

The Holy War (Eph. Vi: 10-11)

by Seth Rees

The sermon emphasizes the importance of wearing the armor of God to stand against the devil in the spiritual conflict between good and evil.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3, Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 6:14, 2 Timothy 2:3, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Armor Of God"

Description

Seth Rees preaches about the spiritual warfare believers face, emphasizing the need to be strong in the Lord and put on the whole armor of God to stand against the devil's schemes. He contrasts earthly wars with the coming reign of the King of peace, highlighting the ultimate victory over evil without the shedding of human blood. Rees urges believers to recognize the seriousness of the spiritual battle, emphasizing the necessity of God's protection and the importance of being fully equipped with the armor of God to withstand the enemy's attacks.

Transcript

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:10-11.)

The word war is pregnant with horror. It has associated with it everything that is terrible, horrific, heart-rending. The earth has groaned to its very center. Its surface has been crimsoned with blood again and again. When we think of the widowed mothers and orphans; when we think of the myriads of graves that mark the tread of earthly conquerors, enough to girdle the earth four hundred and forty times; when we attempt to measure the expense of war in money and blood shed, we almost unconsciously find ourselves praying for the day when they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and the nations shall learn war no more. Thank God that day is coming!

Earthly conquerors have gained their fame through the shedding of blood, but our King is coming, the King of peace, and will reign over the earth without the shedding of the blood of a human being.

War is an awful thing. The world is bristling with bayonets. The nations of the earth are looking into each others faces across living walls of men in uniform. Ten million men stand today ready to fire into each others ranks at a word. All this is the product of sin, the work of the devil. As I walked through the cemetery yesterday, where about seven thousand souls are buried, at the National Encampment at Dayton, I thought of the awful devastation the devil has made. As I thought of the thousands groaning,

crying and suffering on account of these things, my heart cried out for the time of peace, for the time of righteousness, for the time when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Thank God it is coming! All this war, all contention, all family quarrels, all domestic misunderstandings, all unkind words, and everything that would mar the peace, thank God, it is going to be at an end forever.

But we are in the greatest warfare of all the ages. We are called to be soldiers in a conflict, the issues of which are to astonish the assembled multitudes of the universe. All the inhabitants of multiplied thousands of worlds will stand with uncovered heads and witness the outcome of this great conflict in which you and I are engaged. As horrific as war is the Holy Ghost has frequently used military life, military appointments, and military rules as a type of our conflict in this great struggle against the powers of earth and hell. In this chapter, to which I call attention this afternoon, the Holy Ghost uses a figure familiar to all Bible students. The more we study it the deeper we enter into it the more it is developed and the more profoundly we are impressed that this warfare is the conflict of the ages. It is not only the battle of life but the battle of eternity. Thank God we are called to be soldiers of the cross, followers of the Lamb; and with the assurance that all rebellion is going to be put down, and that the arch fiend, who has given all the trouble that they have ever had in heaven, and who was cast into the earth, and who has caused all the devastation and sorrow that this world has known, is going to be locked up in the bottomless pit forever. O, it is not going to be a thousand years only! This seems a long time, but all too short when we have nothing to do but live with the Lord and praise Him. Thank God, the time is coming when the glorious gospel shall triumph forever, and all the powers and forces of evil will be locked up where they can never again disturb or get at God's saints. Beloved, ours is a real conflict. No mere uniformed regiment; no mullen stalk fight; it is something that is real and will require all that God has provided for us in order that we may be successful in this warfare. A general never gains anything by allowing his army to undervalue the strength of the enemy. We never gain anything by dealing with sin and Satan flippantly or in a jocular way, as if to overcome and get the victory was a little matter, or by speaking of Satan as we speak of other enemies. Beloved, we have a tremendous foe. He is not almighty, but he is so mighty that we must wear all the panoply of heaven if we are to stand against him. He is not almighty, but so mighty that it will take the Mighty God to stand between us and him all the time. God is our only protection against the clutches of Satan.

Beloved, have you got the armor on today? Are you in the harness? Can you be trusted? Could the Lord appoint you and then go off and come back again and find you at your post? How are we to know? We are to know by testings. Have you been tested? When the Lord came back did he find you there? There is an experience where God can trust us and we will stand, and "having done all, stand." and then stand, and when there is nothing else to do just to stand. Glory to God! And so I find this afternoon in the message the Lord has given me, like calling your attention to the armor which He has provided for us.

The Holy Ghost has used the figure of the Roman armor and of the Roman soldier, and He knew what He was doing when He chose this figure to illustrate what we are to have, and what the results are to be. O, I thank God for that tenth verse, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might;" then the Holy Ghost tells us how; "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Then He tells us this is necessary, for "we wrestle not against flesh and blood," that is we have no common foe, we wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, and wicked spirits as well, and in high place -- in places where you would expect to find angels, you find devils; wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand in

the evil day.

This is an evil day. Say what you may it is a very evil day. While it is a day of blessedness and privilege to those who will be blessed, it is a day of awful apostasy, indescribable wickedness among those who have rejected the light. I would rather live today than at any time in the world's history. It is the Saturday evening of this age. The triumph is in sight. But it is a day when wicked men and seducers are waxing worse and worse. It is a day when this world is on a mad rush toward hell.

It is a day when the Church has gone into apostasy. It is a great surprise that preachers will tell us that the world is getting better, when we know that while all Protestantism was making three million professed converts among the heathen, the heathen have increased two hundred million. This is a day when eight hundred preachers a year leave the pulpit, go to law, to medicine, to merchandise, and to the devil. Take your pencil and paper and tell me how long it would take for Protestantism to save the world at the present rate.

This is a day when not one person in ten professing Christians, knows anything about vital godliness and spirituality. Ministers and people are as destitute of a real knowledge of God and of spiritual things as if they had never heard the gospel. O, these are awful days! But, thank God there is an armor, there is an outfit in which the follower of the cross can conquer. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." These are days when many have the form of godliness but are denying the power.

The apostle said "from such turn away." The time has come when we have to take to the caves and the dens and dugouts. A full gospel is driven to the halls and street corners, and brush arbors, and canvas tents. The synagogues, the temples and steeple houses will not receive it. We must stand shoulder to shoulder and go through with the King. Turn away from everything and everybody who will not follow Jesus. The Holy Ghost not only calls us to put on the whole armor but tells us what it is, piece by piece.

The first is the girdle. The military girdle serves three purposes. First, to bind the loose flowing garments worn in those days, which otherwise would be a hindrance in battle. Second, to strengthen the loins; and third, as a protection or defense, often having a wide piece of brass attached to it. You remember that Elisha said to Gehazi, "Gird up thy loins and run to the house of the Shunamite." And John the Baptist wore a strip of the skin of an animal around his loins. The military girdle often had an ornament of either silver or brass. Our girdle is the girdle of truth. It will bind up all the loose and flowing graces, and strengthen us for the conflict. "Truth," that is what the Bible students are here for. This is where you dig truth like they dig gold in Colorado or the Klondike. Now, we must have the truth to save us from our early education, from our notions, from our prejudices, from our denominational proclivities. We must have something from which there can be no appeal, no mistake whatever.

We must fill our heads and our hearts and our mouths with this truth. Under the Mosaic dispensation they had it on their foreheads, on the front of the houses they lived in; they had the truth everywhere. They were commanded to teach it to their children; to quote it when they rose up and repeat it when they lay down; and no doubt they had it in their dreams and it was with them all night.

The "breastplate of righteousness" is true holiness. This piece covered the heart. A great many people have thought it was for their heads. There is no breastplate for the head. The breastplate of righteousness was for the heart. It is the only thing that will protect the heart, that will turn away the shafts of evil, that will turn to one side the darts of Satan. A clean heart is not only clean but it is fortified, it is possessed, it is guarded. The angel of the Lord protects a clean heart. The Holy Ghost lives within. "The angel of the Lord

encampeth round about" clean people and protects them. If you are not sanctified wholly you ought to have nothing on hand until this work is accomplished.

Let us be sure we have our "peace" shoes on; "our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." It may seem strange that we go to war with peace shoes on. This is one of the paradoxes of the gospel. We war not with men but our war is with sin and with the devil. We hate sin; we dare to attack sin wherever we find it, whether in high places or low places, at the same time having the peace of God in us and covering us all over. Now, if we have not an experience in which we are kept under all circumstances, there is something radically wrong. In all our conflicts we must be kept placid within. It is the other man that must be disturbed. We must keep sweet. We may preach and pray and sing. Satan may be roaring on all sides but we are kept as peaceful as a Spring morning, and "He spreads a table before us in the presence of our enemies. Brother, have you got this peace? Are you saved so that when you deliver a message, and it stirs people up to answer back that it does not stir you up? Is the armor on? Is it comfortable? Does it chafe? If there is irritability there is a mistake somewhere.

Then you notice that we must have the sword. We must take the sword up by the handle and not by the blade. If we take it up by the blade we will cut ourselves; if we take it by the handle and wield it right we may have victory, no matter how hard the battle. This Word, backed up by the Holy Ghost, is sharper than any two edged sword. Beloved, I want you to feel that you are equipped. If you have on the whole armor of God you have nothing to fear, nothing to dread. You do not have to carry a fallen countenance. You are ready for action, ready to die with the armor on. O, it is a wonderful privilege. I want to die on the fresh dirt of the breastworks of the enemy, doing my best at the front. How many in this school are ready for war? How many are ready, not only to live on hard tack, but to go without anything, and are willing to live or die any death for the sake of your Commander?

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