

'Fight the Good Fight of Faith'

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in overcoming the devil's attacks and achieving salvation and sanctification.

Scripture: Malachi 3:1, John 14:13-14, 2 Corinthians 6:2, Galatians 2:20, 1 Timothy 6:12, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 10:35, 1 Peter 5:9, Revelation 1:18

Topics: "Faith", "Holiness"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the necessity of fighting the good fight of faith to attain a clean heart and holiness. He recounts the journey of a friend who, after much struggle, realized that the last barrier to his sanctification was an 'evil heart of unbelief.' Through persistent faith and resistance against the devil's lies, the friend ultimately claimed the promise of God and experienced the fullness of the Spirit. Brengle encourages believers to renounce all doubts and to trust in God's promises, asserting that true victory comes from unwavering faith. He concludes by reminding the congregation that now is the time to seek God's blessing and to stand firm against the enemy.

Transcript

(I Tim. vi. 12)

A friend with whom I once billeted claimed the blessing of a clean heart, and testified to it at the breakfast table the next morning. He said he had doubted whether there was such an experience; but, since going to The Salvation Army, he had been led to study the Bible, and to observe the lives of those who professed it, and he had since come to the conclusion that he could not serve God acceptably without holiness of heart. But the difficulty was, to come to the point where he would take it by faith. He said he had expected to get it some time, he had hoped for it, he had looked forward to the time when he should be pure; but he saw that it must be claimed now, and right there began his fight of faith. He took hold of one end of the promise, and the devil got hold of the other end, and they pulled and fought for the victory now.

The devil had often gotten the victory before. This time the man would not cast away his confidence, but came "boldly unto the throne of grace," obtained mercy and found grace to help in time of need (Heb. iv. 16); the devil was conquered by faith, the brother walked off with the blessing of a clean heart, and this morning he said: "God filled me with the Spirit last night," while the glad tones of his voice and the bright light of his face backed up his words.

The last thing a soul has to give up, when seeking salvation or sanctification, is "an evil heart of unbelief" (Heb. iii. 12). This is Satan's stronghold. You may drive him from all his outposts and he does not care much, but when you assail this citadel he will resist with all the lies and cunning he can command. He does not care much if people do give up outward sin. A respectable sinner will suit his purpose quite as well as the most disreputable. In fact, I am not sure but that some people are worse than the devil wants them to be, for they are a bad advertisement for him. Nor does he care very much if people indulge a hope of salvation or of purity; indeed, I suspect he likes them to do so, if he can get them to stop there. But let a poor soul say to himself, "I want to know I am saved now. I must have the blessing now. I can't live any longer without the witness of the Spirit that Jesus saves me now, and cleanses me now," and the devil will begin to roar and lie and use all his wits to deceive the soul and switch it on to some side track or rock it to sleep with a promise of victory at some future time.

This is where the devil really begins. Many people say they are fighting the devil, who do not know what fighting the devil means. It is a fight of faith, in which the soul takes hold of the promise of God, and holds on to it, and believes it, and declares it to be true in spite of all the devil's lies, in spite of all circumstances and feelings to the contrary, and in which it obeys God, whether God seems to be fulfilling the promise or not. When a soul gets to the point where he will do this, and will hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering, he will soon get out of the fogs and mists and twilight of doubt and uncertainty into the broad day of perfect assurance. Glory to God! He shall know that Jesus saves and sanctifies, and shall be filled with a humbling, yet unutterably joyful sense of His everlasting love and favor.

A comrade whom I love as my own soul sought the blessing of a clean heart, and gave up everything but his "evil heart of unbelief" But he did not understand that he was still holding on to that. He waited for God to give him the blessing. The devil whispered: "You say you are on the altar for God, but you don't feel any different." The "evil heart of unbelief" in the poor fellow's heart took the devil's part and said, "That is so." The brother felt all discouraged, and the devil got the victory.

Again he gave himself up, after a hard struggle -- all but "the evil heart of unbelief." Again the devil whispered: "You say you are all the Lord's, but you do not feel as other folks say they felt when they yielded all to God." The "evil heart of unbelief" again said, "That's so," and again the man fell, through unbelief.

A third time, after much effort, he sought the blessing, and gave God all but the "evil heart of unbelief." The third time the devil whispered: "You say you are all the Lord's, but you know what a quick temper you have; now, how do you know but what next week an unlooked-for temptation may come that will overthrow you?" The third time the "evil heart of unbelief" said, "That's so," and for the third time our brother was beaten back from the prize.

But, at last, he got so desperate in his hunt for God and in his desire for holiness and the witness of the Spirit that there and then he was willing for God to show him all the depravity of his soul, and God showed him that his "evil heart of unbelief" had been listening to the devil's voice and taking the devil's part all the time. Good people, professing Christians, do not like to admit that they have any unbelief remaining in them; but until they acknowledge all the evil that is in them and take God's part against themselves, He cannot sanctify them.

Again he came and put his all on the altar, and told God he would trust Him. Again the devil whispered, "You don't feel any different"; but this time the man hushed the "evil spirit of unbelief" and answered

himself and said: "I do not care if I do not feel any different. I am all the Lord's."

"But you do not feel as other folks say they feel," whispered the devil.

"I do not care if I do not. I am all the Lord's, and He can bless me or not, just as He pleases."

"But there is your quick temper."

"I do not care; I am the Lord's, and I will trust Him to manage my temper. I am the Lord's! I am the Lord's!"

And there he stood, resisting the devil, "stedfast in the faith" (I Pet. v. 9), and refusing to listen to the suggestions of "an evil heart of unbelief" all that day and night and the following day. There was a stillness in his soul, and a fixed determination to stand on the promises of God for ever, whether God blessed him or not. About ten o'clock the second night, as he was getting ready to go to bed, without any thought of anything unusual going to happen, God fulfilled His ancient promise: "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. iii. 1). Jesus, the Son of God -- "He that liveth, and was dead," but is now "alive for evermore" (Rev. 1. 18) -- was revealed in him, and manifested to his spiritual consciousness, until he was "lost in wonder, love and praise." Oh, how he exulted and triumphed in God his Saviour, and rejoiced that he had held fast his faith, and resisted the devil!

Now, it is to this point that every soul which gets into the kingdom of God must come. The soul must die to sin; he must renounce all unbelief and give up all doubts. He must consent to be "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20) now; and when he does this, he will touch God, and feel the fire of His love, and be filled with His power, as surely as an electric tram receives electric fire and power when proper connection is made with the wire above.

God bless you, my brother, my sister, and help you to see that "now is the accepted time" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Remember, if you are all given up to God, everything that makes you doubt is from

Satan, and not from God; and God commands you to "resist the devil stedfast in the faith." "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. x. 35).

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