

Now, indeed, the whole armor of God is needed. The omission of a single piece is dangerous. The argument is that because the contest is transferred to advance ground, *therefore* we require for victory all that God has given us. Yet we were not so safe when, with only wilderness preparations, we met the Amalek enemies, as now, when we have experienced that the whole armor of God is, indeed, ours, we have to encounter the Philistine in his more appalling manifestations.

Conscious that God's truth, through the Word, is by faith girt about our loins; that not only an imputed but a consequently imparted righteousness through grace gives us the "answer of a good conscience," "void of offence;" that we have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel that brings God's peace into our souls; knowing the shield of faith *not only ought to, but actually does* turn the fiery darts of that wicked one; with realized present salvation for a helmet; and wielding a sword, the victorious power of which we have proved—we now find ourselves praying always in the Spirit; and, because we are so fully armed, watching with all perseverance. Here is, indeed, danger; but here is victory too. I have passed ten days at a time in a conflict with Satan, so actual as to remind me of Luther's vivid description of his contest in the castle—a conflict not of any temptations through the senses, but for retaining actual possession of my heavenly possession beyond Jordan, in resurrection-life and victory. No one who has been through such conflicts will speak lightly of them, nor of the danger, when they are over, of resting in the memory of victory, instead of in Christ alone. Continual practice with the poor, weak human heart, since the days of Adam, has not been in vain in teaching Satan *the suited temptation* to each soul. The danger is real and actual, though the scene may be removed far off from the old scenes of wilderness defeat, but no less real and actual is the victory of faith.

The duty of confessing Christ in all things which He bestows upon us, seems to be essentially connected with retaining His blessings, whether of the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, or of that inward cleansing from sin, which is essentially included in the term "salvation." The special and marked blessing of God is on the confession; but yet like other blessings which lie hard by concealed dangers, the wily enemy of our souls would turn, were it possible, the confession of what we find Christ made unto us (1 Cor. i. 30) into a profession of what we *in ourselves* are. As in a moment the righteousness of the saint may be turned to filthy rags, and even pollution itself.

We know how instantly a soul is turned to darkness and doubt, which for one moment lets in the devil's suggestion that forgiveness of sins is partly of works, and the remainder of faith; even though, Simon Stylites-like, there be the most abject confession of unworthiness along with the claim of merit for unexampled, self-inflicted penance. "Salvation is of the Lord," wholly and exclusively of the Lord; nor will he in any point share its glory with any human being. As His enemies hated Christ without any cause existing in the blessed One, so God saved us without any cause or merit existing in ourselves. When there was nothing in us, or in our ways, that God could approve, then He loved us freely, and created in us that which was of His own holiness, and which alone He could love. It is those who are the most confident of the remission of their sins through shedding of blood, who are most emphatic in their testimony to pure grace. The danger comes in with the temptation to assume to self part of the work of redemption.

The parallel is wonderfully accurate in the work of effectual inward cleansing which ought always to follow the forgiveness of sins. Instantly that there finds lodgment in the soul the faintest thought of self-merit, to just that extent the fearful warning of Mal. ii. is found true. "If ye will not hear, if ye will not lay it to heart to give glory to My name, saith the Lord of hosts,