, if I were brought under different influences, if those about me were a help instead of a hindrance in the upward path, if I had the happy home life or the religious privileges that others enjoy, if I had