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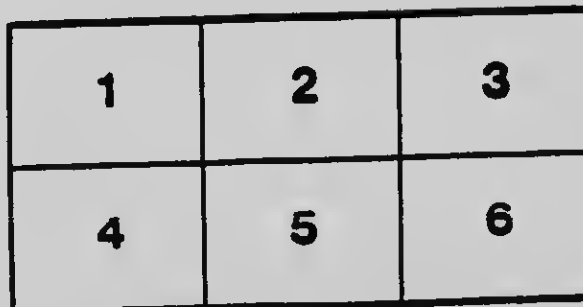
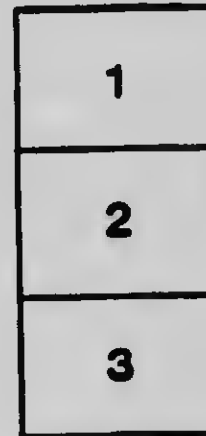
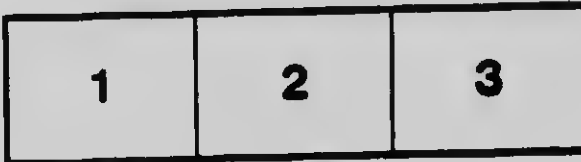
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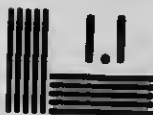
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**SOLDIERS OF THE KING**



# THE SOLDIERS OF THE KING

THEIR WARFARE  
WEAPONS AND  
VICTORY

BY THE  
VEN. W. J. ARMITAGE, M.A., PH.D., 1860-1929.  
*Chaplain 66th Princess Louise Fusiliers  
Rector of St. Paul's Church  
Canon and Archdeacon of Halifax, Nova Scotia*

FOREWORD BY  
FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS

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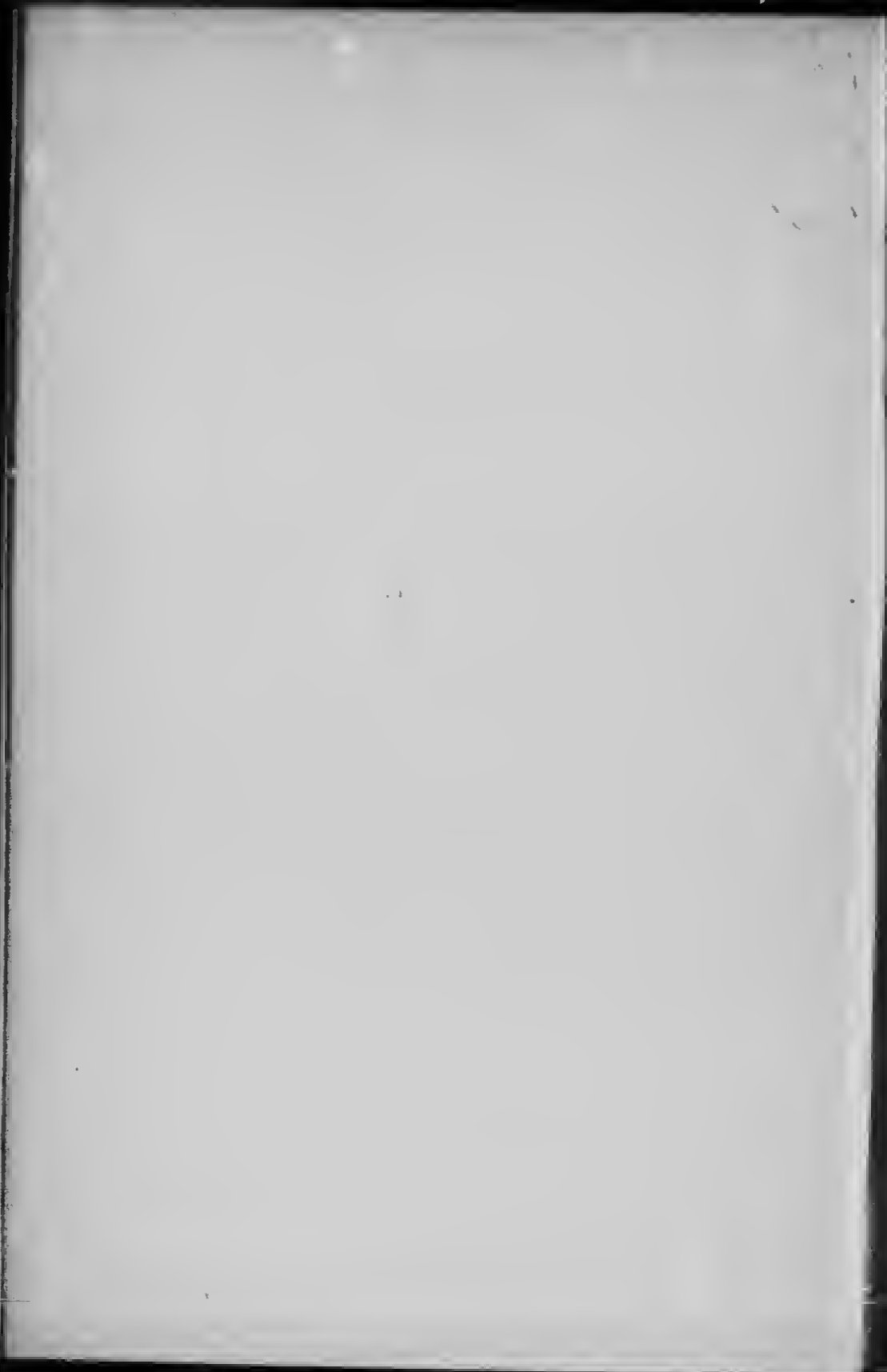
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## Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	v
I. JESUS CHRIST, THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SAL- VATION . . . . .	5
II. THE SOLDIER LIFE . . . . .	17
III. THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH . . . . .	31
IV. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS- . . . . .	45
V. THE WAR SHOES OR SANDALS OF PEACE . . . . .	59
VI. THE SHIELD OF FAITH . . . . .	75
VII. THE HELMET OF SALVATION . . . . .	91
VIII. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT . . . . .	105
IX. ALL PRAYER . . . . .	125



## Foreword

**THERE** is a fine spirit of manly Christianity enlightening the pages of "The Soldiers of the King," making it a very useful study of the Christian Soldier.

I consider the book will serve a good purpose and will do much to help its readers to lead that life of personal service and self-sacrifice which is required of all true followers of our great Captain.

**ROBERTS, F.M.**



**Jesus Christ, the Captain  
of our Salvation**



"What if His Gospel bids us fight  
With flesh, and self, and sin?  
The prize is most divinely bright  
That we are called to win."

*Watts.*

"Right loyal to the best you knew,  
Reality or dream,  
You ran the race, you fought the fight,  
You followed still the gleam."

*Henry van Dyke.*

"Stand then in His great might,  
With all His strength endued ;  
But take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God."

*Charles Wesley.*

"What is my watchword, my passport to show  
The cause I contend for, the way that I go?  
Are my steps onward for ever ahead?  
Never turned back to some hope sin has fed?  
Am I a soldier, and what is my aim?  
Have I left in my footprints the light of Christ's  
Name?"

*George Klinge.*

"The Church's Bridegroom is the Light of the  
world,  
Let us therefore be clad in light,  
And put away the works of darkness,  
And walk as children of the day."

*Abyssinian Hymn, by Jared.*

"Soldiers of the Cross arise !  
Gird you with your armour bright ;  
Mighty are your enemies,  
Hard the battle ye must fight."

*Bishop Walsham How.*



**" Soldiers, who are Christ's below,  
Strong in faith resist the foe ;  
Boundless is the pledged reward,  
Unto them who serve the Lord."**

*J. H. Clark, Tr. from Parisian Breviary.*

## 1. Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation

**T**HE conception of the Lord Jesus Christ as a mighty warrior is a very old one. It seems natural enough that the revelation of God as a helper and defender should have come to a soldier. The thought took possession of the mind of Joshua, that great military leader of God's people, who, in his own person, prefigured the Lord Jesus, not only in name, but in his mission and work as well. The inspiring vision of the Captain of the Lord's Host encouraged him in the terrible conflict upon which he had entered. God was on his side, yea, God was with him. The true Captain of the Lord's host, from the weakest company in the army of Israel, up through the ordered ranks of all angelic beings, was near to aid him in his high enterprise. The voice that spoke to him words of cheer was that of the Ruler of all the forces and powers of the universe.

The warrior Christ is seen in other parts of Scripture. St. John, near the close of the Apocalypsc, "saw heaven opened," and he beheld

a white horse, ridden by a mighty soldier-prince, who bore the all-glorious name of Faithful and True, the very Word of God riding forth in righteousness, as He judges and makes war

It is a word-picture of a great soldier king. The rapt seer of Patmos saw heaven opened, and he had revealed to him the Captain of the Lord's host, followed by the armies of heaven. He saw the King by right, as Son of God, was yet more regal still through His great work of conquest. The snow-white horse upon which He sat represented His royal state. No longer the lowly wanderer of Nazareth, with no place to lay His head, but King of heaven, and Lord of all. His armour was unlike that of any of earth's conquerors, for instead of steel, it was a vesture dipped in blood, and that not of men, but His own, as of a lamb without spot, dyed on Calvary with His own heart's blood, shed for a world's sin.

His warfare was against all sin and unrighteousness, to break down oppression and to set the captive free. His victory was complete in a threefold conflict against the world, the flesh and the devil. His campaign was to found a kingdom of God on earth, like to that of Heaven.

Sometimes wonder is expressed that there should be so much conflict in human life, and questions arise as to its necessity and purpose. There are but three kinds of worlds conceivable to the mind of man. There is a world with nothing but

## THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION 7

holiness and happiness, prepared for those who have come out of the conflict, and are more than conquerors through Him that loved them. There is a world where there is nothing but sin and misery for those who turn from the light to the darkness, which is hell. Then there is the world in which the two are mixed, and there the conflict rages between good and evil, right and wrong, the very world in which we live.

And the reason for the conflict lies in the truth that life is a probation, that the world is a battlefield, a school of discipline, a place of progress.

The poet-preacher Browning has discussed the question, with philosophic wisdom, in his study of a world of imagination, the Star of his God Rephan. Rephan is free from fightings without and wars within, but is stagnant, in contrast with the Earth, which, while the scene of perpetual struggle, is also the sphere of hope. In Rephan there are :

" No springs,  
No winters throughout its space. Time brings  
No hope, no fear : as to-day shall be  
To-morrow : advance or retreat need we  
At our stand-still through eternity."

This then is the work of the Warrior-Christ to bring out of earth discord and strife, the harmony and peace of heaven.

The Christian soldier follows the Captain of his Salvation.

## SOLDIERS OF THE KING

In the divine picture Christ is followed by a great army beyond all count. His soldiers have an armour of defence, strangely unlike all earth's uniforms. The soldiers are clothed with linen white and clean. "Who are these and whence came they?" "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Christ alone wields the weapon which brings safety and wins victory. The speaking symbol is the Sword in His mouth, which represents the Gospel of His love, the glad tidings of His salvation. Mahomet attempted the conquest of the world with the scimitar, but Christ reigns through the peaceful victories of His Gospel Word.

From the beautiful picture of heaven, and its triumphant host, we turn to earth where the conflict still endures, and where the very Church of God is "The Church militant," fighting its way amidst the opposing forces of evil. It is to us who are here, that Christ's first call comes "Follow Me." And as we turn from the self-life, and the dead past in true repentance, and with trustful faith look unto Jesus, the very act enlists us under His banner in the service of the King.

There are outstanding duties which every true soldier attempts to fulfil. Loyalty may well be called a primary duty of the soldier life. The Lord Jesus claims the heart. It is there that He

would make His throne. From that central point He would rule the life. It is the citadel of man's being. He alone must occupy the man's eye of the Christian soldier. The Japanese upon whom all eyes are turned are world-renowned for their patriotism. The spirit has taken possession of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, as an all-pervading principle. It is evoked and kept alive by personal devotion to the Emperor, whose picture is to be found in every school and home. But deeper, and truer far is the love of the Christian for Christ. His image is in the believer's heart. His own spirit takes possession of the breast. Christ is all to the Christian, the whole secret of life and living.

Another duty is that of personal service to his king in the field of action. This duty every soldier gladly acknowledges, and longs for the opportunity to put his profession into practice. There are many in civil life who may justly claim to be loyal who do not wear the King's uniform, but delegate their service to others. In the Kingdom of our Christ, this can never be so. Christ calls every soldier to a life of personal service, to sacrifice, to work and effort. The Japanese in their readiness to do or die for their country, put Christians to shame in the service of the King of Kings. An English correspondent was in the War Office of Japan during the recent conflict of that country with Russia. He saw many

## SOLDIERS OF THE KING

evidences of the war fever everywhere. There were piles of letters, which, said the staff officer, were applications from men who wanted to volunteer. Amongst them was one letter with characters in red from seven old men of Osaka. It was written with their blood. They wished to form a battotai, a brigade of swordsmen who rushed at the enemy, careless as to whether they ever came back, so long as they killed their men. They had been refused in the regular service, but desired to die for their Emperor rather than to live at home a life of inglorious ease.

What of us? Is there the same readiness to enlist under the banner of Christ? To serve Him in life's broad field of battle? To live for Him and if need be to die for Him?

Do not these old men of Osaka, offering their services to their Emperor, in the crimson letters of their own blood, put us to the blush? Are we not in spiritual things, if we dare to make the comparison, but soft carpet knights or feather-bed soldiers at the best?

These men were ready to go forth to battle, yea, to meet death, and as far as we know, a hopeless death. But we are assured of success, of ultimate success, of victory, absolute and complete. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." The great Apostle places before the mind's eye in the field of battle, the forces that war against the

## THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION 11

Christian. The strong battalions are marshalled in battle array. They are spiritual forces which are not to be despised. "Who shall separate us," he asks "from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" These are mighty powers, but they cannot defeat the Christian who is endued with power from on high, and strengthened with the might of Christ in the inner man. Indeed the Christian meets the conflict and comes out of the struggle with the fruits of victory in his hand, and possessing a firmer faith, a brighter hope, a truer courage, a richer experience, a deeper spirit of self-sacrifice and a more burning love.

All life is a battle, and the whole purpose of the soldier's life is to serve as a training for the day of conflict. So the Christian life is a march, a battle, a campaign, a war, a victory. It is a war against evil without and evil within. The Christian who fights under the banner of the cross, with Jesus as the great captain of salvation, is assured of ultimate victory. St. Paul describes the issue in most graphic language. We are "more than conquerors." It is a strong term and means "overcomers," "far more exceeding conquerors." To be a conqueror is simply to overcome. But this is more—it is to reap the fruits of victory and to hold the gains as our own. There is an opinion held by savage tribes that when a warrior goes



## SOLDIERS OF THE KING

to battle he wins for himself the spirit and the strength of the enemies he may slay. However fanciful this may be to the savage, it is literally true of moral struggle. Every battle for the right gives us moral strength for future conflict.

In the battles of this world, victory may be gained, yet at the cost of great and irretrievable loss. It was so at Corunna, which cost the life of the noble soldier, Sir John Moore. It was so at Borodino, for although Napoleon won, the battle really sealed his fate, for the burning of Moscow was the first act in the great drama of his overthrow. It was so at the Rappabannock, when Stonewall Jackson, rising from prayer in his tent, by a bold movement drove Hooker across the river; but, brilliant as the victory was it cost the Confederate forces dear, for Stonewall Jackson himself lay dead upon the field, killed by the fire of his own men.

A victory may be won and yet no results may follow. Osman Pasha first defeated the Russians in a well conceived plan of campaign; he did not, however, follow up success by advance, but remained in the field fortress of Plevna. The Russians cut his communications and compelled him to surrender what they could not take. In this world a soldier may conquer and yet be unable to hold his ground; as Lee discovered after his brilliant victory at Fredericksburgh.

## THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION 13

But in the Christian warfare complete victory is promised to the Christian.

The secret of it all is in Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we are more than conquerors. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

It is but a truism to say that in war much depends upon the leader. A great German writer on tactics has accepted Darwin's dictum that the principle of "mutual confidence" explains the difference between a disciplined host and an armed mob. In spiritual conflict take Christ then as your only leader. Follow Him with implicit confidence. The true soldier ever shows the spirit of obedience without which no victory can be won. Then he must carry out the orders as they are written. He must keep up too the line of communication with the base of supplies. He must watch in the spirit of prayer.

"In God's whole armour strong,  
From hell's embattled powers,  
The warfare may be sharp and long,  
The victory must be ours."



# The Soldier Life

"Consider mine enemies, how many they are : and they  
bear a tyrannous hate against me."—*Ps. cxv. 18. P.B.V.*

"Oh dream no more of quiet life ;  
Care finds the careless out ; more wise to vow  
Thy heart entire to faith's pure strife ;  
So peace will come, thou knowest not when or how."

*Lyra Apostolica.*

"The scheme of our redemption was of old in order laid,  
Thus the wily arts were baffled of the foe who man  
betrayed,  
And the armour of redemption from death's armoury was  
made."

*Fortunatus, Tr. Mrs. Charles.*

"Was I not girded for the battle-field ?  
Bore I not helm of pride and glittering sword ?  
Behold the fragments of my broken shield,  
And lend to me Thy heavenly armour, Lord !"

*Anon.*

"Where our Captain bids us go,  
'Tis not ours to murmur 'No.'  
He that gives the sword and shield,  
Chooses too the battle-field  
On which we are to fight the foe."

*Anon.*

## 2. The Soldier Life

**T**HE Christian life is often compared to that of a soldier in the service of his country. We are familiar with the thought in the baptismal service, where the minister of Christ says: "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign *him* with the sign of the Cross, in token that hereafter *he* shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto *his* life's end, Amen." It was St. Paul's favourite figure. Like his great Master, the apostle used many illustrations to make the meaning of the truth clear to the mind, and to enforce its obligations in the sphere of practical life. Military life in its various forms was very familiar to St. Paul. The Imperial troops were to be found almost everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. The Apostle had often watched during the sad days of his imprisonment, when he was bound with a chain to the soldier, the troops on parade, while under drill, on the march and on guard; and he

had often noted the attention paid to discipline, the care given to the weapons of war, and the provision made in the way of armour and means of defence.

It was a natural figure St. Paul used when he wrote to his beloved Timothy "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath enrolled him as a soldier." "I have fought the good fight." "This charge I commit unto thee," he writes to Timothy again, that "thou mayest war a good warfare," and he urges him to "fight the good fight of faith." St. Paul takes the rough weapons of the soldier's warfare and turns them into weapons of offence and defence in the battle of the Lord in the great spiritual combat in which the Christian is engaged under the Captain of his salvation. The armour of God is Christ Himself, the girdle of the loins is the truth, the breastplate is righteousness, the sandals are the gospel of peace, the shield is faith, the helmet is salvation, and the sword is the Word of God.

The life of the soldier was not only familiar to St. Paul from his personal experience as a prisoner at Rome, but it was also well known to the early Christians to whom his letters were addressed, for the soldiers of the Roman Empire had turned the world into one great battle-field.

The Christian life requires for its development

the same great qualities which military service demands from all who enlist beneath their country's flag. The Christian soldier is called into active service for the King, and his whole life is a campaign. There is no discharge in the war. He fights against spiritual enemies. It is true his foes are often unseen, but the foes are real foes, and the combat is to the death.

The Christian soldier who follows the flag of the King must be *loyal*. His heart must be true to Christ, united by living faith to the living Lord. The watchword of his lips must be loyalty to his King. It is useless to put the best weapons in the hands of a disloyal man. He needs a change of heart. He cannot fight for his King and country in the battles of earth if his heart is not right. And he needs the Holy Spirit to take away the old disloyalty and make the heart right with God, if he is to be a true soldier of Christ. Isaac D'Israeli tells the story of the chivalrous Marquis of Montrose, who, when condemned by his judges to have his limbs nailed to the gates of four cities, replied that he was sorry that he had not limbs sufficient to be nailed to all the gates of the cities of Europe as monuments of his loyalty. He served a king unworthy of such deep devotion. We serve the Lord Christ, who, while He demands the allegiance of an undivided heart, gives all the riches of heaven's kingdom to His own. Well may we



say of such a King, "True-hearted, whole-hearted I faithful and loyal, King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be."

The Christian soldier must yield unquestioning *obedience* to the great Captain of his salvation. It is his place to obey and Christ's to command. "Theirs not to reason why." With England's Iron Duke he is simply to ask, "What are the marching orders?" The word of Christ is to be his law, His commands the rule of his life. "It is impossible," said an officer of engineers to the Duke of Wellington. The Duke simply said: "I did not ask your opinion; I gave you my orders, and I expect them to be obeyed." In the campaign against sin, and for the conquest of the world, Christ makes no mistakes. Obedience is our duty, the results belong to God.

The Christian soldier must learn the lesson of *self-sacrifice*. The soldier goes to war with the bare necessities of life. His food is simple, he expects no luxuries. His home is a tent, his bed is hard and narrow; at times, indeed, it is mother earth and heaven's blue is his only covering. Even in peace he is taught to prepare for war, and in the camp he learns something of its lessons, and is often called to suffer some of its discomforts. The country's interests are everything, the soldier's are effaced. When Xerxes suffered a defeat, in his flight he sought refuge on board a boat. The flying soldiers crowded in after him.

Someone said: "Are you not willing to make a sacrifice for your king?" Many were found ready to perish if by their death the king could be saved. They were faithful unto death. With the Christian soldier Christ is all. Self must stand in the background. He must keep himself free from the entanglements of the world.

The Christian soldier must possess the virtue of *endurance*. It is this quality which marks out the British soldier from all others. Napoleon used to say, in the bitterness of his heart, that the British never knew when they were beaten. The French had all the dash and verve, but were lacking in staying power. They could not meet the patient endurance of the soldier who would die in the last ditch, but who knew not the meaning of defeat.

The Christian soldier is to cultivate the spirit of *vigilance*. He is to be always watchful against the enemy, ever on guard lest he should be taken unawares. He keeps the citadel of life, he guards interests of eternal worth. Watchfulness is the price which all must pay for spiritual blessing. "Eternal vigilance" here, as elsewhere, "is the price of liberty." The duty of the guard is to warn his superior officer of approaching danger. The Christian soldier should do the same. Indeed, it is his duty and his privilege to call to his aid the Captain Himself, who does not leave him to meet the foe in his own strength, but who

brings to his relief the all-powerful forces of heaven. We are called to a spiritual battle, but it is in Christ's strength that we are to fight.

"Fight the good fight with all thy might,  
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right."

The Christian soldier is required to show the spirit of dauntless *courage*. He is the follower of One Who knew no fear, Whose life was a constant witness against cowardice, Who ever braved the hatred of men, and the world's pride, and stood alone against His enemies with brow unabashed, and heart that never quailed. Christ the great Captain of our Salvation has shown us how to face the foe. It is in the spirit of absolute trust in God. And every day fresh proof is given of victory won in the name of the Lord.

The Christian soldier should work in close *unity of purpose* with his fellow-soldiers of the cross. Co-operation is useful in the furtherance of any aim or purpose. It is absolutely essential in warfare. The soldier, who considers himself alone, is a menace to an army, instead of being a strength. He may be an expert swordsman, a crack rifleshooter, an unrivalled marksman, but if he is wanting in *esprit de corps*, fails to work in harmony with his comrades, or to support them in their efforts, he is wanting in one of the first requisites of a good soldier. The same defect works untold harm in the Church Militant. Christian soldiers, above all others, need to stand

together, hand to hand, heart to heart, every heart beating in sympathy with his comrades in the service of the King.

The Christian soldier must be a *patriot*. There should be in his heart an undying love for "Fatherland." He must be willing to live for it, and to die for it if need be. The Jew was self-centred, and never gained the highest type of patriotism. The Christian's heart, like that of his divine Leader, is to take in the whole world, embracing it as in a universal kingdom, which belongs to Christ, desiring to bring every nation, tribe, and people into subjection to their true King. The Christian lives, too, in the simple belief that Heaven is his "Fatherland." This thought enlarges his view of life's mission, reveals to him the full meaning of the campaign in which he is engaged, and centres his affections on his King.

The Christian, as St. Paul reminds us, is a "Soldier on Service." And, as Dr. Weymouth so graphically translates the words: "Everyone who serves as a soldier keeps himself from becoming entangled in the world's business, so that he may satisfy the officer who enlisted him." This description of the Christian life is clear-cut and definite. Yet how seldom is it realized? We think of citizenship as a suggestive picture of Christian activity. But truer far to that ideal is the soldier life, the life of one whose sole business is fighting, whose one object is conquest, who lives

entirely for the subjugation of the world to Christ. The Christian, then, is a soldier on active service, not in barracks, not on furlough, not playing with war, but at the scene of conflict, and in the midst of the battle. This is the business of his life, his absorbing passion, his present aim, his ultimate purpose. Walt Whitman, peace-prophet, mystic, and philosopher, saw the heart of the matter in the dark days of the American Civil War.

“Knowest thou not there is but one theme for ever-enduring bards?

“And that is the theme of war, the fortune of battles.

“*The making of perfect soldiers.*”

The apostle's metaphor is that of the good soldier on active service. Every Christian is called to the soldier's life. In the times of our great Elizabeth, every Englishman felt that every man must fight, or that England would fall a prey to the Spaniard. So in the Franco-German war, the whole German people stood in arms, young and old were called to fight for Fatherland. The Christian is enlisted under the banner of the King. There is no discharge in the war, none are excused, all who name the name of Christ must fight the good fight, and wage the good warfare.

The very term, Sacrament, which is connected with our highest religious privileges in Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, speaks of Christian

duties. The word was originally used of the soldier's military oath, and just as Hannibal, who learned first to obey, then to command, was taken by his father to swear eternal enmity to Rome before the altar of sacrifice, a vow which he kept, as the Romans confessed, by the destruction of 300,000 men, so we are to be the sworn enemies of sin, as the consecrated warriors of Christ.

It is now generally recognized, and has been proved many times over, as may be seen in some of our best spiritual biographies, that soldiers, when true men, devoted to the service of Christ, make the very highest type of Christians. This is partly due to thoroughness in character. But there are other reasons. They have learned many secrets of the world's campaign, they know the power of the enemy, they are not unfamiliar with his devices, they are on their guard against every artifice which may be used against them, and they know that if victory is to be gained it will be by following implicitly their great Commander.

We are all aware that military service demands the exercise of the highest qualities of head and heart. There must be shown at all times discipline, self-control, patient endurance, obedience, self-sacrifice, co-operation with others, loyalty and vigilance. In the campaign the one thought is that of constant warfare against the foe, which requires instant readiness to take the field, and careful preparation against attack.

The Christian life cultivates, nourishes, and sustains just such qualities, for it is a constant conflict against evil, in a battle with unnumbered foes, in a campaign which ends only with our mortal life and the last great victory over death.

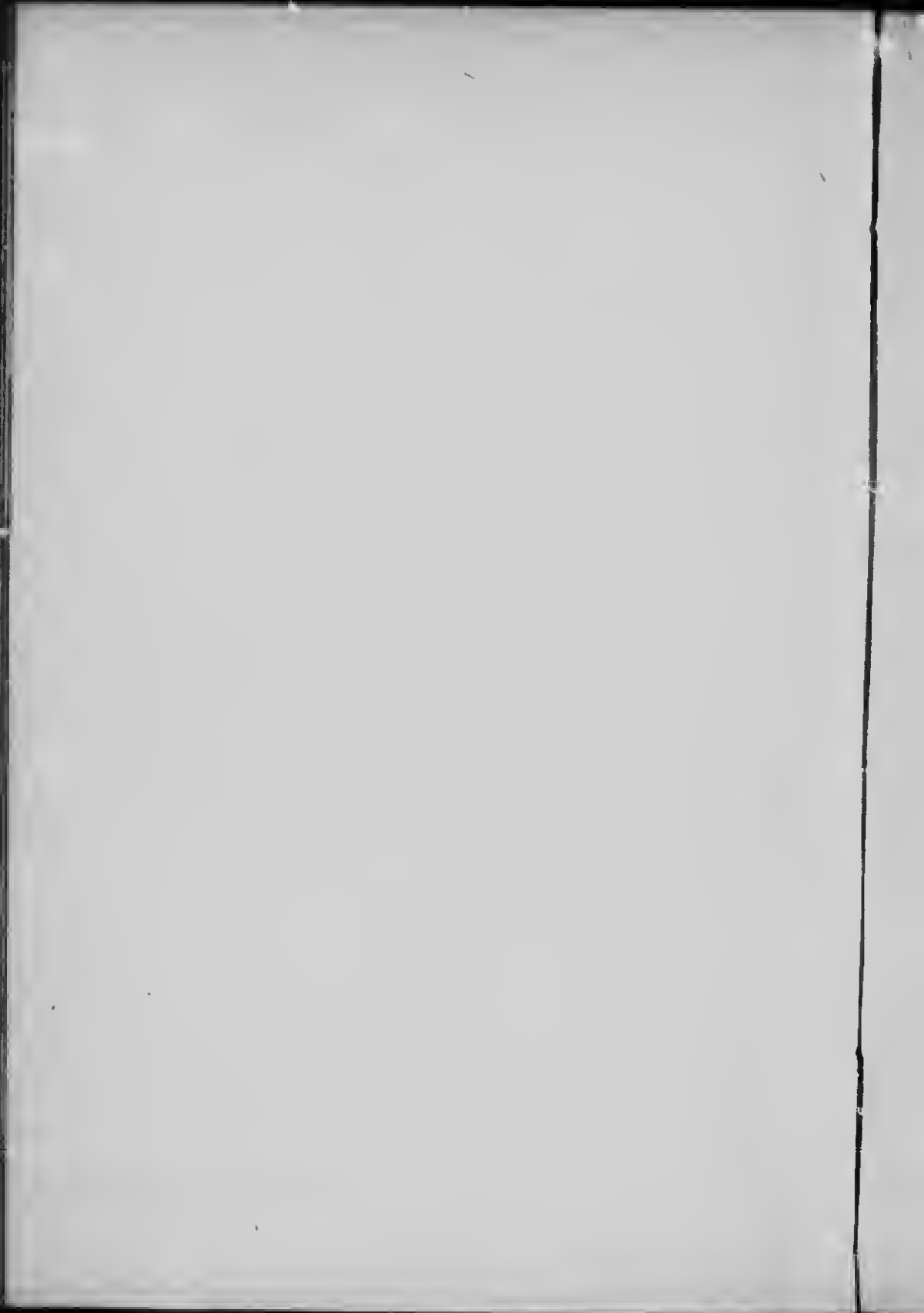
The soldierly qualities were well illustrated in the life of Sir John Field, K.C.B., *Soldier and Evangelist*, recently published. John Field, born in 1821, went out to India in his twentieth year, where he served for thirty-four years. But the determining factor of his life was spiritual. Conviction came home to his mind, and profoundly affected him. From that hour he felt constrained, not only to live according to the truth of the Gospel, but to testify to others, a difficult task, as *The Spectator* points out, anywhere and at any time, and particularly so in the Indian Army of sixty years ago. Who can refuse to recognise the disinterested courage—to say nothing else—of the man who acts on such a conviction? After his retirement from the Army he carried on the work to which his heart was given. We are quite sure, says *The Spectator*, that such men as "Sir John Field, Soldier and Evangelist," are the most powerful "evidences of Christianity."

The Christian soldier, though engaged in a warfare in which there is no discharge, in a campaign which ends only with death, and against a watchful and cruel enemy, enjoys inward peace amidst it all. Every victory over the

world, the flesh, and the devil is a cause of triumph. It was otherwise with that great soldier, the first Napoleon. When he was asked at St. Helena if he did not feel happy in the height of his success, when victory perched on his banner, and the world was filled with his fame, it is said that his reply was that he "enjoyed not one moment of peace." "They who think so," said Napoleon, "knew nothing of the peril of our situation. The victory of to-day was instantly forgotten in preparation for the battle which was to be fought on the morrow." But amidst the conflict of life, the smoke of its battle, Christ the great Captain whispers His peace to His own. It is the peace which He won for us in His own great victory. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He provides armour for His soldiers which He has Himself tested and tried, and He gives them the very weapons with which He gained the day and triumphed over Satan's power. It is, indeed, the very panoply of God. And it is as true to-day as ever that he

"Who in the strength of Jesus trusts  
Is more than conqueror."





**The Panoply of God**

"Every thought which is base, or vile, or selfish, is first of all untrue."

*F. J. A. Hort.*

"Hold the high way and let thy spirit thee lead,  
And truth shall thee deliver, it is no drede."

*Chaucer.*

"Whenever wrong shall right deny,  
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,  
Be thine a voice to smite the lie,  
A hand to set the captive free."

*Whittier.*

"How happy is he, born or taught,  
That serveth not another's will ;  
Whose armour is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his utmost skill."

*H. Wotton.*

"Help us to fight as warriors brave,  
That we may conquer in the field,  
And not one Christian man may yield  
His soul to sin a slave."

*Paul Gerhardt.*

"Ah ! would we join that blest array,  
And follow in the might  
Of Him, the Faithful and the True,  
In raiment clean and white !"

"Thou God of Truth, for Whom we long,  
Thou, Who wilt hear our prayer,  
Do Thine own battle in our hearts,  
And slay the falsehood there !"

*Thomas Hughes.*

### 3. The Girdle of Truth

**T**HE Church militant here in earth, was a familiar thought to St. Paul's mind. The life of the soldier furnished the apostle with his greatest, and perhaps his happiest illustration of the Christian life. For it, too, is concerned with warfare, offensive and defensive, with weapons, with constant conflict, struggle, and toil, and it looks for victory over enemies.

In ancient warfare armour was absolutely necessary in the field of battle. It was a great encumbrance, but essential for the safety of the soldier. It has been well said that "armour is a heavy burden, but an honourable, and a man standeth upright in it." The romance of life is associated with the use of arms and armour, almost from the dawn of history. Homer's marvellous word pictures of soldiers with their "gleaming helmets," "bossy shields," and shining swords make a natural appeal to the imagination. It is of "arms and

the man, I sing," cries Virgil in his immortal epic, and Milton sees the foes of Samson fresh from

"The forgery  
Of brazen shield and spear the hammered cuirass,  
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail-proof  
Adamantean."

While Shakspeare gives us almost in a line a picture of the ancient warfare :

"The armourers, accomplishing the knights,  
With busy hammers closing rivets up,  
Give dreadful note of preparation."

as every soldier stands "armed at all points cap-a-pé."

St. Paul declares that in the spiritual war we need the whole armour of God, and that armour consists of Christ Himself; "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." In such a conflict, against such an enemy, nothing will suffice but the invulnerable panoply of the Son of God.

He in His Person, His life, and His work, He as Saviour, Redeemer, and Friend, can alone supply complete armour to the Christian soldier. But having Him we have all, and are complete in Him. In the Latin poem, when Æneas faced the conflict, he saw at his feet the armour which his goddess-mother had supplied, and which seemed heaven-sent. In this he arrayed himself and stood ready for the foe. So the Christian puts on Christ, and in that armour of Light stands prepared for the battle on the Lord's side.

The apostle divides the armour into six portions. It is, however, a whole; and while one part depends upon another, yet no portion is to be wanting when the Christian knight is fully armed by his great Captain. St. Jerome long ago pointed out, with true insight, that by "all the arms of God," "the Saviour is to be understood." In this, he was simply applying the well-known principle that Scripture is its own best interpreter, for the Divine Word runs, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14).

The first part is the girdle. Its chief use was for binding up, in preparation for action, the loose and flowing garments worn in the East. The Passover was eaten with the loins girt and the shoes on the feet. The main idea, then, is that the girdle binds the armour together; to put it on meant to prepare for action; to lay it aside, to give way to repose. It supplied a familiar figure in Scripture. Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet, pointing to Messiah, said, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." These great qualities, as the prophet indicated, were the controlling influences of His life, as the girdle binds together the dress of the body. Jeremiah said, "As the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave to me the whole house of Israel," thus illustrating the attachment that bound the true Israel to God. Christ Himself said, "Let your

loins be girded about," when He called His disciples to hold themselves ready for action. And St. Peter makes it one great requirement for service in the words, "Gird up the loins of your mind." It has also a strengthening effect, as when God said of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, "I will strengthen him with thy girdle." It is a symbol of readiness, "neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed." Above all, it tells of the preparation God Himself makes for His own. "I girded thee," saith the Lord, while the believer replies, "Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle," realizing that all power is of God. The loins represent the seat of bodily strength; the girdle, then, stands for God-provided readiness for action or service.

But the girdle has a peculiarly significant place in the Christian armour. It not only binds all together, which is of great importance, but it also holds the sword in the position of greatest readiness for instant use. The girdle of truth in the armour of God, holds the Sword of the Spirit, ready for attack or defence.

The girdle is truth. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." As the girdle binds the armour together, and thus prepares the warrior for action, so truth binds or holds the life together, and prepares us for service in the world for God and our fellow-men. Fairfax, in his description of Armida and her enchanted girdle, says:

"This wondrous girdle did Arnida frame,  
And, when she would be loved, wore the same."

It was composed of a strange mixture of opposites, hope mingling with despair, and joy with fear. The Christian's girdle is far from such inconsistencies. It is at unity with itself, for it is the truth of God.

The truth is used in Scripture in the sense of the truth of the Gospel. It is God's true Word to men. Christ claimed this grand title for Himself, "I am the Truth." He teaches the truth about God. He teaches the truth about man. The vehicle is His Word. "Thy word is truth." The result is freedom. "Th truth shall make you free."

But the word is used in another sense in Scripture. It means not only the truth of the Gospel, but truthfulness, the spirit of truth shown in word and act. It is used in this latter sense in the text, "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."

"Think truly, and your thoughts shall a world's  
famine feed ;  
Speak truly, and your words shall be a good  
and faithful seed ;  
Live truly, and your life shall be a great and  
noble deed."

The attainment of a truth-loving spirit is a great step in the development of a high type of character. The truth is beautiful because it is



Christlike, while the lie is hateful because it is Satanic. God is the Author of truth, Jesus Christ is its living embodiment; but Satan is the father of lies, and, sad to say, he has many followers. Otherwise the saying of George Adam Smith would be pointless, when he remarks: "There is something in the mere utterance of truth that rouses the very devil in the hearts of men." Thus Dean Swift says, "Tell truth and shame the devil." The love of truth goes with the highest development of human character. No man is truly great without it. The want of it mars some of the ablest of the sons of men.

Christ is the Truth. There is nothing higher, nobler, better than truth. Thus, Lord Bacon declared, "Truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it—the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it—and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God in the work of the days was the light of sense, the last was the work of the reason, and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of His Spirit."

It is a far cry from these lofty sentiments to that strange statement Froude made in his early days in his *Memories of Faith*: "Even superstition is a bracing girdle."

The only girdle worth the name, the only

girdle Christ has provided for His soldiers in His spiritual armoury is Truth. Froude himself often in later years answered this false view of religion and life, given at a time, as *The Spectator* says, when he had "lost his spiritual anchorage."

Superstition, alas! has proved itself to be the fruitful mother of many evils. Unbelief often follows in its train. And with Hartley Coleridge we may well:—

"Thank God, the times are pass'd  
When Fear and blindly-working ignorance  
Could govern man—Fear that dishelms  
The vessel of the soul, and quite o'erwhelms  
The spiritual life."

The love of truth is an English virtue. It is upon this moral quality of heart and mind that the English character is firmly based. Truthfulness is an old national characteristic. The Norman chronicler could give no higher praise of Alfred the Great than that he loved the truth, and so he gave him the distinguishing name of the "Truth-teller." The Duke of Wellington said of Sir Robert Peel, who was a type of the English statesman, "I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence. I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw in the whole course of my life the smallest reason for suspecting that

he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact."

It is a German virtue, too. Bismarck, the great German statesman, the man of blood and iron, bore most striking testimony to the truth-loving spirit of his royal master, the great Emperor William. He said that in the difficult diplomatic relations in which he was concerned he could not wander from the truth without bringing a blush of shame to the face of the king, so loyal was he to the truth. The Emperor could not even prevaricate; it was with him always, "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." He enjoyed that rich experience to which Bacon refers when he says: "No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth." Such men are sadly, sorely needed—

"Men who never shame their mothers;  
Men who never fail their brothers;  
True, however false are others;  
Give us men, I say again,  
Give us men."

Truthfulness, or the character of being truthful, is one mark of the soldier of Jesus Christ. His training is in the school of truth. He gains this bracing girdle for his life from Him who is the Truth. He puts on the new man "which after God hath been renewed in righteousness and holiness of truth." His life is brought into

harmony with the mind of God. His heart is open to all the sanctifying power of Him whose name is Truth, and whose "word is truth."

The pursuit of truth is one of the highest forms of human endeavour, and a school of moral and spiritual discipline. As Tennyson, with profound insight, has said: "The truthful man generally has all virtues." The wise man said, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." The searcher from below, guided by the Spirit of Truth, finds the light above. "Seek, and ye shall find." Sometimes it breaks upon the discoverer with all the suddenness and illumination of the lightning's vivid flash; but oftener it comes to the spiritual vision like the quiet sunrise in the east chasing away the darkness of the night, the shadows of the morning, and filling all the earth with its light and glory. But its pursuit is attended with difficulty and toil. God has given us powers which He intended us to use as seekers after truth, and He promises to crown the efforts of every earnest seeker with success, even a knowledge of that truth which alone can make us free.

The Christian soldier, whilst he must ever show good fidelity to Him Who is the truth, must constantly remember the apostolic motto: "Speaking the truth in love." And when the heart of love beats above the girdle of truth, then one of heaven's knights walks our earth. This is the union in which there is strength, truth, and love

joined in the life of service. Wordsworth pictures his Happy Warrior as "alive to tenderness," and a sweet singer declares :—

"The bravest are the tenderest,  
The loving are the daring."

Truth alone often seems to be harsh and rude, and stays not to think of the wounds it makes. Love by itself may become effeminate, and softheartedness ill becomes a soldier. But when grace binds the girdle of truth around the heart of love, then love brings tenderness to bear on truth, and truth brings firmness to strengthen love. This was the spirit of the great Captain of our salvation, Who was "full of grace and truth," infinitely tender, and yet true as He was strong.

The Christian soldier is to stand for the truth, no matter what the consequences. "Fear God," says Thomas à Kempis, "and thou shalt not shrink from the terrors of men." To do this demands moral courage, which is always of a higher order than physical bravery.

We all understand what physical courage is. And we all admire it. The thought of danger has a fascination about it. And when it calls with insistent voice to some deed of heroism, such as rowing a boat among the breakers to the sinking ship, or leaping into the waves to rescue the drowning, or mounting the ladder to the window where one calls for help from amongst the

devouring flames, or leading a forlorn hope in some desperate struggle, or riding into the valley of death facing the deadly fire, we hail as hero the one who thus adventures his life. But moral courage requires a higher spirit of self-sacrifice. It is a far more difficult thing to give up party for principle, to despise success, if it means the sacrifice of truth, to yield to another that which is rightfully ours, rather than lose the sense of honour, to speak out boldly what we believe to be true, in the face of open opposition, or at the risk of unpopularity, or at personal loss, to take a consistent stand against those whose goodwill we value, or whose help we need, to do all this in a right spirit makes a large demand upon the heart of courage within us. But this is the very courage Christ ever showed, and which He seeks to develop in His soldiers.

It is the spirit of Luther, who, loyal to his conscience, could only say, "Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise. God help me! Amen." It is the spirit of Henry Clay, who said that he would rather be right than be president. The Christian, in the service of his great Captain, knows that he is right, and that knowledge fits him for every conflict against evil. He is "armed with more than complete steel." He stands on the side of truth and right to fight against wrong, against evil of every kind. And if he is to take his "stand" for the right and the true, he needs

the girdle of truth, in order that he may be prepared for action and able to maintain his ground,

“Strong in the strength which God supplies  
Through His eternal Son.”

THE PANOPLY OF GOD:

The Breastplate of  
Righteousness



"What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!  
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."—*Shakespeare*.

"Who her strong breastplate  
Buckles on him, that feels no guilt within  
And bids him on and fear not."—*Dante, Inferno, xxviii., 3.*

"But who would force the soul tilts with a straw  
Against a champion cased in adamant"—*Wordsworth*.

## 4. The Breastplate of Righteousness

**I**T is probable that while St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians he could look out upon the camp, and see the soldiers in their armour or at their drill. It throws a flood of light upon the military imagery of the passage to remember that he was chained to a Roman soldier. The Epistle to the Ephesians was one of the epistles of the captivity. It was written in the earlier days of imprisonment, when he enjoyed comparative freedom, and could teach and preach, although bound still with fetters of iron to his guard.

The thought was ever present to the apostle's mind, as we have seen, that the Christian life is a warfare. It is a fascinating idea, and has taken a strong hold upon the human mind. It affects the language of the day. It was Darwin, I think, who first described the fierce fight in the world of nature as "the struggle for existence." Business life has its struggles, its victories, and its defeats.

All life is a struggle in which we strongly influence each other for good or ill, and the conflict makes us or mars us.

The breastplate was a portion of the armour intended to protect some of the most vital parts of the body. The breastplate held a place in the equipment of the British soldier, in comparatively modern times. As late as 1844 the Regulations read: "The bayonet belt is to be then fitted in front, and wherever it crosses the pouch belt, there the breastplate is to be placed." In ancient times the Romans used at first a linen cuirass, but it soon gave place to one composed of horn, or of the hoofs of animals, fastened like feathers upon linen, in imitation of the scales of a serpent or fish. This cuirass was flexible, but one composed of two solid plates was often used, one for the breast and the other for the back.

Polybius, in a celebrated passage, describes the armour used in the Roman army in New Testament times. He tells us that the majority of the soldiers put on a bronze plate, measuring a span every way, which they wear on their chests and call a heart-guard. It completes the armour. The richer citizens, however, wore a sort of cuirass made of chain-mail.

Indeed, the Greek word *θώραξ* describes a cuirass, rather than what we call a breastplate. It was quite an extensive piece of armour, and as worn by the Greeks covered the

## BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 47

back as well as the breast and stomach, and in some cases afforded protection to the neck, and even to the hips. It was practically a coat of mail, covering the body from the shoulders to the thighs.

Ammianus Marcellinus, who bore arms under Constantius the Pale, says that the armour of the Parthians was "artificially woven, like so many little feathers, which did nothing to hinder the motion of the body, and yet so hard that our darts hitting upon it would rebound." So completely armed were they, that he calls them "men of iron." And Plutarch tells us of an artificer, who made such strong breastplates, that when experimented upon by an arrow shot out of a catapult, no impression, or practically none, was made upon them.

The Christian soldier is armed with the *θώραξ*. He is given a complete coat of mail. The term may seem awkward, but it is the language of Scripture; taken literally, he is to put on the "coat of mail of righteousness." There is a hint, perhaps of its completeness, in St. Paul's injunction to the Thessalonians to put on the coat of mail of faith and love (1 Thess. v. 8).

The freedom of the Spirit is shown in the selection of the Christian virtues which God uses as the armour for the soldiers of the cross. In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, faith and love are constituted the breastplate, while in the

Ephesians, the breastplate is righteousness, and the shield is faith.

The breastplate of the Christian warrior is righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The ground of his justification is the perfect righteousness of Christ. It was His sinless obedience and complete sacrifice that satisfied the demands of God's perfect law. It was thus that God could be just, "and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The way by which justification is obtained is through faith alone which rests upon Christ.

The warrior of Christ has learned to trust no longer in self, for self-righteousness is a weakness rather than a defence. He knows that he has no merit of his own, and looks to Christ to clothe him with the spotless robe of His own righteousness, even as the poet sings :

" Robed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne."

But the apostle's reference is not only to the righteousness which God imputes to us through faith in Christ, it is also to that personal holiness which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. There is imparted, as well as imputed righteousness, a fruit of the Divine indwelling, and now made through the abiding presence of Christ, a part of the inmost being. There is before St. Paul's mind the Christlike character, the Christ formed

## BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 49

within, the growth in Him who is the Righteous One.

It is not without reason, we may be sure, that righteousness is joined with truth. Truth in word, leads to righteousness in deed. "Little children," said St. John, "let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

This means, surely, that it is not "his doing" that makes him righteous, but that being righteous, that is justified by faith, the righteousness of God in Christ, he, therefore, does righteousness.

The Breastplate, as Weymouth's expressive translation states, is: "the breastplate of uprightness." This is an equipment which provides what Scripture everywhere demands, that is integrity. It is to be right with God, and then right with our fellow men. The Wise Man unites them when he speaks of "The integrity of the upright" (Prov. xi. 3), and that the "just man walketh in his integrity" (Prov. xx. 7). This is the true protection to the heart, from every crooked way of the world's life. It turns aside every selfish and wrong principle in society, it shuts out questionable methods in business, it throws back every vicious, self-seeking, and unworthy purpose from gaining a place of vantage in our lives. This is the safe-guard against political ills: "uprightness." This is the true defence of society against the myriad foes which beset it—"uprightness."

This, alone, is the ægis of the soul, in all the intercourse of daily life in home and street, and mart, and office, and workshop, and place of business--Uprightness.

The breastplate is an aid to courage.

Now courage is a very rare virtue, and those who appear outwardly to possess the most of it, often feel, in their inner hearts, every form of cowardice. Skobelev, the great Russian general, may be taken as an example. No one seemed to fear fire less. He appeared to be absolutely indifferent to danger. He was apparently reckless to a fault. He would actually walk about the field of battle, pulling his beard, as if he were out for a stroll. He would pass along amidst a very hail of bullets, as if he were on parade, seemingly unconscious of the death-dealing shot and shell, while men were laid low in death on every side of him. We are not left to wonder, what was passing through the mind of Skobelev, for he once confessed that no one felt more a coward at heart. "So far from not fearing death, I fear it so much," said he, "that for a time whenever the firing began, I used to say to myself, 'It is for to-day,' but never will I bow my head to shot or shell. Now I take my cowardice in my hands, and with an iron will crush it into silence."

The breastplate increases courage. The soldier who knows that the most vulnerable part of his body is protected fights with greater

BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 51

freedom, if not greater bravery. And the thought that all is well with the soul, that Jesus Christ is its Saviour and Protector, that what is wrong has been made right through the application of His precious blood by faith, and the power of the indwelling Spirit, is the only confidence worth the having. So that Master singer, the immortal Dante, has well expressed it:

"Conscience makes me firm,—  
The boon companion, who her strong breastplate  
Buckles on him, that feels no guilt within,  
And bids him on and fear not."

Whereas, when all is not right within, conscience, as our Shakspeare tells us, "makes cowards of us all," and we find ourselves unarmed, and utterly unprepared for the enemy as he wars against the soul.

The spiritual breastplate is to guard the heart from sin. The heart, as Bunyan said, is "the main fortress" of the physical world, "man." It is the key of the whole position. Christ not only cleanses the heart, through the Holy Spirit, but He provides the means by which it may be kept inviolate through His mighty power. He covers us with a coat of mail against all the fiery darts of the wicked.

"Ah me! how many perils doe enfold  
The righteous man, to make him daily fall,  
Were not the heavenly grace doth him uphold,  
And stedfast truth acquite him out of all."



The stratagems of the devil are many indeed by which he hopes to win the heart of man. He as Prince of Darkness knows well how to tempt a man from the path of uprightness. And how easily alas! many Christians are led from the straight line of principle along devious ways of compromise, leading often to a cowardly surrender of the truth. Is not straightness, allied with courage, the great need of the hour? Why even Confucius long ago saw that "To see what is right and not to do it is not courage." But such a position cannot be stated in merely negative terms, for to know the right and not to do it, or to attempt it at the least, is a wrong to God and man.

The Christian armed with the breastplate of uprightness must ever remember on which side he stands. He is not to be found hand in glove with crooked actions and wrong principles, but resisting them wherever found, in home or in society, in public or in private life, in the world of labour or of business, in Church or in State. He who seeks the right will surely find the right, and have grace given by which to do the right.

The "breastplate of righteousness" will protect the life from those subtle, ulterior motives, so deceptive unless seen in the light of Christ's truth, by which we are led away from the straight line of duty or right, by the thought of personal gain or loss. How often, otherwise, self would come between us and right, or principle, or truth, or

## BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 53

even Christ Himself, and we would find ourselves deceived, as is so often the case, by the fear of man, or the praise of the world, or the desire for human credit, or the fading glory of the hour.

The "breastplate of righteousness" will save the trusting Christian, as the eternal verities are seen in their right relations, from that easy-going spirit which compromises some far-reaching and important spiritual principle, for a so-called peace, which is as hollow as it is false, and perhaps as unholy as it is untrue. It will save us from sacrificing truth for the passing popularity of the day, or for some earthly honour which appeals to us with its false glamour, but which in the end, if it has not eluded our grasp, is without real content and unable to satisfy the heart.

The "breastplate of righteousness" will help us to stand in the right with two or three, yea even to stand alone like Athanasius against the world, and having done all to stand. James Russell Lowell saw, in the light of that great crisis which shook the republic of the United States to its centre, the truth of the ages:—

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side."

This is the appeal which comes to every God-lit and Christ-like and Spirit-taught soul, the right as against the wrong. The charm of chivalry, as

Fitzgerald wrote in his "*Euphranor*," was just this, its note of heroism, and if it appealed to the bravest and noblest and most gallant men, it was just because it put the accent there. To stand upon the side of right, for the right's sake, regardless of all consequences, is the only possible position for the Christian. It is this that makes him the "happy warrior" of his King. And he finds sooner or later the truth of Wendell Phillips' strong words: "One on God's side is a majority." But the reverse is also true. To swerve aside from the right, to allow even a shade to pass over the light of truth, is to disarm the soul, and to leave it powerless before its foes. Shakespeare, with true discriminating power, brings out this mighty contrast in the noble words which he places on the lips of King Henry the Sixth:—

"What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!  
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.  
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,  
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

The breastplate is to protect the heart in the exercise of its affections. The first affection of the heart is *love*. Satan uses every weapon to destroy the heart's love for Christ. He would kill, if he could, the heart's response to the love that has sought us all our lives long, the love that found us in our blood, poured healing balm into our wounds, clothed our nakedness, and opened heaven's gates to our feet. We need His keeping

## BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 55

power, so that the love born within us, as the fruit of His great love, may be kept from all that would blight or injure it.

Another affection is *desire*, the longing of the soul for Christ, the craving of the heart for the riches of His full salvation. When Bishop Beveridge was dying his wife and children stood over him weeping. His wife bent over him and said in accents of love: "Do you not remember me?" A blank stare was the only reply. The children asked him, one after another, "Do you remember me?" but no reply came. At last one said to him: "Do you remember Jesus Christ?" That name recalled the shattered faculties, and the dying man said: "Dear Jesus Christ! He is all my desire." It was thus that the breastplate of righteousness kept the good bishop's heart in the hour of weakness and of death.

Another affection is *joy*. It is one of Christ's best gifts. It is not transitory, like earthly gladness, but an abiding possession. It is in the Lord and of the Lord, and from the Lord. As such, it requires His constant care. It has many enemies, and needs to be kept by the mighty power of Christ.

The love of the good, the desire for the true, the joy in the right, since God is God, are in themselves presages of the final victory, of which every one enlisted under the captaincy of our King is assured, for we are not only victorious, but more than conquerors through Him that loved us.



**THE PANOPLY OF GOD:**  
**The War Shoes or Sandals**  
**of Peace**

"How beauteous are the feet of those who bear  
Mercy to man, glad tidings to despair."

*C. H. Johnston.*

"March on, march on, ye soldiers true, in the cross of Christ  
confiding,  
For the field is set, and the hosts are met, and the Lord  
His own is guiding."

*Ella S. Armitage.*

"Where now with pain thou treadest, trod  
The whitest of the saints of God !  
To show thee where their feet were set,  
The light which led them shineth yet."

*J. G. Whittier.*

"O Will, that willest good alone,  
Lead Thou the way Thou guidest best ;  
A silent child, I follow on,  
And trusting lean upon Thy breast."

*Gerhard Tersteegen.*

"Keep step with Jesus : He who leads  
Should surely set the pace ;  
Keep step with Jesus, would'st thou be  
A victor in the race.  
Not over-running His sweet will,  
Nor lagging far behind ;  
Who walk with Jesus, only these  
The road to blessing find."

*Lucy A. Bennett.*

## 5. The War Shoes or Sandals of Peace

**T**HE sandals or war-shoes, and greaves of brass were at one time a most essential part of the military armour. The war-shoe worn by the Roman soldiers and centurions, so familiar to St. Paul, was composed of leather, and the sole was thickly studded with large nails. Josephus mentions the case of a Roman centurion, Julian by name, who entered the temple with his soldiers and who slipped on the pavement, "his shoes being full of nails," and was killed. They were not worn, however, at all times, as we wear shoes, but were laid aside when indoors, and only put on when about to leave home on a journey, or in case of a military expedition. The sandal, which consisted of a sole attached to the foot by leather thongs, allowed this to be done with ease.

The sandal itself, in earlier days, was looked upon as a hindrance, as witness the prohibition of its use by boys on the part of Lycurgus. "To be shod is to be bound," said Clemens Alexandrinus. It was better, he thought, to "practice walking with naked feet, both for one's health and for



swiftness." And as Musonius pointed out, all runners know that they are more agile and swift without sandals.

The purpose of the sandals or war-shoes was to protect the feet in marching on the hard, uneven, often rocky road of the country, to defend the feet against traps and against sharp sticks, which were placed on the line of march to obstruct the way, disable an enemy, and to render the soldiers unfit for service. They were also needed as a protection against the changes of climate and the variations of temperature, from summer's heat to winter's cold. In modern warfare the need of protection for the feet was seen when Washington's army was reduced in fighting strength for the want of shoes, and when in the terrible days of the Crimea British soldiers were served with boots utterly unfit for use.

It was a true instinct on the part of Zola to make one of his heroes say, in language as graphic as it was expressive of fact, not of fiction: "A soldier who can't depend on his feet may just as well be thrown on the rubbish heap."

The fabled Antæus, mighty wrestler of old time, was invincible while in contact with his mother earth. So George Meredith sings:—

"Strike Earth,  
Antæus, young giant, whom fortune trips,  
And thou comest on a saving fact  
To nourish thy planted worth."

If from any cause he was thrown, the very fall proved the secret and source of a renewal of strength. So Dean Swift tells us:—

“Antæus could, by magic charms,  
Recover strength whene'er he fell.”

It is but an old-world story, not without its lesson, it is true. But God's provision for His soldiers is richer far. He provides them with Gospel sandals for their feet, which are war-shoes fitted for every campaign, and which afford a firm footing, no matter what the difficulties of the way. His soldiers are enabled, through His power, to stand in all circumstances and against all foes. When St. Jude offers to God the glorious doxology which concludes his Epistle, he ascribes to the Almighty this keeping power. There is a graphic touch in Dr. Weymouth's translation into modern English: “But to Him Who is able to keep you safe from *stumbling*, and cause you to stand in the presence of His glory free from blemish and full of exultant joy” (Jude, 24). St. Peter also tells his fellow-warriors in the spiritual conflict, that “God in His power is guarding ‘them’ through faith.”

St. Paul lays great stress upon the necessity that the Christian soldier should be able to stand, and to stand fast, in the day of spiritual battle. This thought lay behind the use of the spiked sandals of the Roman soldier. Their main

purpose possibly was to give a firm footing to the feet.

The primary significance is probably, then, that of a firm foundation, or, as Dr. Hatch expressed it, of a firm footing. So Dr. Weymouth translates it, "The shoes of the Good News of peace—a firm foundation for your feet." This thought was in the mind of Chrysostom, when he spoke of the gospel of peace furnishing a foundation for the believer, as the war-sandals did for the soldier. The feet of the Christian stand upon the rock, he is not to be moved by every wind of doctrine, but grounded and settled in the gospel hope. Dante saw this with clear vision in his *Paradiso* :

"Christ did not to His first disciples say :  
' Go forth and preach ye fables unto men.'  
But gave them baséd truth whereon to stay."

The gospel of peace is now, as always, the sure ground of the Christian. Upon it he can take his firm stand, and wrestle and fight against any foe. Stand, therefore, having your feet shod with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace.

The sandals of the spiritual armour are called the preparation of the Gospel of peace. It is the Gospel of peace that prepares the feet of the Christian soldier for the warfare of life. The sandals give ease in walking and protection to the feet. So the Gospel of peace enables the Christian to march with ease and freedom. It

protects him against the traps of Satan, set for his destruction and ruin.

This preparation shows itself in readiness for action, a light, quick step, and willingness to serve. Luther translates it, "ready to promote the Gospel of peace." It shows itself in readiness to obey what the Duke of Wellington once called "the marching orders" of the Church, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The Christian warrior is to stand with his "feet shod" and ready for the march. He is to await the call, "Go forward." He is to be prepared to do and dare and suffer in Christ's name.

This was the spirit of the English prince in the crusade to take the holy city from the Mohammedans, when he found that the small band of soldiers melted away on the Syrian sands. "I will go on," he said, "if I go on with no other follower than my groom." The Christian warrior goes forth in a wiser crusade against the powers of evil, the strongholds of oppression and wrong. With this thought in her mind, Frances Ridley Havergal wrote in her consecration hymn, "Take my feet, and let them be, swift and beautiful for Thee." Only the Gospel of peace in the heart can make the feet swift for God.

The Christian soldier, moreover, has sometimes to stand still and hold a difficult position already

gained. So the apostle writes: "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." Sir Walter Scott tells us that on the terrible field of Waterloo the Duke of Wellington rode up to a regiment which was hard pressed by Napoleon's veterans and cried, "Stand fast, Ninety-fifth! What will they say in England?" And with true British endurance they stood firm as a rock, against which the French soldiers charged in vain. So the British squares have ever stood. When an officer sent word to the Iron Duke, "Tell the commander-in-chief that he must move me; I cannot hold my position any longer, my numbers are so thinned"; "Tell him," said the Duke, "he must hold his place—every Englishman to-day must die where he stands, or else win the victory."

In the warfare of life we have sometimes to perform a single duty, just to stand fast, and it is often the hardest thing we are called upon to do. To move anywhere seems easier than just to stand and hold our ground. Only the preparation of the Gospel of peace can take away the anxiety, and restlessness, and fear, and lead to that calmness which can await the assaults of every enemy. The motive Wellington set before his soldiers to make them stand fast was duty and honour. Ours has in addition the feeling of perfect rest and security in Christ Jesus, which the gospel of peace inevitably brings.

The Christian life is the profession of arms in its most perfect expression. We think of it often as a confession, but it is also a profession. It makes the same high demands upon the heart, and mind, and will, as the most exacting military life. The Prince de Ligne was one of the bravest of soldiers, and a most able tactician, whose writings Wellington is said to have valued. Goethe described him as the happiest man of the century. He loved soldiers and the soldier life, the field of battle and the camp of war. His enthusiasm for arms and men was unbounded. "Love the profession of arms," he writes, "before all else; love it with passion—yes, passion is the word. If you do not dream of soldiering, if you do not devour books and plans of war, if you do not kiss the footprints of old soldiers, if you do not weep at the recital of their combats, if you are not consumed with the desire to see war, and with shame that you have never done so, tear off in haste the uniform that you dishonour." We may well ask ourselves if this spirit possesses us in the warfare against sin and Satan? Have we a passion for souls to win them back from the thralldom of Satan's power? Do we dream of the great field of the world in which we are to do battle for the Lord? Do we devour the great Book of the holy war, and study the plans of the Captain of our Salvation to win the world for God and good? Do we love the footprints of the

soldiers of the King, the heroes of the cross? Do we long above all else for active warfare, or do we bring discredit to the glorious name we bear?

The Christian Church must guard against any spirit which would regard its equipment as intended for outward show, that spirit which mistakes the means for the end. The full dress parade with all its bright array may do for the piping times of peace, in the life of this world, but in the spiritual sphere there is no such time known to the Christian soldier. He is always engaged in active service. He must keep his arms ever ready for the hour of conflict, and use such constant exercise as will enable him to handle them with the greatest precision and most deadly effect. There is, of course, "a far-flung battle line," composed of those soldiers of the King who are carrying the war into the enemy's country, where the danger is the greatest, and the fight is the fiercest. The mission field is the true fighting-line of the Church. It is there that the true soldier spirit is most needed of self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and unswerving loyalty, and heart devotion, and constant watchfulness, and aggressive service.

The object of the parade is to gain experience in the art of war. The learned Josephus points out that the Roman soldiery spent their whole time in acquiring military expertness. Their

peace manoeuvres were so like war that one might have called them bloodless battles, while their battles were really but "death-bringing" manoeuvres.

The qualities of heart and life, which make a good soldier, are invaluable in missionary service, especially when infused by the power of the Holy Spirit, and transformed by the love of Christ. The soldier naturally yearns for active service, is ready for any post of danger, and above all desires to be at the front. We are not surprised, then, when a soldier enlists in the army of Christ, that he wants to be engaged in the thick of the fight. In the history of missions, we have many interesting instances of men who have volunteered for the most difficult missionary service.

William Garnon was an officer in the 14th Foot, and served under Sir John Moore, the hero of Corunna, during the Peninsular War. He was on sick leave in England, his health having been shattered during the ill-fated Walcheren Expedition. Garnon heard a sermon at Brighton which turned the whole channel of his thoughts towards God, and His saving work amongst men. His one desire was to preach the Gospel as the mighty power of God, which is able to break down every stronghold of Satan. He was encouraged to study for the ministry, by no less a man than William Wilberforce. He offered his services for the most difficult post, probably of



that day, Sierra Leone, with its fatal climate, and dangerous conditions. The same mission field called to its service Henry Palmer, who had fought with great bravery on the field of Waterloo. For Christ and His Church, they loved not their lives unto death, and soon exchanged the lower service of earth for that which is continuous in the more immediate presence of the King.

"If all our soldiers were living epistles of Christ," said the late Field-Marshal Sir Lintorn Simmons at a meeting of the Army Scripture Readers' Society, "there would be no need to send missionaries to preach to the heathen." The statement is probably an exaggeration, for there are millions of heathen outside the range of the sphere of influence of the British soldier. But there is a profound principle at the heart of the veteran's words, a truth which has found expression in the saying, that practice is more powerful than precept.

The thought of preparation, or of "readiness," as Dr. J. Armitage Robinson suggests, carries with it the idea of a messenger, ready from the outset to announce peace as the outcome of victory. So, indeed, Conybeare renders it, "shod as ready messengers." The sandal, then, facilitates the march of the Christian soldier, through a difficult or trying country. He is shod with the gospel of peace, so that he may the better propagate it. Isaiah's gracious image is

thus carried into the New Testament: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

There were two special qualities greatly prized in the ancient soldier. One was strength, the other swiftness of action. The Psalmist recognized agility and fleetness as gifts of God: "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet"; like the chamois, he could climb heights that looked inaccessible. The spiritual suggestion is not far to seek. If we are to live in the mountains, we must climb; and God thus provides the means by which our feet may walk and not stumble, by which we may ascend and not be footsore. It is as we wear the sandals of His peace that we are enabled to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint, as our feet are shod, as some think the very words suggest: "with the alacrity that comes from the Gospel of Peace."

The Gospel is a world-wide message. Its success depends upon movement. It must be carried from land to land, from country to country, from tribe to tribe, from people to people, until it has traversed the earth, and marched triumphantly around the world. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

The gospel of peace, that Good News which brings peace to heart, and mind, and conscience,

that speaks Peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, may well be taken as the efficient cause of all freedom of spiritual activity and movement. It sets free all the activities of the inner life, breaks the fetters of the mind, casts off the shackles of the will, and bursts every chain by which we are tied and bound by Satan's guile. There is nothing then to divide life's purpose, or to retard the energies of the will, nothing to perplex the mind, or to distract the heart. Into what a gracious state of privilege it introduces the soul, so that those who "once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace."

What the foot is to the body, says an old writer, that the will is to the soul. The foot carries the whole body on its way, and so does the will the soul; yea more, the whole being. And what the shoe is to the foot, so is preparation, or readiness to the will. It gives it alacrity, so that the good thought is carried into effect. The joyful tidings of peace are the true preparation of the heart, and furnish that gracious influence of which the Psalmist speaks: "I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou hast enlarged my heart." A willing heart, a ready will, an informed mind, these are the requirements of a Christian soldier, whose life is a battle and a march, a march and then a battle, in a war in which there is no discharge, but which

ends in complete triumph and glorious victory. The motto of worldly wisdom is, if you want peace, prepare for war. The wisdom which is from above teaches, if you want war and victory, seek peace and ensue it.

The soldier is given no option as to the uniform he shall wear, and the weapons he is called upon to use. And the same principle obtains with the Christian soldier—he is ordered to put on these war-shoes. Otherwise, he is not prepared for the holy war. But shod with the gospel of peace, he stands ready for any emergency, whether it be as the King's messenger to carry the Good News, or as the soldier in battle to fight the good fight.



**THE PANOPLY OF GOD :**

**The Shield of Faith**

"Faint not, Christian ! though in rage,  
Satan would thy soul engage ;  
Gird on faith's anointed shield,  
Bear it to the battle-field."

*J. H. Evans.*

"No coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere ;  
I see heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear."

*Emily Brontë.*

"Full many a conflict must he fought,  
But shall I perish, shall I yield,  
Is that bright motto given for nought,  
'Thou art my shield.'"—*Charlotte Elliott.*

"Shield of faith ! My trembling heart  
Well thy battered front hast guarded ;  
Many a fierce and fiery dart  
From my bosom thou hast warded."

*Prof. Geo. Wilson.*

"He to His own a Comforter will send . . .  
His Spirit, within them, and the law of faith  
Working through love upon their hearts shall write,  
To guide them in all Truth, and also arm  
With spiritual armour, able to resist  
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts."

*Milton.*

## 6. The Shield of Faith

**I**N these days of scientific warfare a shield would be a poor protection against the deadly rifle in the day of battle—would be, in fact, a hindrance. The latest experiments prove that a rifle can be made to shoot a bullet that will kill four men standing one behind the other.

It was not so in ancient times. There were no weapons of such deadly power. The shield, therefore, formed a necessary and most important part of the soldier's equipment. It was the ancient warrior's chief and best defence.

The shield has disappeared from modern warfare, except in one important particular. It met its death before the fatal rifle ball, but it died slowly. The soldier had an affection for it, and the Highlanders long clung to its use, receiving the thrust of the bayonet in it, thus twisting it aside, and using the broadsword with telling effect against the encumbered enemy. It was long before they were willing to cast aside the target :

“ Whose brazen studs and tough bull hide  
Had death so often dashed aside.”



But though driven from every field, save that, perhaps, of the Zulu warrior, or the Arab of the Soudan, it still holds its place on the sea. The shield of steel, strongly and thickly made, is used in naval gunnery, for the heaviest weapons, and for the men who serve them as well. The most formidable weapon of destruction, it seems, still needs one of the most primitive equipments for defence, both for itself and "the man behind the gun."

It is thus one of the strange anomalies of war, that when men were imagining that the only place for the shield was the museum, or the College of Arms, it meets a need in the most modern of conditions.

The Hebrews were familiar with various kinds of shields, from the small and easily-carried buckler to the large screen shield which was borne by an attendant in front of his master. Solomon prepared two hundred large shields and three hundred bucklers, which were either made of gold or overlaid with that precious metal, and were, it is thought, used in state ceremonial, more fitted, perhaps, for the glittering pomp of the palace and the court than for actual warfare. The war shield was probably of the same character as the Roman scutum of leather, stretched over a frame, or, perhaps, like the Persian shield of wickerwork. The Assyrian shields were usually round and spherical in form, so that the arrow glanced aside,

but they were sometimes made that they might be planted on the ground, furnishing at once a point of vantage and defence. The shield was often anointed before battle, as Isaiah says, "Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield," the oil not only protecting it from dampness and making it shine, but also causing the weapons of war to glance off from its smooth and slippery surface.

The shields used by the Greek and Roman soldiers were circular in form. In Homeric times the shield was large enough to protect the whole body. In later days it was adapted to the shape of the body. The Roman soldier always had his name inscribed upon his shield. It was the large door-like Roman shield, about four feet long by two feet broad, as the word itself indicates, affording the maximum of protection, that St. Paul had in his mind when he described the Christian's armour.

When Spenser, in his "Faery Queen," robes Prince Arthur for his adventures, the poet's mind is taken up with the beauty and magnificence of his hero's shield. It was hewn out of a solid diamond of surpassing richness and of great brilliancy—

"His warlike shield

Was all of diamond, perfect, pure, and clean."

Its dazzling light was like that of the great central fire, the sun. No human eye could look upon it. It was, therefore, constantly



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covered lest it should afflict with blindness all beholders. It was only upon the rarest occasions, in some sore and terrible conflict with the powers of evil, that the covering was withdrawn. Then the knight was all-powerful. His enemies, stricken with blindness, dazed in mind, and groping in the dark for their weapons, fell an easy prey to his sword. The giant, Pride, and the monster, Falsehood, could not withstand the bright and shining light of that shield. It is the light that conquers, it is the truth that dispels the darkness and the gloom of error and deceit.

The shield of faith is one of the most appropriate, beautiful, and expressive images in human speech. The term is only used once in the New Testament, but it has caught the Christian imagination, so perfectly does it convey to the mind the image of security in the midst of conflict.

The Christian warrior's shield is Faith. It is a sure defence provided by God in the armoury of heaven against all the fiery darts of the wicked. The helmet protects the head, the seat of intellect, the breastplate the vital organs, the engine of life without which there can be no action, and the sandals or war-shoes, the feet, so essential for marching or conflict. But, "above all," the soldier needs the shield, which can be turned every way, and through its wise and skilful use made to protect every part of the body, the head, the heart, the limbs, the feet.

In the Christian warfare faith intercepts and renders harmless the assaults of the evil one. It quenches all his fiery darts. The image is that of the ancient fire-darts formed of cane with tow and combustibles ignited on the head of the shaft so as to set fire to the tents in a camp and other inflammable material. Darts were often used tipped with poison. They caused frightful wounds which inflamed with a fever worse than any fire could burn. The arrows were called "fiery darts," just as serpents with poisonous bites are called fiery serpents. Christ supplies His followers with the shield of faith to quench all the arrows Satan's quiver may contain, though they be dipped in the poison of hate worse than adder's deadly sting, or set on fire with hell's fierce and awful flame.

But the shield of faith is a sure defence. The arrows of evil fall broken and destroyed from its invulnerable front. For it is God's protection against the enemy.

The goddess in the old Hellenic legend gave Achilles his wondrous shield, as a protection to his body in case of danger. His mother, another legend runs, had, in his childhood, placed his body in boiling water, or in a fire, and then salved him all over with ambrosia to make him invulnerable. The story of the Styx has the same root idea, as she dipped him in the river, from which he came out, all but the heel which she held, proof against wounds of every sort.

The shield of the soldier, of whatever material, may fail as he faces the skill of the archer in the day of battle. But God gives perfect protection amidst all dangers in the Shield which He places in our hands, the shield of Faith. The Scripture metaphor is upon the boldest lines of thought. For God is spoken of as being in Himself our Shield. Thus God appeared unto Abraham and said: "Fear not, I am thy shield." To the man of faith there is given an impregnable defence, not for a passing moment, but for all time: "I am," now and always. So David could say in the spirit of faith: "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me," or about me. This was the confidence in which he lived: "He is our help and our shield."

There is another beautiful, though weaker, image used, when the Psalmist compares God's gracious favour to a shield (Ps. v. 12). Salvation is also a shield (Ps. xviii. 35). And so is God's truth (Ps. xci. 4). The image is in constant use in the Old Testament, and was a speaking symbol of the sure protection of God for His people. In Him all need was fully met. He was Himself their sure and perfect defence.

There is but one instance of the metaphorical use of the shield in Christian teaching in the New Testament (Eph. vi. 16), "The Shield of Faith." But that instance is sufficient in itself. It gathers up the fulness of the divine revelation.

There are scholars who see in the identification of Faith with the shield, the complementary truth to that found in the Old Testament, that God's truth or faithfulness is a shield. In the book of the Old Covenant, there is the truth that God is our Shield, and in the New the man-ward side is shown, man's appropriation by faith of God's provision. The Christian uses the shield of faith, it is the means by which he finds God Himself, his protection in every hour of danger and of need, nothing less than His encompassing shield.

We have, however, just as bold an image in the New Testament, for the Christian's armour is Christ. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." And we may say with confidence, too, that Christ is our Shield.

Satan has many arrows. He is a skilled archer, who knows his mark, and his bow is always bent. He knows how, when, and where to tempt. He has not made a study of the weaknesses of human nature for many centuries without purpose. He knows when to shoot the dart of passion, which in some evil hour may inflame the heart and gain an entrance to the citadel of the life. He shoots his arrows of anger, of lust, of temper, of dishonesty, of despair, of revenge, of hate, and of every evil that his mind alone can devise. His awful temptations are fierce and malevolent and perilous and terrible.



He shoots with deadly skill the arrow of doubt and suspicion, which wrought such havoc with our first parents. He uses the arrow of fear so paralysing in its effect upon mind and will. He takes careful aim with some profane or sure thought, carrying poison as well as pain. He knows well how to send his dart to the eye which even the helmet cannot cover, the arrow of lust, which entering the mind leaves its deadly virus to fulfil the work of sin. Or with other weapon, javelin or sword he would pierce between the joints of the armour, or beneath its greaves, seeking some vulnerable part to wound unto death. Satan, then, is pictured as an accomplished archer, "The Wicked" one with poisoned, venomous, hurtful darts, aiming them with great skill against the Christian warrior.

What a picture it is of the danger of the warfare in which we are engaged? Temptations are like darts. They come perhaps from an invisible enemy. They are shot forth in great numbers, and aimed at different parts of the body. They come suddenly and when unexpected. They are as silent and imperceptible as an arrow in the air, and often come as a bolt from the blue. Temptations are like fiery darts, in that they carry the poison to the blood, inflame the desires, and pollute the soul.

The Shield of Faith is the God-appointed means of defence of Christ's soldiers, wherewith

the fiery darts of the wicked can alone be quenched, and their power destroyed.

The primacy of faith is clearly shown in the Apostle's words. Faith has been called an elementary grace. And so it is. It is by faith that we enlist at all in the army of the Lord. It is by faith that our loyalty grows and develops. It is by faith that we follow the great Captain of our Salvation. And "above all," we are to take the shield of faith in life's battle. Each piece of armour has its place, but it is faith that gives completeness to the whole.

It is through Faith that the Christian is "in Christ." Faith leads him to Christ, faith unites him to Christ, faith keeps him in Christ. It is itself the personal trust of the heart in the personal Saviour. It is an act of confiding reliance in Christ. Such faith is the heart of courage.

Faith is like a shield in that it receives the blows which Satan means for the man himself. The sword falls broken, the fiery darts are quenched, no weapon prospers against it, it is an invulnerable defence. How true it all is of Christ? He bore our wounds in His own body. He came between us and Satan's wrath. His life was yielded up in place of ours. He now stands between His people and their great enemy.

Faith is like a shield, in that it is a protection for every part of the body. The shield could be moved from one portion of the body to another,

now warding off blows from the head, again affording a defence to the heart, and when needed protecting the feet. So Christ meets our need whether the temptation comes on the side of our intellectual life, or springs from our emotions and affections, or shows itself along the line of our activities. Faith thus meets doubt, conquers lust, and leads the feet from the highway of sin into the pleasant paths of peace.

Faith is like a shield because it protects other parts of the Christian armour. Above all, said the Apostle, take the shield of faith. In the battles of long ago many a helmet would have been crushed, many a breastplate broken through, many a girdle destroyed, but for the protecting power of the shield. So with the Christian graces. Faith lends to them all, however strong and beautiful, an additional strength.

Faith is like a shield, because it is such a strong means of protection. Faith is shown in Scripture to be absolutely sufficient for the work of salvation. And it is so, because it leads to absolute reliance upon Jesus Christ. The Christian stands by virtue of his attitude of trust, which is saving faith in Christ, in God. That is to say, he is surrounded by Omnipotence.

Faith is like a shield, because it causes the temptations of Satan, his fiery darts to fall harmless, and quenches the flame of lust and passion and secret sin. It brings the water of grace to

put out the flame of sin. It calls to our aid the Holy Spirit, Who sheds abroad in our hearts the healing balm of love, the antidote to Satan's hate. The shield of faith is given in order that it may be interposed before the poisoned arrow of temptation can reach the soul, and set the passions in a flame. Their power is to be met first, their fire extinguished on the shield of faith, so that they find no place of entrance into the soul. The words of the Apostle taken in their simple integrity are peculiarly instructive. "Ye shall be able," he declares. The armour of this world may prove defective, the soldier behind it may find that he cannot rely upon it for defence. It is not so in the spiritual conflict, it is not "ye may be able," but ye shall be able to quench not simply an occasional dart, but every dart of the wicked one. The fight is still in progress, and yet St. John as he views it sees in vision its end, and long before the call to rest sounds upon the ear, proclaims the victory of faith: "Ye have overcome the wicked one."

The shield of faith has not only resisting but conquering power as well. It is able to meet not only Satan's weapons, but to defeat Satan himself. St. Peter, when he warns us of the devil, who walks about as a roaring lion, gives this word of advice, "Whom resist steadfast in the faith." This resistance, St. James declares, ends in his utter discomfiture, for he says "*Resist* the

devil, and he will flee from you." We should remember that this is not the word of man; it is the promise of the living God. Christ's triumph gives heart to every true follower of the Saviour, in whose hands are placed the weapons of the warfare through which His victory was won.

The shield of faith has overcoming power in the believer's conflict with the world. This is a part of his three-fold fight. But faith gives him the victory. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." This victory is over all that is opposed to God, all in the world, including its "prince" and our sinful flesh, all that sets its face against Christ.

It is then the highest wisdom to seek grace to become skilful in the constant use of this portion of our armour. King David of old yielded unfeigned thanks to almighty God for His instruction in the science of war. "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." We need to rely more fully on the Holy Spirit's teaching, so that we may become more prompt and valiant in the use of heaven's weapon of faith. Flesh and blood will fail us. But God Himself is our sure refuge.

Faith is the Christian's great and invaluable defence, while doubt, which sometimes receives such praise, strips the life of every safeguard, and leaves it open to every design of the enemy. It was the poisonous breath of doubt that led Eve

to fall into sin. Faith is a shield, a door of defence, but doubt is the traitor's gate which opens the citadel of the heart to its deadly foe. It is through faith that the Christian is united to the great Captain of his salvation and becomes partaker of His life. The shield is called the shield of faith, but a much higher name still is applied to it in Scripture. For faith brings to our defence Christ Himself. Thus the promise of old is fulfilled, "The Lord God is a sun and shield," and again, "He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him."



**THE PANOPLY OF GOD:**  
**The Helmet of Salvation**



" Arise and conquer while ye can  
The foe that in your midst resides,  
And build within the mind of man  
The empire that abides."

*William Watson.*

"Ye warrior host  
Of darkness and of air !  
In vain is all your impious boast,  
In vain each missile tempest-tost,  
In vain the Tempter's snare !  
Though fast and far your arrows fly,  
Though mortal nerve and bone  
Shrink in convulsive agony,  
The Christian can your rage defy ;  
Towers o'er his head Salvation's crest,  
Faith, like a buckler, guards his breast,  
Undaunted, though alone !"

*Heber.*

## 7. The Helmet of Salvation

**T**HE helmet is a familiar portion of the warrior's armour. As a rule it was made of metal, and covered the head wholly or in part.

The helmet is one of the few portions of the soldier's armour that has stood the hard test of the ages, and has come down to the opening years of the twentieth century. It was worn by the soldier who fought for a Pharaoh of Egypt, for a Sennacherib of Assyria, for a Cæsar of Rome, for a William of Normandy, for a Marlborough of England, for a Napoleon of France, and for a Moltke of Germany. It has survived all changes. While still with us, it is chiefly used now for effect and military display.

The helmet occupies a large place in heraldry, where it is used to indicate rank and position. The Sovereign and Royal Family bear the helmet of gold, as do also dukes and marquises, royalty having gold bars, and the nobility steel. The lesser nobles bear silver helmets, and baronets and knights steel.

The defence of the head was a matter of supreme importance in ancient warfare. It was natural that the strongest metal should be used in its protection. Helmets were therefore made from solid metal, or by the joining of plates. Layard notices that the earliest found, from the ruins of Nimroud, were of iron and copper. The early Assyrian, Grecian, and Roman helmets were practically close-fitting skull caps, covering the forehead, and reaching down to the nape of the neck. The Normans paid special attention to the helmet, and from the conquest there is to be traced a gradual development in form, until the whole head found protection. The apertures for sight and breathing had a double defence of their own. The helm of the Black Prince, which hangs over his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral, and that of Henry V. in Westminster Abbey, both show considerable differences, but not so much as those made in the fifteenth century, when the movable visor and beaver and neck-guard were introduced.

The helmet still finds a use amongst the cavalry as a protection against sabre wounds. It looks quite ornamental on the head of a fireman, but it serves a practical purpose as well. Its utility is well known in the case of falling objects, which are often a dangerous feature of fires.

The helmet has, strange to say, recently found

a most practical place in naval warfare. Its latest use is as part of an apparatus, which has been provided for the escape, when necessary, of crews from sunken submarines. This invention is one of the most wonderful in naval history.

The head of the soldier, especially in hand to hand conflict, required protection almost above every other member of the body. Plato calls it the citadel. It is a vital and easily assailable part of the human frame. The head is the seat of the intellectual power. The head is the highest part of the human body, its splendid crown. It is the glory of the man, the seat of honour, the place of blessing. It is the most expressive part of the body, the central life station of all directing forces. The head unites every portion of the body, however widely separated, or diversified in operation. The head bears a vital relationship to the whole body. One may alter to serve the purpose of the moment William James' familiar illustration of the functions of the brain. If I begin chopping the foot of a tree, its branches are unmoved by the act, and its leaves murmur as peacefully as ever in the wind. If, on the contrary, I do violence to the head of a fellow-man, the whole body instantly responds and is profoundly affected in every part. The reason of this is that the man has a nervous system, which centres in the head, while the tree has none, and the function of the

nervous system is to bring every part of man's body into a complete unity, and a harmonious relationship.

The head is the seat of the intelligence department. It provides four watchful sentinels in the eyes and the ears. It operates a telegraphic system more wonderful far than a Morse ever perfected or a Marconi ever dreamt of, carrying its warning signs to every part of the body.

The helmet and the breastplate protect the two most important parts of the human frame—the head and the heart. When the head is right, and the heart is right, the whole life is right. In the spiritual armour the helmet protects the mind from error, and the breastplate the heart from sin.

The head, as the seat of intelligence, the workshop of the mental processes, the constantly growing library of a man's thought, the storehouse of the memory, the home of the unconquered and unconquerable mind, needs constant protection. This nature provides for man's physical needs, the brain, the centre of the nervous system, possessing a strong encasement of bone. To this provision the helmet was added to ensure a greater measure of safety. And in the realm of the spiritual, salvation is God's protection for the mind against error and evil.

The description of the helmet is given, in a great and notable term. Salvatic is the Christian soldier's helmet. Now salvation is a word

frequently used in the Bible. It has a long and varied history in the Old Testament, and grew in significance until it reached its full meaning in Christ the Saviour. The Old Testament meaning was exceedingly fruitful along spiritual lines. We find in its root idea "enlargement," from which the thought of "deliverance" naturally springs. And what could be richer in suggestion than the noble words: "Jehovah is salvation." The simplest explanation of the term, and yet the deepest in meaning, was given by St. Paul: "If God be for us who can be against us?" But every true Israelite knew well what the word meant. It was written all across the history of the people. God was their Saviour and Deliverer, they were a saved nation, saved from Egypt, saved from their enemies, saved from the wicked, and as the religious conception grew, saved, not only by a temporal deliverance, but by a spiritual emancipation as well. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto Thee, O people saved by the Lord" (Deut. xxxiii. 29).

The New Testament teaching in regard to salvation is naturally much richer in content, and as Canon Girdlestone points out, in its Gospel significance, might be well expressed by "restoration." Christ came as a Saviour and Redeemer; that work He has completely accomplished, but the great end of His mission only finds perfect fruition, in a restored humanity entering into the

enjoyment of the fullness of the life of Christ in God, in His immediate presence in the heaven of His love.

The place of faith in salvation is insisted upon constantly throughout the Word of God. This is necessary, for faith is that act of appropriation by which the sinner in his need simply trusts Christ, and relies upon Him for salvation. It is a constant and abiding spirit of reliance upon a loving Father, Who has been revealed to us by Jesus Christ.

The Helmet of Salvation is an exquisitely beautiful figure of the grace that God gives to the trusting soul. The heart is purified by faith in Christ as the Son of God, the Holy Spirit becomes an abiding presence in the life, and there is thus given an earnest of the final inheritance of the saints, the complete restoration, the perfect salvation of God which is ever the object of the Christian's hope. For while we speak of salvation as belonging to the now, and the here, and answer the question: "When is a man a saved man?" by saying that the new life through faith in Christ Jesus is a present possession, the believer entering at once into the enjoyment of everlasting life, still salvation is a process. And during the whole Christian warfare, salvation is a helmet of protecting power against every wile of the enemy of our souls. It is more than a mere state of spiritual existence, it has keeping and

protecting power. Isaiah, in vision, pictured Jehovah Himself, putting on His own glorious head, the far-shining helmet of joyous and full salvation. What an appropriate, as well as beautiful, symbol the helmet thus becomes of the gracious purpose of God towards us, in saving us by His keeping power in an eternal salvation.

The Helmet of Salvation protects the head from Satan's arrows of impure thoughts. Pascal, who noticed that all human dignity lies in thought, marked as well, that its perversion led to meanness and foolishness. While to think is man's whole dignity and his whole merit, his whole duty is to think rightly. It was Luther who compared the entrance of evil thoughts into the mind to the flight of birds. I cannot keep birds from flying over my head, he said, but I can prevent them from making their nests in my hair. The only protection from wrong thoughts is in Christ. One cry to Him brings the Spirit of purity near, and the presence of the good leaves no room for the evil. The sad thing in connection with evil thoughts lies in that law governing the human mind, the tendency of thought to return over the same tracks. The brain is plastic, and impressions once made are hard to efface. John Angell James once said that when he was a boy at school another boy lent him a bad book, which he read only for a few minutes; yet the evil thoughts it



contained would come unbidden to his mind long after he had reached manhood.

The Helmet of Salvation protects the mind from unworthy fears. It is the helmet of hope. "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Now fear is a common weakness, and is found often where least expected. What better instance could be given than that of the great Indian warrior, Joseph Brant, the principal chief of the Six Nations, the mighty Mohawk brave. Yet even he confesses that in his first battle at Lake George, "he was seized with such a tremor when the fighting began that he was obliged to take hold of a small sapling to steady himself." The hope of salvation gives the Christian security in Christ his Saviour, and there is born of this sense of security, of this "assurance of hope," humble confidence, moral courage and spiritual endurance. Where hope lives and reigns there is no room for fear, and difficulties soon melt away. It gives stability to the character, and is the mark of true manhood. It is God's rich gift to us, not only for our comfort, but also for the strength it furnishes to life. Hope awakens courage, and he who can give courage to the mind is the best leader of men. "Hope," wrote Charles Dickens, "heaven's own gift to struggling mortals; pervading like some subtle essence from the skies, all things both good and bad." We may therefore say:—

" It becomes no man to nurse despair,  
But, in the teeth of clenched antagonisms,  
To follow up the worthiest till he die."

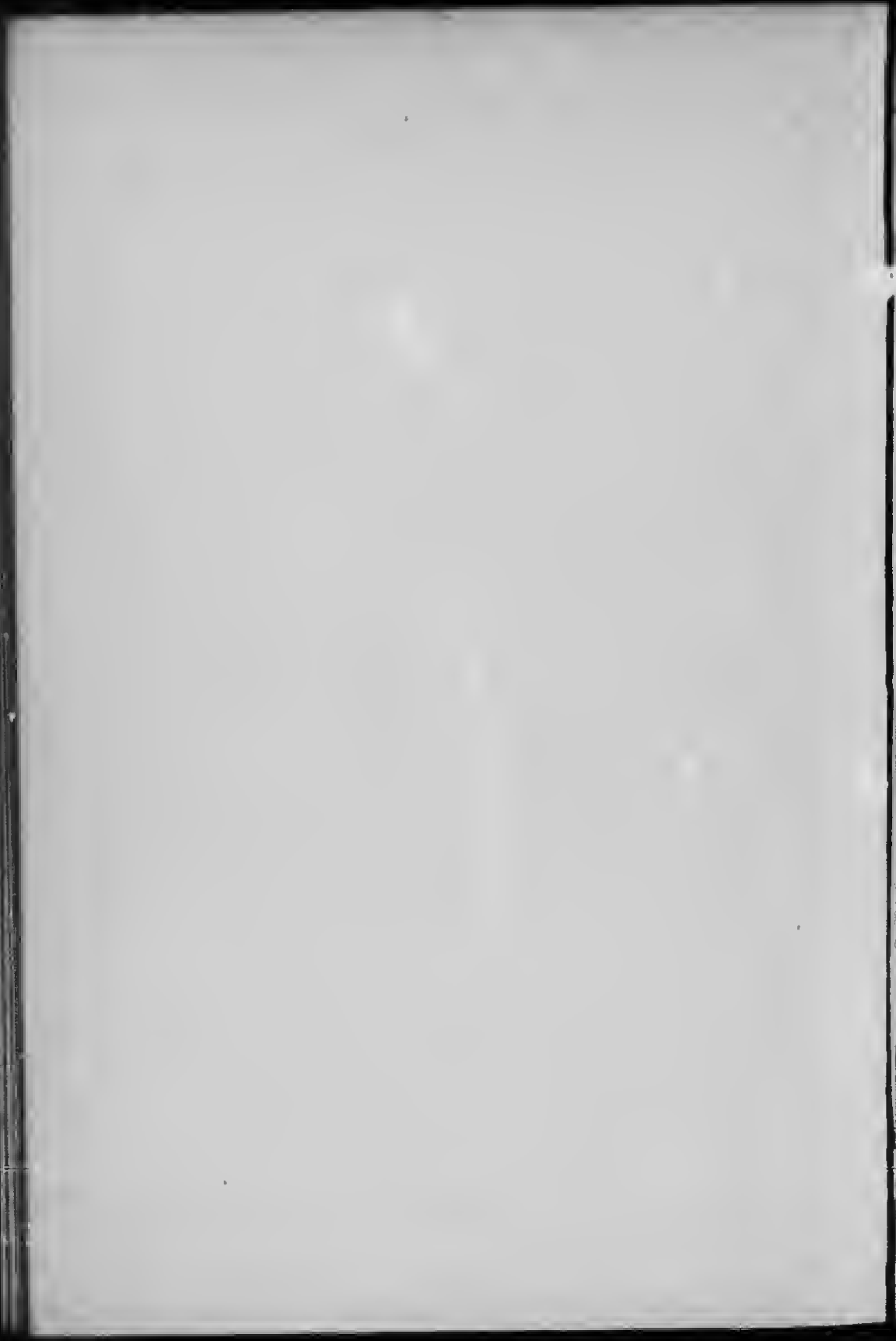
The spiritual warrior is given the Helmet of Salvation, which, in a word, means that his life is crowned with salvation from self and from sin, salvation in this life, salvation for evermore.

The Helmet of Salvation protects the Christian's mind from the attacks of error. It is thus that Satan attempts to injure the soldier of Christ. The great enemy ever seeks an entrance for some delusion in the mind. The error weakens and destroys. It casts a blight upon the life, and dwarfs the intellectual side of our complex being. Even doubt, however honest, chills the heart and paralyses the will. It is the truth alone that brings light and liberty.

The power of error is seldom realized. It sets the face in the wrong direction, the feet in the wrong path. If a ship is out of its course it runs the risk of the rocks, whether the deviation be one mile or a thousand. The mariner who sails by a chart which is not accurate but crowded with mistakes, may watch his ship covering miles of smiling seas, but sooner or later he will find himself amongst the shoals and quicksands. The slightest deflection will make all the difference in the world, as the rifle ball is shot at the mark. So a mistake profoundly influences all conduct.

The Scriptures warn us against all falsity of life and practice. There are special warnings against false gods, against false Christs, against false prophets, against false doctrines, against false hopes, against false witnesses, against false balances, against false ways, against false oaths, against false dealings, against falsehood and falsifying of every kind. The only safety from the falsities of Satan is a personal knowledge of Christ the Truth, and the light and leading of the Spirit of Truth. If our minds are truly fixed on Him, if we are constantly looking unto Jesus, we shall find that He is in Himself the Helmet of Salvation. And it is a fact, attested by all experience, that men of great intellectual powers have often been carried away by soul-desolating errors, which undermine and destroy, not only faith in God, but the moral virtues which, like salt, preserve the world. Intellectual power, of itself, is no safeguard. It has been truly said that Satan has great knowledge, yet he stands as the representative of "unsanctified intellect." The mind of man needs to learn the truth of Christ. And Christ, in Himself, is the truth—the truth concerning God, the truth concerning man, and He reveals the truth concerning our salvation, thus uniting in its bonds man to God.

THE PANOPLY OF GOD:  
The Sword of the Spirit:  
The Word of God



"The dew on Gideon's fleece,  
Was fire on Gideon's sword,  
And thoughts of triumph and of peace  
Breathe in the living Word."

*Dean Bullock.*

"For no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness."

*Milton.*

"Our sword is the Spirit of God on high  
Our helmet is His salvation,  
Our banner, the cross of Calvary,  
Our watchword, the Incarnation."

*Rev. Gerard Moultrie.*

"Lead forth the angels, in spirit strong,  
Armed with Thy Word, a dauntless host,  
Lead to attack the rule of ancient wrong;  
And let them all the earth for Thee reclaim  
To be Thy kingdom, and to know Thy name."

*Bogutsky.*

"It is an armoury of light;  
Let constant use but keep it bright."

*Crashaw.*

"I saw one man, armed simply with God's Word,  
Enter the souls of many fellow-men,  
And pierce them sharply as a two-edged sword,  
While conscience echoed back his words again."

*Mrs. Norton.*

"Be the banner still unfurled,  
Still unsheathed the Spirit's sword  
Till the kingdoms of the world  
Are the kingdoms of the Lord."

*Bp. Walsham How.*

"And other folk have wondred on the swerd,  
That could so piercen through every thing ;  
And fell in speech of Telephus the king,  
And of Achilles for his queint spere,  
For he couth with it both heale and dere."

*Chaucer's Squier's Tale.*

"Whose smile and frown like to Achilles' spear,  
Is able with the change to kill and cure."

*Shakespeare, Henry VI.*

"Gird each one with the Spirit's sword,  
The Sword of Thine own deathless word ;  
And make them conquerors, conquering Lord  
Where Thou Thyself wilt come."

*Mrs. Merrill E. Gates.*

## 8. The Sword of the Spirit : The Word of God

**T**HE sword completes the equipment of the Christian soldier. It is used not only in defence, but in attack as well. The warrior of old used many weapons of offensive warfare. In addition to the sword, dagger, and falchion, there were weapons common to all nations of antiquity, such as the spear and javelin, the bow and arrows, the sling and stones, the battle-axe, the mace, and the war club. But in the spiritual warfare the sword is the sole weapon of attack. There is one weapon all-sufficient in the Christian soldier's hand—the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

The Christian is restricted to the sword in his spiritual warfare. He cannot choose his weapons, as in the days of chivalry, or as in the times when duelling was in vogue. If he fights with carnal weapons he is sure to suffer defeat, and perhaps to meet death. Christianity can only be propagated along spiritual lines, by spiritual men, and by spiritual means. The earnest soul may be



tempted to use any weapon that comes to his hand, imagining that he is doing God service. But however good and noble the end it does not necessarily justify the means. The Sword of the Spirit is a heavenly weapon, designed by God, prepared by the Spirit, and used by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian with this sword in his hand is, like his great Captain, invincible. He is taught its use by the Master Swordsman Himself. No one, not even the great enemy of souls, can meet this Sword in attack, or beat it down in defence.

The Sword of the Spirit is our only weapon, but it is sufficient for our purpose. It has been tested and tried in every possible way. Captain Dawson, president of the Mildmay Conference, was at one time an officer of the Inniskilling Dragoons, and an accomplished swordsman. When he received his commission, he went to choose his sword. He saw several tested. The first flew into a number of pieces, but the third stood every test that could be applied, and was pronounced to be a perfect sword. Such is the Sword of the Spirit; it has been tested and tried and found to be perfect. This was felt by that eminent saint of God, Professor George Wilson :

“ Sword at my side ! Sword of the Spirit !  
Word of God ! Thou goodly blade !  
Often have I tried thy merit,  
Never hast thou me betrayed.”

The famous Scottish painter, Sir Noel Paton, in his beautiful conception of Faith arming the Christian Knight, "In Die Malo," personifies Faith, and shows us the figure of a lovely girl, clothed in purest white, with a halo around her head, kneeling at the warrior's feet, and buckling on the Sword of the Spirit. On the pommel may be seen a divine hand pictured with the mystic letters Alpha and Omega, while on the grip of the hand is a bleeding lamb, bearing the banner of the resurrection. The guard bears a dove, the emblem of the Holy Spirit, with the words: "*Gladius Spiritus Verbum Dei.*" The artist seems to have had almost the spiritual imagination of a Bunyan. Faith completes the soldier's armour, by fastening the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to the girdle of his loins, which is Truth.

It is said that when Edward the Sixth, the boy king, was crowned, the swords were handed to him as King of England, France, and Ireland. When he had received them he said: "There is yet another sword to be delivered to me," and when the Lords in attendance wondered what his meaning could be, he said, "I mean the sacred Bible, which is the Sword of the Spirit." "Without that sword we are nothing. From that we are what we are this day . . . we receive whatsoever it is that we at this present do assume. Under that we ought to live, to fight,

to govern the people, and to perform all our affairs. From that alone we obtain all power, virtue, grace, salvation, and whatsoever we have of divine strength."

The thought of the Word, the utterance of the lips, of speech, being like a sword is a constant metaphor in the Old Testament. In the Psalms the tongue is said to be like a sword, and in Isaiah the mouth like a sharp sword. Dean Armitage Robinson reminds us that the Greek version of Isaiah's prophecy reads thus: "He shall smite the earth with the word of His mouth; and with the Spirit through His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. xi. 4).

The comparison of the Sword of the Spirit to the Divine Word is as suggestive as it is appropriate and beautiful. The image was a natural one, for the short Roman sword to which St. Paul was accustomed was tongue-like in shape. The Word is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is His production: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16). The Holy Spirit makes its use effectual. It is the Spirit's Sword, which He provides for us, and shows us how to use.

The Word of God has all the keenness of a sword. It is a sharp and piercing weapon. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, of the

soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Word of God has the death-dealing power of the sword. It does error to death. It destroys the strength of sin. It defeats the great enemy of all.

The Word of God is a terror to evil-doers. "He beareth not the sword in vain." It breaks down all false defences. It reveals the presence of evil. It a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The story is told of one of Cromwell's knights, that he complained about his parish minister that, because of a personal quarrel, he preached against him every Sunday. The Protector called the two before him, parson and parishioner, and heard the evidence for himself. The minister declared that he had simply preached in general terms against vice and immorality, against drunkards, thieves and robbers, and defied the knight to name one personal allusion which he had ever made. Cromwell, with Spirit-quicken insight, soon saw the root of the trouble. Go home, Sir John, said he, and "hereafter live in friendship with your minister; the Word of the Lord is a searching Word, and I am afraid it has now found you out."

The Word of God wounds the soul. It cuts deep and wide. It penetrates the conscience, it lays bare the false hopes of the self-deceived, and cleaves asunder the sinful defences in which the

sinner trusts. But, like the famous blade Excalibur, while it has the power of wounding, it has also healing efficacy, and when applied to the soul by faith, it heals the sinner's wounds. It "caus'd pain first," as Dante wrote, "and then boon of health restor'd."

The Word of God is like a sword in its penetrating power. It was Philo who noticed, as doubtless others had done before him, that the Word has penetrating and searching power, and severs all things. Indeed, it is far more searching than a warrior's sword. For that can only touch the merely physical side of man, while the Word penetrates into the region of the intellectual and spiritual, into the innermost parts of a man's being. It pierces even the inward parts, divides the soul from the spirit, and discovers the most secret and hidden recesses of life. David Livingstone noticed that the Bechuanas could stand any amount of physical pain. The most terrible surgical operations were as child's play to them. They will allow a large tumour to be cut out, and will talk under the knife as if they felt nothing. It was a common expression: "A man like me never cries, they are children that cry." But when the Sword of the Spirit is brought to play upon their hearts they not only cry most piteously, but they cover their faces with their garments and try to hide themselves from the gaze of others.

The Word of God is like a sword in its piercing

character. It enters the very joints and marrow of man's life. It cuts far and deep into the first springs of action, the hidden motives, the moving energies of the will, and unveils and uncovers the secret life. It discerns, for it possesses judging power, the thoughts and intents of the heart, the hidden ambition, the hidden pride, the hidden self-sufficiency, the hidden self-complacency, the hidden self-will, it makes no truce with the enemies of the soul, but it cuts and pierces, and wounds not to destroy the life, but to save it. There is no armour proof against it, and though men clothe themselves in the armour of indifference, or of carelessness, or of scepticism, yet it has power to pierce through to the very marrow of manhood, the secret thoughts and intents of the soul.

The Sword of the Spirit is sharp. There is no heart of man too hard for its edge. There is no knot of man's devising which it cannot cut. The ignorant African bore the same testimony to its self-revealing power as that given by Coleridge, the great English philosopher, who said, "The Bible finds me." "I know," he said, "the Bible is inspired, because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book."

The Sword of the Spirit is more than a match for the so-called "axe" of unbelief. The words of Guizot proved, in this respect, to be true testimony: "It is the Bible, the Bible itself,

which combats and triumphs most efficaciously in the war between incredulity and belief." Thomas Paine, the noted sceptical deist, declared, as he closed the first part of his "Age of Reason," now more than a hundred years ago, that he had "gone through the Bible as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder to fell the trees. Here they lie, and the priests may, if they can, replant them. They may, perhaps, stick them in the ground; they will never make them grow." But the trees of the Lord's planting have not been destroyed as he prophesied, although he verified the truth of a statement once made in another sense by George Eliot, which one may venture to use of man's natural powers: "Prophecy is a superfluous folly." The Word of God, however, abideth for ever.

"Once Truth's banner unfurled,  
Where's falsehood? Sun-smitten, to nothingness hurled!"

There are three factors which go to make up a good swordsman.

The first is quickness of eye. This is an absolute essential. And spiritual perception is just as needful in the use of the Sword of the Spirit. This alertness is partly endowment, a gift from God, and partly the result of the exercise of the faculty.

The second factor is strength of arm. The necessity for such physical power is so apparent that it needs only to be stated. And in the use

of the Sword of the Spirit, there is required, too, power which the Holy Spirit gives, concentration of will, and steadiness of purpose. The source and secret of all spiritual strength is in God, Whose grace is all-sufficient, Who teaches us how to use the Divine Word, and blesses us in its use, so that we gain greater proficiency by its very exercise.

The third factor is that of agility upon one's feet, and rapidity of movement. And the same principle is at work in the spiritual sphere. The swordsman changes his ground quickly to meet attacks. And he who is to use the Sword of the Spirit to good purpose must show versatility in its application. He must be ready to bring forth things new and old in order to meet the adversary at every point. He needs to exercise himself in the Divine Word until he becomes entirely proficient in its use.

It is the clear duty of every Christian warrior to know his sword well, to handle it constantly, to become familiar with it by practice in order that he may know how to wield it with the most telling effect. The good swordsman becomes expert, not by chance, but as a result of the most careful training, followed by constant exercise.

He will then find that it is like the fabled sword in the song of Roland, with which the mighty Paladin clove a way through his enemies. The Word of God possesses resistless power. The



evil and the error cannot stand before its might.

The sword is not only used for attack, but it forms a most effectual weapon of defence as well. The sword in the hands of a proficient swordsman can be used with lightning-like rapidity, covering every part of the body, and the flash of steel soon shows that the attack of the enemy has been in vain.

The sword is a head guard. In the swordsman's three main lines of defence the two guards of the head are important, warding off attack whether from the right or the left.

In the spiritual warfare the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the most efficient means of defence. What, indeed, can guard the mind from error but the truth? What can so well keep the mind free from evil thoughts as the presence of the good? This is well illustrated by the saying of Rabbi Isaac in the Babylonian Talmud: "Every one who recites the Shema (Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might) upon his bed is as if he held a two edged sword in his hand.

The sword is a heart guard. The expert swordsman watches especially against attack upon the upper part of his body, and schools himself in the two parries of the middle line.

In the Christian conflict the heart, the seat of

the affections, needs to be kept with all diligence. Out of the heart are the issues of life. It is a determining factor in character. And it is the state of the inward life, the hidden man of the heart, which is of spiritual importance. The intellectual life of man is far from summing up the activities of his complex being. His personal, his social, his religious life is profoundly influenced by his heart. The Lord Jesus especially used the heart to express the seat of man's inner life, the centre of responsibility, the home of the affections and emotions, the source of volition, and the organ of religious faith and life.

The guarding of the heart from evil is so all-important that God provides a three-fold defence. There is, first, the Breastplate of Righteousness, then there is the Shield of Faith, and as an additional defence the Sword of the Spirit. One naturally hesitates to give to one part of the armour any seeming pre-eminence over another, but the Divine Book gives special honour to the sword. It is the Spirit's own weapon. And while God is often pictured as our shield, the shield of our help, He is also Israel's Sword, "the sword of thy excellency," and the sword has the advantage of being a weapon for offence as well as defence.

The sword is a body guard. The swordsman takes a wide sweep with his sword in defence. But the parry of the lower line must never be

forgotten, nor the vulnerable portions of the body which nature protects the least left open for attack.

The Sword of the Spirit affords protecting power wherever it is needed. And where is the need sorer than in the case of the vital organs where the first springs of impulse take their rise? The desires play an important part in man's life, and unless they are under the Spirit's control, and guarded against misuse, lasting injury soon results. The work of the Spirit's Sword, the Word of God, is to guard against the outward solicitations of the tempter, it parries his attack, it drives him back in defeat. John Knox, when he entered the palace of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, carried his Bible under his arm, supremely confident that with the Sword of the Spirit at his side "Satan cannot prevail," as he said, "against a man."

The Word of God is an unceasing source of comfort and strength.

In the terrible experiences of his captivity at Bokhara, Captain Arthur Conolly found the Word of God his comfort and his stay. After his death Conolly's Prayer Book was found. The margins and the blank leaves had been used by him to chronicle the chief occurrences of his trying imprisonment. "Thank God," he writes in one place, "this book was left to me. Stoddart and I did not fully know before our affliction what was

in the Psalms, or how beautiful are the prayers of our Church."

We are not surprised at this experience, the feeling of surprise might arise in our hearts if it were otherwise, for, as it has been well said of this Divine Book: "It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error for its matter."

The Word of God is the source of true prosperity. This is seen especially in the difference between Bible-reading countries and countries where the Bible is an unknown or closed book. Contrast Spain, Portugal, and Italy with England, Germany, and the United States. The Bible-reading countries are the countries with the largest measure of freedom, and the highest development in civilization and culture. It was not merely sentiment when the African prince asked Queen Victoria the secret of England's greatness, when she handed him a Bible and said the secret was to be found therein. Huxley said that he knew no way by which "the religious feeling," which he called "the essential basis of conduct," could be secured "without the use of the Bible." He knew no book like the Bible in its humanizing influence, or that showed so clearly the meaning of life, or that taught so plainly how "to do good and hate evil." It was Andrew Jackson who said, speaking of the United States: "That Book, sir, is the rock upon which our

republic rests." And Chauncey Depew declared: "The open Bible by the family fireside was the force which made America possible."

The Word of God is the foundation of the highest type of character. It reveals not only God, but man. It shows us what man's spiritual life should be. It furnishes a model life in the person of Jesus Christ. It is the heaven-drawn picture of Christ, the living Word. It reveals the open gate of forgiveness, and leads to the cleansing fountain of a Redeemer's blood. It tells of the grace sufficient for every need, and the secret of growth in the knowledge and love of God. The best of men in every age have gladly owned their debt to the Word of God. In modern days we have had Gladstone, the Liberal leader, bearing testimony to the influence of the Bible, and declaring, "There is but one question, and that is the Gospel." The Bishop of London, speaking at the Tercentenary of the planting of Virginia by the English race, an event which meant not only the founding of free institutions, but the proclamation of the Gospel of Truth as well, presented, in the name of King Edward the Seventh, a Bible to the ancient parish church at Bruton. He declared that "The Bible is the foundation of British character. It has made England the nation she is." It was this truth which led George Borrow to sow far and wide in Spain the good seed of the Divine Word. Long

afterwards, he said, that it made the blood glow in his veins and the marrow wake in his old bones, as he thought of what he had accomplished for the cause of religion and civilization, with the colours of the Bible Society in his hat, "and its weapon in his hand—even the Sword of the Word of God."

The Word of God is the Christian's weapon against temptation. The great Captain of our salvation has shown us the way to use it. In His sore temptation He used it against Satan, and defeated that arch enemy of our race. He met each temptation as it came with the Sword of the Spirit. Three times, in answer to the tempter, He made His appeal to the Word of God. "It is written." "It is written." "It is written." In that great assault He used no weapon which He does not place within our reach. He furnishes us with the same defence which He enjoyed. He arms the soldiers beneath His banner with the Sword of the Spirit. With that weapon we conquer. No foe can stand before it.

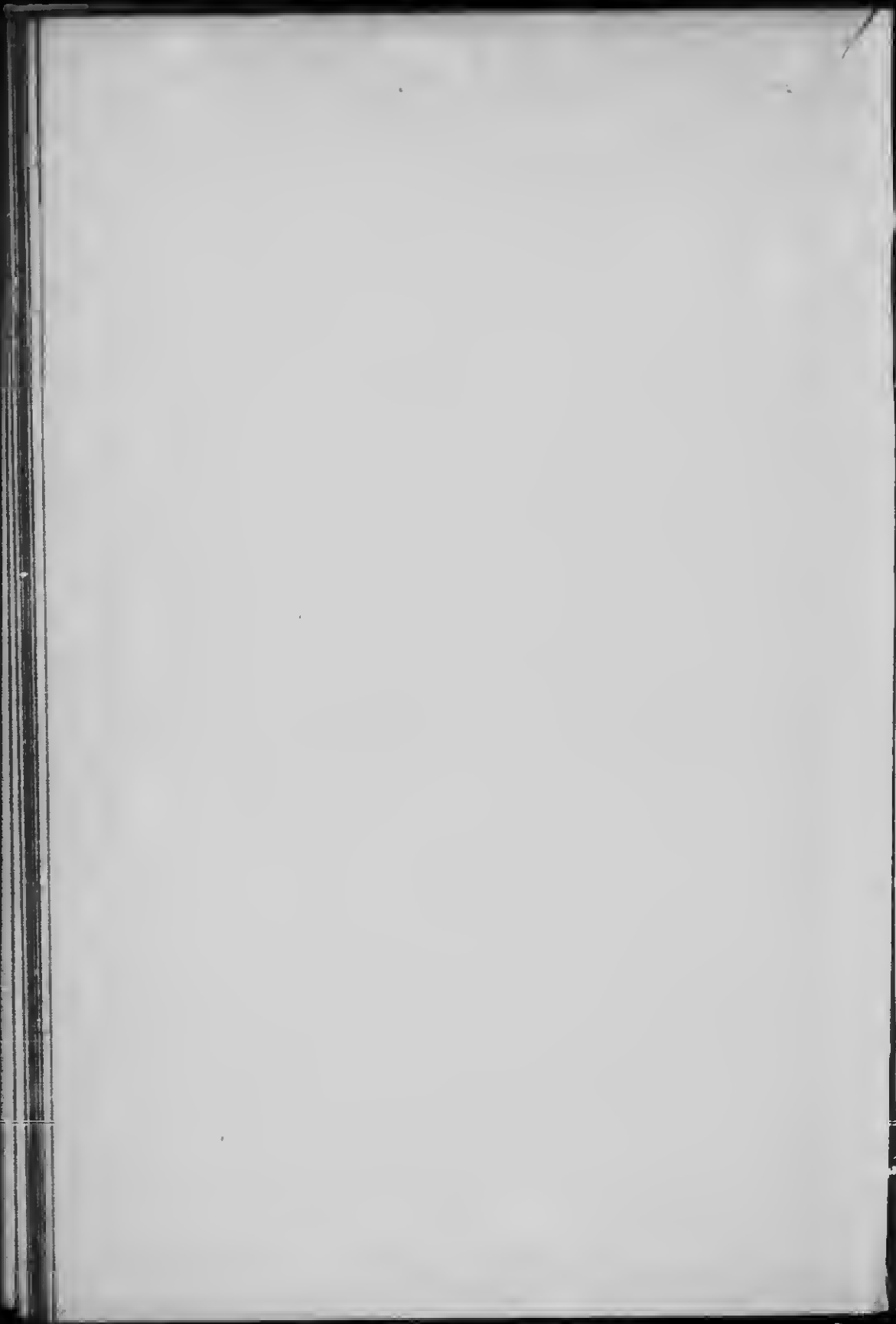
"It yields  
To holy hands and humble hearts  
More swords and shields  
Than sin hath snares or hell hath darts."



THE PANOPLY OF GOD :

All Prayer





"First worship God : he that forgets to pray,  
Bids not himself good morrow nor good day."

*Thomas Ranolph.*

"When the soldier on the field  
Lifts his heart to Thee :  
Hear then, in love, O Lord, the cry,  
In heaven, Thy dwelling place on high."

*Horatius Bonar.*

"If courage should falter, 'tis wholesome to kneel,  
Remember that well, for the secret with some,  
Who pray for no gift, but have cleansing in prayer,  
And free from impurities tower-like stand."

*George Meredith.*

"To the sentinel,  
That hour is regal when he mounts on guard."

*Shakespeare.*

"When Moses' hands through weakness dropped,  
The warriors fainted too,  
Israel's success at once was stopped,  
And Amalek bolder grew."

*John Newton.*

"Our bodies but forerun  
The spirit's duty ; true hearts spread and heave  
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun."

*Henry Vaughan.*

"The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,  
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray ;  
My unassisted heart is barren clay  
That of its native self can nothing feed."

*Michael Angelo.*

**" Father, to Thee I cry !  
The roaring cannon's vapour shrouds me round ;  
And flashing lightnings hiss along the ground ;  
Lord of the fight I cry to Thee !  
O Father, guide Thou me ! "**

*From Körner's German Battle Hymn.*

**" We kneel, how weak. we rise, how full of power !  
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others, that we are not always strong ;  
That we are overborne with care,  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee ? "**

*Abp. Trench.*

## 9. All Prayer

**T**HE Christian has been fully armed. He stands ready for the holy war. The whole armour of God invests him. The girdle covers the most vulnerable parts. The breastplate, or coat of mail, protects his body. He stands in his war shoes ready for the battle. He has taken the shield of faith for his sure defence. The helmet is on his head, protecting that vital point, upon which all else depends. He holds in his hand the sword, his weapon of offence, in the power of which he is to conquer. In a word, he is armed as the famous Normans were, cap-a-pie, a knight of God, fully equipped from head to foot.

Is anything more needed? One might naturally think not. For this panoply, this heavenly armour is all of God. It is provided by the King Himself, even as in the campaigns of the nations of the earth, the soldier does not provide his equipment, his government does that for him.

The armour itself is complete. Nothing can be added to that Divine provision. The inventive

genius of man cannot improve upon the panoply of God. But before the conflict is entered upon, before the fight can be fought with success, there must be prayer. Prayer, then, while not specified as a part of the armour, is essential for successful warfare in the field of action.

There have been many conjectures as to the place of Prayer in connection with the spiritual armour. It has been said, for instance, that Prayer keeps the Christian's armour bright, that it "buckles the Christian's armour on." Gurnall thought that it had to do with every part of our armour. What the key is to the watch prayer is to our graces, and that the Christian armour will rust without the oil of prayer. John Bunyan seems to have felt that it must have an important part to play, and he gave it the office of binding the armour together. But in St. Paul's great allegory no portion of the armour is assigned to prayer. What is its place then? The soldier who stands fully equipped for action wants but one thing. He cannot move without his orders. And this appears to be St. Paul's idea, "Praying always with all-prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." The orders are thus clearly stated, keep in constant touch with headquarters.

The history of war shows that in the old times even heathen armies before they engaged in battle

offered up prayers to their deities. The Greeks always offered prayers to their gods. The Romans sought by sacrifices for success upon their arms. In older days still, the Philistines carried the images of their gods to battle, and sought their aid. Israel, from its first history as a nation, when it went up "harnessed" out of the land of Egypt, looked for the guidance of Jehovah, which was given by the pillar of cloud and fire. At a later period they carried the very ark of God into the field. And throughout their history as a nation they sought for religious sanction for their wars, or for the help of Jehovah against the enemy. Their prayer might well have been said in the very words of Kipling's "Hymn Before Action":—

"Ere yet we draw the blade,  
Jehovah of the Thunders,  
Lord God of battles, aid."

Prayer is necessary in the Christian warfare.

It is by prayer that the Christian warriors are kept in touch with their Commander-in-Chief. The spiritual soldier depends altogether upon the commands of the great Captain of his salvation. Prayer, then, might well be called the line of communication, with the base of supplies. In modern warfare, everything, as every recent campaign has shown, depends on keeping up the lines of communication. This was Lord

Kitchener's master stroke in the Boer war. It was the settled policy of Roman warfare above all to keep the lines of supply open. The folly of any other course is well illustrated in Wellington's censure in his despatch regarding Monson's disasters, "the most disgraceful to our military character c any that have ever occurred." General Monson, it appears, was defeated in the Makundra Pass by Holkar, and nine-tenths of his army slain, all because he was cut off from his resources by rivers, "on which he had neither bridge nor boat," and without provisions in the only fort to which he could look. The Christian soldier is never to be in this sad position, but "praying always" he is to keep in constant touch with the lines of communication with the base of supplies.

Prayer is essential to success in the Christian warfare.

We dare not minimize the dangers of the conflict in the long campaign. There is no discharge in that war. It must be fought out to the end. There are no neutrals in the great struggle. All are called to the battle, to stand on the Lord's side against the powers of evil. And if a great soldier, the Prince de Ligne, the idol of the troops with whom he served, could say of the wars of earth: "I am surprised that a single soul survives a battle," what of the spiritual conflict? "For we wrestle not against flesh and

blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Prayer has been called "the greatest outlet of power." Is it not rather the inlet of power? Is it not the throwing open of the gates of life, of the citadel of the soul to God, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that the Holy Spirit of power may take complete possession of our lives. "Be strong," says St. Paul, "in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "Put on the whole armour of God. . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." The receptive side of prayer needs to be emphasized. "Prayer," said Lord Tennyson, "is like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels, when the sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."

Prayer is needed for guidance in the spiritual campaign.

It is related of the great Napoleon that whenever he entered a new territory in times of war that he spread a map of the country upon the ground and studied it upon his knees. We can do no less. God has given us a great map of life in the Divine Word. It shows clearly the enemies' land, its fortresses, its places of offence and defence, where the forces of wickedness combine, where the secret foes lie in ambush, where an



attack is likely to be made, every point of danger is noted, and every line laid down.

And as we study the carefully-prepared map, and read the history of the great spiritual war, which, unlike the thirty years' war, or the hundred years' war, has been waged through all the ages, we have the unfailing counsel of the great Captain of our Salvation, Who Himself has fought the fight and won the day. The Christian soldier is to pray in the Spirit, that is through the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is the source of all knowledge, as well as the secret of all illumination.

Prayer is offered for the wise use of the spiritual weapon.

There is but one weapon in the Christian's hand in the spiritual fight. In the old days the soldier carried many different weapons of offence. The Assyrian soldier had his bow, and his lance and his javelin, as well as his sword; the Roman had both sword and pike; the Frank had his battle-axe and his darts, in addition to his sword; while the Norman bore a mace, and axe, and lance, and sword. It is sufficient for the Christian if he have the Sword of the Spirit. But he has his orders as to the manner and method in which it is to be used. It is to be in all-prayer, in the Divine Spirit, "praying in the Holy Ghost," with His assistance, and relying in faith upon His aid. Prayer itself is not a weapon in our warfare. It is only in a limited sense that we

can speak of it, as we sometimes do as a power. It is a means by which we obtain power, an inlet through which the power comes. But God Himself is the Power, through Christ Who is our life, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Emperor William of Germany, perhaps the greatest exponent of military power in the world in his day, has borne striking testimony to the need of prayer. His illustration of its place and influence is drawn from Scripture. It is that never to be forgotten incident, that sublime picture of the great leader of Israel, "the best general," Sir Charles Napier said, "that ever we see," the aged Moses on the hill with hands uplifted towards heaven, supported in his weariness by Aaron and Hur, as he supplicates God for Joshua and the army of Israel in the great fight against Amalek at Rephidim. Prayer, says the German Emperor, is the golden key to the treasury of God. And in the great conflict he declares, in words which deserve to be written in letters of gold: "The only helper and rescuer remains the Saviour." The Emperor, with true spiritual insight, compares Confirmation to the act of the soldier or officer on the day he takes the oath of loyalty. It is, he says, a spiritual coming of age. "I speak it technically," he says, "in the military sense, because I assume that you all know the beautiful allegory in which the Christian is compared to the warrior." The

Emperor clearly indicated the importance of prayer; Moses must pray if Joshua is to win success in the battle. But with us the spirit of Moses is to be combined with that of Joshua. We are to be praying as well as fighting-men. Indeed it may be said of us:—

“ Restraining prayer, we cease to fight  
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright.”

The Christian soldier is to watch unto Prayer.

It is the Holy Spirit Who prays within us, teaches us to pray, and enables us to pray. And it is in the spirit of prayer that our watchfulness is to be exercised. There is to be persevering constancy in prayer. We are to watch for the seasons of prayer, to watch for opportunities of prayer, to watch for all occasions of prayer, and to use all kinds of prayer, whether private or public, individual or social.

In life's great campaign, the warfare of the soul, watchfulness is always needed. “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch,” is the word of Christ. The Roman soldier was renowned for his watchful spirit. In every army the duty of the guard is carefully laid down. The more recent wars have shown the need of alertness on the part of the guard, and of sending out scouts in active warfare. Every movement of the enemy must be carefully watched, and their whereabouts known. The lack of such ordinary precautions, belonging

to the first principles of war, had led to many a reverse, and to irreparable loss. Yet how often in the spiritual conflict we are trapped by the wiles of the enemy? How unsuspecting we are of the assaults of an enemy, at once treacherous and implacable? How easily we are ambushed, caught, ere we know it? What an easy mark we allow ourselves to be made for the craft and guile of the most wily of enemies? And yet the power to meet the enemies of our souls is within our hail. Did not our great Leader and Commander tell us: "Without Me ye can do nothing." One cry for help and He brings to us Divine aid, one cry for succour and He is at our side. For us the need is imperative:—

"Principalities and powers,  
Mustering their unseen array,  
Wait for Thy unguarded hours ;  
Watch and pray."

All-Prayer is to be offered in the Spirit.

The meaning evidently is "through the Power of the Holy Spirit." It is not the human spirit to which reference is made, but the Divine. It is the Holy Spirit Who is the secret, source, and strength of all-prayer. He is the indwelling Strengthener, the tender and helpful Friend, the immanent voice of God within the soul, the Expresser of our infinite need, the unseen but most real helper, the powerful and prevailing Intercessor, without Whom we cannot pray

aright. But "in the Spirit" what a power prayer becomes! Christ Himself is living in the believer's heart, the Holy Spirit is making known to the Father its wants, and the Father Himself stands ready, according to His true promise, to grant the request. Without Christ we can do nothing, but in Christ all the resources of the Infinite and Eternal God are brought within our reach.

"Holy Spirit, from on high  
 Helping our infirmity, . . . .  
 Flesh and heart would faint and fail,  
 But there stands within the veil  
 One Who ever doth prevail."

All prayer includes every form of adoration, petition, supplication, thanksgiving, and every act of the same in approaching God. It is the communion of our souls, through the Spirit, in the name of Jesus with the Father of our spirits. The Apostle uses two expressive words to reveal the privilege, and to urge the duty, *προσευχῆς και δεήσεως*. The first is the general word for prayer, as showing the communion of the believing soul with God. The second word is a cry of need, a supplication in distress, a call for help, a desire for some favour, a clear and direct petition to God.

The Apostle makes it as strong as possible. There is to be a continuance in prayer, a constant

abiding in the spirit of prayer. The Christian soldier is to pray always, watching for opportunities as well as for subjects of prayer.

"The Saints of God ! their conflict past  
And life's long battle won at last.  
No more they need the shield or sword,  
They cast them down before their Lord.  
Oh, happy Saints ! for ever blest,  
At Jesu's feet how safe your rest."

*Abp. MacLagan.*



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