

God's Armor

(For Soldiers: Armor is Better Than a Thin Cotton Shirt!)

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:3,4). Merely spiritual-sounding metaphor? But what if the devil knows you by name, knows where you live, knows your character? Are you armored against him?

God's Word describes the Christian life as warfare; identifies the devil as a vicious, cunning enemy; and urges the repentant sinner to be armored against his many weapons. Unfortunately, many wear only a thin cotton shirt.

The corporate seal of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association, is designed around Ephesians 6:11-17, which describes the "whole armor of God." Without the spiritual armor God's Word describes, we are unprotected from Satan and his wiles. It's time to check up and find out if our armor is in place; to find out if we and our loved ones are protected from the devil.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Have you ever noticed how Satan disappears when professing Christians discover one of their own has committed a sin?

Intellectually, millions of professing Christians believe there is a devil. They have, through study of their Bibles, determined his origin. They have read, or heard, about Christ being tempted of Satan. They have heard that the devil is a "roaring lion walking about, seeking whom he may devour." They have heard how he caused Herod to commit genocide against thousands of innocent little babies.

They have heard dozens of sermons, read books and articles, about Satan's wiles, his temptations, his demons, his subtle, deceptive ways. They imagine, in their minds, a wicked spirit being who is engaged in continual evil.

But then someone they know and love, someone they trust, comes short of their expectations and disappoints them.

Suddenly, outrage! Suddenly, she did it! He did it! They did it! Instead of the old cliché, "up jumped the devil," they seem to say, "away went the devil, and he did it on his own!"

And even this, believe it or not, is Satanic!

Your Bible says, "God is LOVE!" God is portrayed to us as instantly ready to forgive when His children are ensnared by Satan's evil tricks, and taken in sin. Like a loving parent, seeing a child doing something which could result in serious injury or death, God's emotions toward His children are positive ones; emotions of sorrow, of protectiveness, of understanding how His child could have been tempted, or misled, and a desire to forgive and protect against future mistakes.

Not so the spiritual Pharisee.

Spiritual Pharisaism is, first, self-righteous. It is harshly judgmental, critical! It preens itself in its own spiritual mirror, saying, "How thankful I am not like that evil person!"

Christ showed us exactly this example: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other

men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you [said Jesus Christ], this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14).

Notice that the Pharisee prayed with himself. His prayer was not accepted of God. God didn't hear his prayer. His attitude was one of self-righteous comparison with others.

He had no compassion, no empathy. He was incapable of saying, "Oh, look at this poor person, who is being attacked of Satan; who is being deeply hurt and spiritually injured by the evil arrows of the devil. How may I help this person overcome his trial?" Oh, no. Not the Pharisee. To him, it was all a matter of personal integrity—personal character—personal comparisons.

But the publican was feeling so wretchedly condemned because of his sin that he couldn't even approach God's altar. He could not raise his eyes. He struck himself on the chest with his own fist in self-revulsion and sick remorse. He acknowledged his sin, and begged God's mercy!

Your Savior, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, heard the publican's prayer, and rejected the self-righteous judgment of the Pharisee!

What are you? Are you a Pharisee, or are you a publican, in your attitude toward those who are victimized by the devil?

How Job Lost Everything From Satan's Attack

"Have you considered my servant Job?" asked God of the devil. Satan had presented himself before God when the angelic hosts were likewise appearing before God's throne.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Eternal, and Satan came also among them. And the Eternal said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Eternal, and said, >From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

God then asked the question above, and added "that there is none like him [Job] in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth [dreads, avoids] evil?"

"Then Satan answered the Eternal, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the Eternal said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Eternal" (Job 1:6-12).

We learn many important things from this encounter.

First, we learn that God calls conferences in heaven; that there are times when His angels appear before Him as if in accounting of their actions.

Second, we learn that Satan was not denied access to God's throne at this time.

Third, we learn Satan is not omnipresent; he has no ability to be everywhere at once, no ability to "project" his power over vast distances. He said he was "going to and fro" and "walking up and down" in the earth. First, he presented himself before God, and then he "went forth from the presence of the Lord."

Fourth, it is obvious he knew Job personally, no doubt because he had tried to corrupt him and had not been able.

Fifth, the reason Satan could not previously attack Job was because he knew God had "made an hedge about him," and about his property, and his family. Not only was God protecting Job, He was blessing his labors, so that Job was prospering. Therefore, we know God will both bless and protect those who serve Him. But Job was self righteous. God knew it. Satan did not. God allowed the devil to try Job almost to the breaking point, as a thorough study of the entire book of Job shows.

Sixth, we know Satan wanted to see Job fall; wanted to attack him personally. Satan knew Job's name and address.

True to form, Job's "friends" could only see Job as the sole perpetrator of whatever evil was causing him all this suffering and anguish! They tormented Job. They accused him. They railed at him for his alleged sins. They demanded he confess the great evil they were sure he had done. When Job deeply repented of his self-righteousness, which neither his friends nor the devil himself could seem to see, God said to Eliphaz the Temanite (one of Job's "friends"), "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath" (Job 42:7).

Instead of deeply empathizing with Job because Satan himself had attacked him, his so-called "friends" could only judge him, rail at him. Suddenly, there was no devil who powerfully tempts, lures, induces, incites, or attacks God's people.

Suddenly, to these judgmental men, Job was solely responsible for it all.

How do you and I react when we are deeply disappointed in someone we love? Do we react as the publican, or as the Pharisee? Do we judge and condemn, or do we pray for, and forgive?

Who, What, Is the Devil?

Is there a real devil? In the Western Christian-professing world, hundreds of jokes about heaven and hell, about God and Christ and Satan, about "Peter and the pearly gates" and the "other place" are common.

Prominent geological phenomena are named after the devil. The "Devil's Pinnacle," "Devil's Punch Bowl," "Devil's Rock," "Devil's Canyon," and "Devil's Cave" are only a few. People eat "devil's-food cake," or say, "The devil made me do it."

People speak of a mischievous child as a "little devil," or wonder aloud, "I wonder what got into him?" "What could have possessed him to do such a thing?" they ask. Sports teams are called the "Blue Demons," or "Devils."

If one wanted to go to a costume ball dressed as the "devil," one would automatically look for the proverbial red body stocking with wicked little horns, spade beard, waxed, thin mustache, a long, pointed tail, and a trident to go along with it.

Ancient woodcuts picture Satan as a snake entwined around an apple tree, hissing to Eve, who is handing her simpleton husband an apple. The devil is pictured in mythology as half-man, half-goat, or half-man, half-horse, or in various other weird ways. People think they would immediately recognize the devil if he suddenly rang their doorbell. But they are completely ignorant and deceived. And guess who deceived them? Read Revelation 12:9 to find out.

Satan was originally a brilliant, shining, super-intelligent creature, right next to God's throne in beauty and power. His name was Lucifer, which means "shining star of the dawn," or "light bringer." He was called one of

the cherubim, the great creatures who attend God's throne, and who were seen to transport the throne of the One Who became Christ.

Notice: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God: thou hast walked in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

Here, Lucifer, one of the three archangels named in the Bible, is said to have been one of the cherubs "that covereth."

Moses was instructed to design two "cherubims of gold" which would be placed over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant. God was said to "dwell between the cherubims " (1 Samuel 4:4).

Notice: "And thou shall make two cherubims of gold ... one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" (Exodus 25:18-20).

Cherubs are not little pink babies with tiny wings, floating around heaven with tiny bows and arrows. They are not "Cupid," nor is "cherubic" a term which means tiny, ruddy faced, naked, or cute, as sometimes applied to infants.

What was a cherub?

Let an eye witness describe them: "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet [like hooves of an ox]; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

"As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined together, and two covered their bodies" (Ezekiel 1:5-11).

Four faces? Four wings? These were like no creatures ever seen before. Yet, Ezekiel clearly recognized that each face of a man was the principal face; that the face of the lion was on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and, naturally, the face of the eagle on the reverse side, or behind the face of the man.

Commentators have long ago speculated on the various aspects of these cherubim. The man, as the supreme handiwork of God's creation, is over all other created physical beings. The ox is the largest, most versatile and powerful, the most useful of all domesticated animals. The lion is "king of beasts," while the eagle is the most majestic of all winged creatures, traditionally the symbol of power, might, freedom, strength, or war. The eagle is a symbol found on the crests of many governments and kingdoms, as is the lion.

Study the entire first chapter of Ezekiel, together with Ezekiel 10 and Isaiah 6. While each cherub had four different aspects, it is obvious our eye witness, Ezekiel, knew which one of the four to dub "cherub." Notice: "And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle" (Ezekiel 10: 14).

Since the face of an ox is the only face not described, in this passage Ezekiel indicates that the "face of a cherub" is the face of an ox.

What did Eve see in the garden?

Believe it or not, the Bible does not describe the physical aspect of the devil in Genesis 3. Though the English translations use the word serpent, probably because of the curse placed on the serpent (verse 14), the Hebrew word is nachash, and does not always indicate a snake.

The word is from a primary root which means, "To hiss (i.e. to whisper) (a magic spell), to prognosticate; to divine; enchanter, enchantment," among other things.

What Eve saw was a creature which was an enchanting, magnetic, whispering prognosticator, who was attempting to predict her future! No doubt, she saw one, or perhaps all, of the aspects of a cherub—albeit a perverted one.

This was not at all surprising to Eve, that a creature such as we see Ezekiel describing should talk to her. After all, she had no prior experience.

Notice that Satan appeared in person to the first family of creation. Contrary to some popular mythology, the devil was not speaking through a snake entwined around a tree, but was standing there before Eve, in person. What did she see? Was it all four faces of the cherub, with the huge body of an ox, claws and tail of a lion, and wings of an eagle?

When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden after their sin, God "placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). Notice that they were placed at the eastward approaches to the garden. Jewish tradition says the garden was probably in modern-day Palestine, with its center in the mountains around Jerusalem. Whether true or not, it is obvious no wayfarer or explorer in that ancient time could approach from the west. And what is to the west of ancient Eden? The Mediterranean Sea!

Ancient Myths and Superstitions

As the human family increased, no doubt there were those among the grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren of Adam and Eve who heard the tales of their ancestors' expulsion from Garden of Eden.

Remember, the Garden of Eden continued to exist until the flood of Noah's time one-sixth of all human history from creation until now.

What would they have seen if they got too close?

Examine the ancient monuments, palaces, hieroglyphics, pictographs, sculpture, and idols. What do you see? Almost always, you see some combination or other of cherubim.

On the walls and gates of ancient Babylon were huge oxen, with men's faces, eagles wings, and lion's claws and tails. The famous Sphinx of Egypt is a lion with a man's head. On the walls of Egyptian tombs one finds men with eagles' heads.

Also, since the Bible speaks of a seraph as a "winged, flying serpent," and since there are no vowels in the Hebrew language, and since Satan is described as both a "serpent," and a "dragon," it is not surprising to find Quetzalcoatl, or the winged serpent" god of the Aztecs and other Mexican and Central and South American Indian civilizations.

Myths like that of "St. George and the Dragon," or myths depicting a dragon crouching in front of a castle at the end of a precipitous hill, a dragon who guards treasure of inestimable value, and who comes roaring out breathing smoke and fire to frighten away intruders, no doubt have their origin from ancient tales of pre-flood people—tales perpetuated by Noah's children.

God commanded Israel not to worship "the host of heaven." The heavenly host included cherubim and seraphim. Satan is a corrupted cherub, and drew fully one third of the angelic creatures of heaven with him in his rebellion (Revelation 12:3).

Christ said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10: 18). The Bible says that "his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth..." (Revelation 12:4).

Long prior to the creation of Adam, Satan and his fallen angels, now perverted, demonic spirits, were chained by God's command to this earth. It was to these evil spirits Christ witnessed during the flood (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Peter 3:19,20), which was a type of the coming destruction of the earth by fire at the end of the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment (2 Peter 3:3-13).

We are not told how many angels there are. However, the Bible says that one-third of them followed Satan in his rebellion. They became evil spirits, demons, and are currently in tartaroo (falsely rendered "hell" in 2 Peter 2:4), which means a condition of imprisonment, or restraint. Since only three archangels—Lucifer, Michael, and Gabriel—are mentioned in the Bible, it follows that each of them commands one-third of the angels.

Notice: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

Satan has caused millions of humans to worship him by appearing in his many guises, as mentioned above. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

But Satan's greatest deception of all is his masquerading as an angel of light, which is exactly what he used to be!

The "Angel of Light" and His Ministers

A deceived person can be the nicest person you ever met. A deceived person can be honest, faithful, loyal, generous, forgiving, kind, friendly, decent, fair, hard-working, thrifty, bubbling over with personality, outgoing, charming—the kind of person you would like to be.

You see, deception has nothing to do with conscious, deliberate choice! By its very nature, deception is something which appears right. It appears attractive, good, even righteous and holy! A deceived person can be a very sincere, believing person!

When you don't know something, you don't know that you don't know it! That does not make you a bad character. It does not mean you are dishonest! If you HONESTLY DON'T KNOW, then you are HONEST about something of which you are in complete ignorance.

Satan is the great deceiver. He is the master of subtle deception; the superb actor who produces misdirection, misinformation, illusion; the greatest magician of all time. He is a counterfeiter.

A counterfeit one hundred dollar bill may have passed through your hands at one time or another, and you never

knew it. It takes a real professional, sometimes with sophisticated scanning machines, to determine whether a bill is counterfeit or genuine. If such occurred, you were unwittingly passing on a completely worthless piece of paper. Yet, you were wholly innocent of any wrongdoing.

So it is with Satan's myths, superstitions, false doctrines, and lies. Millions believe them. Millions cling to them with a tenacity that would amaze a frightened wildcat! They believe their false doctrines. They believe their false ministers! They are good people. Just good deceived people.

If the devil can deceive good people, he is content. Remember, now, what you read in the beginning about the fanciful ideas people have concerning the devil; how he sounds, looks, and acts. Now, let's see if those ideas are biblical or not.

"But if our gospel be hid [obscured, not understood], it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).

Millions think they believe the gospel. That is, they believe a Person called Jesus Christ was the Son of God; they believe He died for the sins of the world; they believe He is the Savior of all mankind; they believe on Him, and they "accept Him as their personal Savior."

But these same millions imagine a "Jesus Christ" who did away with God's laws. They imagine a "Jesus Christ" who lived a righteous life in their stead. They imagine a "Jesus Christ" who had long hair, walked about in a white robe, carrying a shepherd's crook with a lamb in His arms, speaking platitudes. They imagine the "Jesus Christ" who is depicted in millions of pictures in Bible bookstores, or on colorful pages in family Bibles.

They believe in a "Jesus Christ" who could easily be picked out of any crowd, from the Super Bowl to a political convention. They believe in a "Jesus Christ" who abrogated God's laws about which animals are unclean, and not fit to eat; who did away with any requirements to keep God's Sabbath days, weekly or annual; who "nailed the law to the cross."

Suppose your father was a World War II veteran. Suppose he told you, hundreds of times, about one of his favorite buddies who had saved his life overseas. He described this buddy, whose name, shall we say, was "Aloisious Percival McGillicuddy," as about 5 feet, 2 inches tall, missing his right leg, left eye, and most of his hair. According to the descriptions your father has repeatedly emphasized, "Good old McGillicuddy" was a wizened, stooped, horribly wounded veteran, with a black eye-patch, tattoos on both forearms, and limped about with his prosthetic leg, telling jokes in his squeaky, rasping voice with a Brooklyn accent.

For years—decades—your father had told you about good old McGillicuddy. So many stories had he told you—exploits of heroism; how it was that McGillicuddy lost his eye and his leg because he dove on a grenade to save his buddies; how brave he had been in the hospital—that you came to feel, over the years, that you KNEW Aloisious P. McGillicuddy.

Then one day the doorbell rang.

You went to the door, and standing there was a man about 6 feet tall with the build of an athlete. Two steady blue-grey eyes looked down at you. His arms had no tattoos, and he was standing on two good legs. He had a shock of straw-blond hair, a commanding presence, and a deep bass voice without accent.

"Hello there," said the stranger, putting out his hand, "My name is Aloisious Percival McGillicuddy. Is your father home?"

Would you be shocked?

To millions of professing Christians, if a person approached them in a vision or a dream, or if someone approached them in person, looking exactly like all the pictures of "Jesus" one sees festooning the walls of a Bible bookstore; if such a person said, "Hello, I am Jesus Christ, may I come in?" They would immediately swing the door wide open!

And guess who would be entering?

But don't take my word for it. Let's see what the Bible says:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11: 13-15).

How does Satan appear?

Not as the "Satan" depicted by mythology and popular belief! He doesn't come to you as a grinning "devil" wearing a red body stocking with black beard and mustache, little horns, hissing lies, with smoke and flames just behind his spear-pointed tail.

Oh, no. Not at all. No, his favorite costume, his favorite masquerade, is to pass himself off as Jesus Christ! He is a "false Christ" who is accepted as the real Jesus by millions!

Jesus Himself said so! "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you as wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15, paraphrased).

A wolf knows it is not a sheep. The devil knows he is not Jesus. A false prophet knows what he is.

Do you suppose there are those "out there" in the field of televangelism and religion who know they are nothing but con men" who are mostly concerned about money?

Or are you so deceived, so self-righteous and "good," that you would not dare to admit to yourself some of those you see and hear are deliberate frauds, fakes, charlatans, crooks and liars?

Your Creator, and the real Jesus Christ of Nazareth, warn you very solemnly to beware of false prophets; warn you that even the devil himself is "transformed" as an "angel of light."

What Is the Main Message of Satan's Ministers?

Satan is the original "rebel without a cause." He became jealous of God, lustful of His power. Not content with the brilliant, beautiful status God had allotted him; not content with the whole earth as his domain, he coveted heaven! He coveted God's power and majesty. He wanted to be the one "in charge."

He attempted to overthrow God.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning [bright, morning star]! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou has said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds [he was on this earth]: I will be like the Most High"

(Isaiah 14:12-14).

In this antitype of the king of Babylon, Satan is described as having lusted after God's own throne.

Ezekiel wrote, "Thou [Lucifer] wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise, they have filled thee with violence, and thou has sinned..." (Ezekiel 28:15,16).

The second part of this quotation makes little sense in the old King James English. Who are "they"? What is the meaning of "By the multitude of thy merchandise?"

The word merchandise in Hebrew is rekullah, which is the feminine past participle of rakal, meaning "to travel for trading." Our English expressions going about, trafficking, traveling here and there, or going to and fro in business make the meaning plain.

It was not passive things, or "merchandise," as in items stored on the shelves of a market that filled Lucifer with violence. Rather, it was his continual "trafficking" in, going to and fro, talking, reasoning, arguing, surmising, influencing the angelic hosts under him, and convincing himself that he was treated unfairly! His "business" was to persuade, to continually attempt to influence the angelic hosts under his command that God was "unfair."

Lucifer is depicted as "walking to and fro" and "going up and down" in the earth. Even in the warning about him as Satan, God's Word says he is like a pacing, caged lion, walking back and forth.

The true sense of this obscure verse should be: "Because of the vast amount of your going about, trafficking in resentment, jealousy, vanity, and hostility toward God, you became filled with wrath and violence."

Then comes the indictment: "Thou hast sinned."

Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). The first four commandments tell us how to love and serve God, and the last six tell us how to love and serve our fellow man. Satan was putting himself in the place of God. He was deeply afflicted, like the mythological Narcissus, with self-adoration. He worshipped himself, his beauty, his brilliance, his self-perceived perfection.

Sin breaks God's commandments, and is therefore rebellion against God. "Therefore I will cast thee as profane [the opposite of holy or sacred, meaning plain, common, base] out of the mountain of God..." (Ezekiel 28:16).

Satan's entire being is deeply enmeshed in hatred of authority, resentment toward law, anger toward restraint, loathing of God's Ten Commandments.

Lucifer was created with free moral agency. He could choose whether to obey God, remain faithful to His Creator and serve Him in gratitude for his high station, or rebel against Him.

We have no idea how long the process of Lucifer's corruption took; no idea how long he had been "going about" with his subtle arguments and hints against God, of how "unfair" God was. Measured in human terms, the process could have consumed millions of years. In any event, Lucifer finally became completely corrupted, hostile toward God. He mounted up in rebellion with all his equally perverted, resentful, hostile angels and tried to overthrow God.

The original "Star Wars" was the great battle, perhaps more than 4.5 billion years ago between Lucifer and his angels and God and His loyal angels. Our space probes and powerful telescopes show us the result of great destruction in the universe. Billions of huge burning balls of gas; billions of lifeless, pockmarked planets; billions of empty, misshapen, scarred moons; massive quantities of debris like dust, rocks, asteroids, comets,

meteors are found in space.

The lifeless face of our own moon, and the empty, lifeless face of Mars and the other planets, like the thick clouds of gas around Venus (the names are all pagan) testify to an ancient chaotic time. Even the most cherished theory of the no-God evolutionists for creation itself is called the "Big Bang," in which they theorize a vast explosion, which is the ultimate violence, caused an expanding universe and brought about the forming of the solar system.

The primary focus of Satan has always been resentment against God's laws! Satan is the crown prince of nihilism; of anarchy, rebellion, chaos, disorder, caprice, randomness, happenstance, and amorality.

And what is the primary focus of Satan's ministers today? As if with one voice, they shout, wheedle, argue, write, preach, cajole, reason, whimper, cry and whisper, "The law is done away!" "There is nothing you must do to be saved," they cry. "Just BELIEVE."

But the devil believes. His demons believe (James 2:19). More than "believe," they know! Satan knows the Bible, and could quote it to you by memory backward!

Today, millions "believe" on the "Lord Jesus Christ."

They "believe" He was the Son of God, that He died for our sins, and that He was resurrected and sits on the right hand of God.

But they will not obey Him!

Christ cried out, "WHY CALL YE ME, LORD, LORD, AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?" (Luke 6:46).

Notice that the judgment of Satan's ministers will be because of the very thing they so vehemently preach against WORKS!

"Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11: 15).

Today, as billions of years ago, the subtle, lying, charming, reasoning, influential voice of Satan says, "Only believe; there is nothing you must do; you need not worry about laws and "legalism"; you need not worry about doing what God says with regard to His law [don't you know Christ nailed all that to His cross?]-you need not worry about obeying God; only believe."

But Christ said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments [whichever ones men think are "least"], and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:19).

God says faith without works as evidence of your faith is dead! (James 2:17).

Identify Your Enemy

What is the single most important piece of information a battlefield commander could possess? It is intelligence-the knowledge of exactly who his enemy is, what his enemy intends to do, when and how he intends to do it.

Those who have read The Man Called Intrepid, or books about the "Ultra" secret during World War II, know how vastly important it was to a handful of top allied officials to know, in advance, much of what Hitler was

going to do.

Unfortunately, what many millions of hopeful, professing Christians do not know is who their enemy really is, what he looks like, how to identify him, what his plans are, where and when he is most likely to attack.

Notice: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will!" (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

The devil said to God that he could not attack Job because God had "placed a hedge about him." But of these described by Paul in his letter to Timothy, the devil had no such problem. No, he could ensnare, entrap, capture, influence, enslave these people "at his will," meaning whenever he got good and ready, at his leisure.

What a horrible thought, if it were to apply to you, or to me! What if God were to mention your name to the devil? What if he were to ask about you, in the same way he asked about Job? Would the devil say, "Oh, HIM?" or, "Oh, HER? Well, with that one I have no problem at all. Whenever I feel like it, I just influence them a little, and they fall right in with what I want them to do"?

What kind of people are these?

Paul described them as people who prate about "foolish and unlearned questions" (2 Timothy 2:22), as well as those involved in strife and argument, and those who "oppose themselves," or who are continually in opposition. Immediately following this passage, Paul launches into his description of human nature in the raw just as you and I see it being lived all about us.

He said, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves [narcissistic, filled with vanity], covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection [but with perverted, twisted, demonic lusts, such as lesbianism, sodomy, homosexuality], trucebreakers [look at Bosnia, Ireland, and countries all over the world], false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady [headstrong, self-willed] high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Millions today have a "form" of "godliness." They have rituals, ceremonies, clerical garb. They recite written prayers, and engage in "responsive reading." They light candles, and insert scraps of paper in walls, trees, and niches in churches. They kneel, bob, scrape and weave. They crawl, and make signs on their heads and chests. They have a "form" in everything they do.

But they deny the power of God. They deny His authority to rule over them. They deny His laws! They will not obey God's Ten Commandments.

The carnal mind loves itself, not God.

Satan loves carnality. Human nature is carnal, meaning purely physical, fleshly; of the human lusts and appetites.

Satan will continually appeal to those lusts and appetites, particularly the most powerful appetites of human beings, those of the taste, of the feelings, of the smell, of the five senses. Millions are deeply tempted over physical drives and Compulsions involving sex. Millions of marriages are destroyed, lives ruined, by adultery, pornography, incest, "wife swapping," child abuse, and illegitimacy. The cost in human life the divorces, desertions of children, abortions, rape, beatings, and murder—is simply incalculable, and all because of the

blatant, screaming, continual assault of Satan the devil against our society about sex.

As I write, a major flap is being discussed in the news media over ads for a kind of denim jeans, which picture dozens of semi-nude teenagers on billboards, in magazines, and on television. The message of the ad, and hundreds like it, is clear to impressionable young minds.

Satan will attack you in your very weakest point. What is it? Is it overeating? The wrong kind of music? Is it the lust of the eye, or physical cravings for sexual fulfillment?

God says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the LAW of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). Satan is exactly this! He is in rebellion against God's law! Human nature is primarily made up of vanity, jealousy, lust, and greed. It is a mixture of a certain amount of "good," in a carnal, human way (which we call "humanitarianism," congratulating ourselves for being "human"), and a very unhealthy amount of evil.

Primarily, we human beings are completely engrossed in self. We think of self-serving, of pleasing and satisfying the self.

Satan takes captive at his leisure, just "for the fun of it," those whose physical appetites of vanity, jealousy, lust, and greed are continually exercised.

What Is the Armor of God?

Paul wrote that the "weapons of our warfare are not carnal [physical, material], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds..." (2 Corinthians 10:4).

God says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth..." (Ephesians 6:13,14).

Obviously, God's Word is using metaphor, or analogies, to illustrate a point. The Bible clearly says our armor is not material, or physical. It is spiritual, of the mind and heart.

Put another way, it is the armor of the intellect, combined with conscience, commitment, and emotion. It is not a flak jacket, or bullet-proof vest the Bible is talking about, any more than it is really talking about a literal shield or helmet of metal, or a steel sword, or a solid metal breastplate.

It is the kind of armor a tiny, 92 pound, 85-year-old lady could wear; the kind of armor a pregnant mother, or a logger in the woods could wear. It is spiritual, mental, intellectual.

It is the truth of God.

Protect Your Spiritual "Loins"

The loins, or that part of your body between the ribs and the hips, are regarded as not only the part of the body which should be "clothed," as opposed to the torso and legs, but the generative part of the body. Look up the word in your dictionary, in case you have forgotten. It will say, "The part of the body between the ribs and the hipbone. The part of the body that should be clothed, regarded as the seat of physical strength and generative power: "Kings shall come out of thy loins [Genesis 35:11]" (The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary).

When the Bible speaks of "girding up your loins," it means the practice of tucking the longer skirt, which would impede running, or hamper in battle, into the belt. The "loincloth" is worn around the hips, and between the upper thighs.

God says this vulnerable, vital part of our bodies (as a spiritual analogy) can be protected by God's truth.

The first part of God's armor is truth. Truth is the opposite of falsehood. Jesus said "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Complete freedom is freedom from fear, freedom from uncertainty and doubt, freedom from the shackles of physical, carnal appetite.

Satan the devil is the first liar in all history. Christ said to the posturing religious leaders of His day, who had a form of godliness, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning [he influenced Cain to kill his own brother], and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

When Christ appeared before Pontius Pilate, who had the power to release Him, He said, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate said unto Him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all..." (John 18:37-38).

In the moral and social revolutions which have swept the Western world of professing Christianity since World War II, there has been much written and said about "truth." "Moral relativism" has replaced right from wrong. The evolutionists, agnostics, and perverted philosophers of Satan's world have taught millions that "truth" is only a "relative" term, changing with the mood swings of the populace.

Perhaps nowhere is Satan's perverted lie about "moral relativism" so self-evident as in politics. Millions of Americans know many of their elected officials are practiced, deliberate liars; that they only say "what works" for them, to keep them in power.

Millions believe "cover up" is one of the foremost concerns of corrupt public officials. God's Word says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me, seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6).

Amorality, nihilism, and anarchy have replaced morality, right from wrong, and God's law. Today, millions of human beings are murdered before reaching birth, all in the name of the "law" protecting abortion. A multi-billion dollar pornography industry flourishes, corrupting youth, destroying marriages, perverting people's knowledge about sex, contributing to rape, and sado-masochistic, brutal crimes—all protected by the Supreme Court.

Our news is filled with sensational trials: the shotgun murders of two youths' parents; the bloody stabbing deaths of two victims in Los Angeles; the piteous death throes of two little boys as they slowly drowned, trapped in their own mother's car. We are stricken by hideous spectacles of massive murder and violence, like Waco and Oklahoma City.

As if crying out with a national voice of outrage, Americans today are like those characterized by Isaiah's stirring prophecies: "The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity [millions of Americans "waited for light" during the Waco hearings, and the Whitewater hearings into Vince Foster's death—but behold, obscurity!]; for brightness, but we walk in darkness....

"For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the Eternal, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity [honesty, fairness, integrity, veracity!] cannot enter!" (Isaiah 59:8-14).

These verses describe many Western societies today! They describe our judiciary, executive, and legislative branches of government. They describe many government agencies. And, sadly, they describe many professing "religious" people!

One of the most important pieces of "armor" for a Christian is the truth!

Yet, one of the biggest lies of professing "churchianity" is that Jesus Christ came to do away with God's law!

Jesus Christ said, "Think NOT that I am come to destroy the law..... Yet, millions are taught by their clergy that He did precisely that!

Christ said NOT to use "vain repetitions" when we pray, but millions, each Sunday morning, repeat the "Lord's Prayer" (it was not His prayer, but an outline of how we ought to pray) in responsive readings."

Christ told His disciples, after washing their feet, and giving them wine and bread on the fourteenth of Nisan at the Passover, "This DO as I have done unto you..... and millions of professing Christians simply will not do it!

The truth includes the truth about Who and What Is God; about Who was Jesus Christ before His human birth; about God's law, and whether the New Covenant does away with the Ten Commandments. The truth is the truth of the whole Bible, the truth of the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Christ is the living WORD, the "TRUTH," in metaphor, for He never spoke a single untrue word. His word, His example, His life, His death and resurrection, and His present-day High Priesthood represent the truth about Jesus Christ. But millions do not know the real Jesus Christ, even though they have heard the phonetic sound, in their tongue, of His name.

Are you one who is armored with the very truth of God? Are you thoroughly grounded, rock solid in the truth? Do you know the truth about pagan holidays, as contrasted with God's Sabbaths, both weekly and annual? Do you know the truth about the pagan doctrine of the "immortality of the soul," as contrasted with the "spirit in man," or the "human spirit" and its incredible potential? Do you know the truth about whether God's law has been done away?

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The next piece of armor Christians should wear is the breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14).

The chest, with its encircling ribs, protects the most vital organs in the body, the heart and the lungs. Always, soldiers in battle in ancient times sought to pierce the chest with their lances, spears, swords, or arrow. Such would usually be a fatal wound, as opposed to wounds on the arms or legs.

What is the Bible definition of "righteousness?"

Obviously, it comes from the word right. Right is the opposite of wrong. God is perfect righteousness. He is flawless, holy, just, perfect, RIGHTEOUS. Jesus Christ lived a perfect, righteous life.

But is "righteousness" defined as a series of "don'ts," such as "don't drink, don't dance, don't go to movies, don't smoke"? Millions of professing Christians have various concepts of righteousness.

Some believe it is righteous to wear a thick beard. With millions, there is something holy about human hair. Hair styles, hair lengths, the manner of braiding, curling, twining, piling, or dressing the hair becomes a laborious religious duty in various religions. Some women believe they should never cut their hair.

Other religious groups define "righteousness" as various restrictions on hair length, facial or bodily hair, various types of headgear, or clothing. The "righteous" uniform of some might be all black, with a severe hat for men, a bonnet, veil, scarf, or hat for women. To some, long, bushy sideburns (a perversion from General Burnside of the American Civil War, who effected generous hair growth along the sides of his face below his ears) are sinful, and should not be worn.

"Righteousness," to some, is the difference between a jacket and a necktie, or a casual shirt. It is the difference between being bareheaded in church, or wearing a hat or veil. It is the difference between driving an automobile, or plodding along behind a horse in a carriage.

It is sheer nonsense to believe God requires His people, no matter in what climate, geographical location, or ethnic background, to wear a uniform! God is not sitting in heaven, in His "heavenly armchair," looking down to check out whether this or that person has the right hair length or the correct skirt length. No, God does not judge by appearance, but by what goes on in the human heart, or conscience.

What is the Bible definition of righteousness?

David said, "My tongue shall speak of Thy word, for all Thy commandments are RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Psalm 119:172). The Ten Commandments of God are, by biblical definition, "righteousness."

God is Righteous. David prayed, "Righteous art Thou, O Eternal, and upright are Thy judgments. Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful" (Psalm 119:137,138).

The Ten Commandments comprise God's most basic laws. The first four tell us how to love God, while the last six tell us how to love our fellow man. The "testimonies" of God spoken of by David comprise every word God ever spoke. The Bible itself is the "testimony" of God.

Jesus said, when defeating Satan by using God's armor, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" (Matthew 4:4). Satan had just asked Jesus, Who was on the brink of starvation, to miraculously turn stones into warm, fragrant bread to eat. Christ countered Satan's evil thrust into Christ's mind, trying to tempt Jesus to give in to the power of the devil, by the Word of God. Christ, through forty days and nights of fasting and prayer, was heavily armored against Satan's darts and spears.

"Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" means the entire "testimony" of God. It means all the Bible.

Modern philosophers sneer and scoff at God's laws. To millions, moral relativism is the order of the day. To them, every conceivable human situation, from murder to rape, from lying to abortion, "depends" upon circumstances.

But they are merely educated fools, without the knowledge of God, and with no fear of God.

Millions of humans, in dozens of societies, know the difference between "right" and "wrong." Hundreds of human societies know it is wrong to steal from one another, wrong to murder someone, wrong to be disobedient to parents.

Lacking God's law, they are a "law unto themselves." Paul wrote, "For when the Gentiles [nations], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14,15).

God has given to humanity a conscience. It is a part of human nature, when living together in a community, to seek the most functional method of harmony, mutual protection, productivity, and happiness. Therefore, many human societies, "do by NATURE the things contained in the law."

This is merely to illustrate the point that all human societies, to some degree or other, recognize the difference between right and wrong. By no means is this biblical righteousness, but it certainly gives the lie to "situation ethics," and the simpering excuses of liberal extremists who would make sodomy an act of love, and the murder of millions of the unborn a "choice" for young mothers.

God's Word clearly points out what is "righteousness." It is living by every word of God (Matthew 4:4); living according to God's perfect law; living the life of Christ; living a life of faith, of love, and of obedience!

"And Your Feet Shod With the Preparation Of the Gospel Of Peace"

The gospel is the "good news" about the coming Kingdom of God. It is the message Christ brought from His Father in heaven to deliver to His disciples (John 8:26,28,38).

It includes all the truth about the central Figure of that coming kingdom, its King, Jesus Christ; the facts concerning His pre-human existence (John 1; Hebrews 1), His birth, His lonely sacrifice; His teaching, His example, His death, His burial, and His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

Millions have heard what they believe is the "gospel," not knowing it is "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6). They have heard "about" Jesus Christ. They have been told He died for the sins of the world, but have never really understood what is sin (1 John 3:4), nor been truly informed of what it is they should repent.

They have been told they should "believe on Him," without being told they must also believe what He said!

They have been told they should "accept Him" without being told they should obey Him (Luke 6:46).

If you are going to hike for twenty miles over the mountains, you need good, sturdy boots. In your walk through life,

God's Word says part of your equipment—your armor for your very important vehicle of travel, your feet—Is the gospel of peace."

Isaiah cried, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings [the gospel of Jesus Christ!], that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing..." (Isaiah 52:7,8).

In my own case, I have said dozens of times, "I will just keep putting one foot in front of another, plodding along, doing what I am supposed to be doing with my life, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness and a warning to the world." I have described my calling of preaching, teaching, writing, as a "walk" through life. What about you? Are your feet "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"?

If you do not truly understand the real gospel of the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached, it is as if you are wearing thin, worn, shoddy boots which allow every stick, rock or thorn you encounter to pierce your feet; which allow your feet to blister, and become so badly injured that you simply cannot take another step!

"The Shield of Faith"

"Above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]" (Ephesians 6:16).

What is faith? God's Word answers, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11: 1). Faith is the rock-solid conviction that what God has promised He will perform.

The entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews is written to illustrate the powerful faith of believing men and women over the centuries.

Not only this, but having the faith to know, from the clear evidence right beneath our feet of the earth itself, that God is the Creator; that He is the Original Maker, Lifegiver, Lawgiver, and Sustainer of all that He made.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 1:3).

It was not until the discovery of the atom that man began to learn that matter is merely energy, compacted into various forms. A molecule is the smallest divisible particle of matter which can be identified according to its properties. But each molecule is made up of atoms, which are invisible to the human eye, even under a powerful microscope.

Each atom is made up of many particles. An atom is like a tiny universe, with electrons, neutrons and protons whizzing about in microseconds. Thus, everything we can see and know, such as the rocks beneath our feet; trees, grass, soil, animals; even our own bodies, are composed of energy, compacted together in highly structured form.

We know by looking at His handiwork that God created all things: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world [by looking at the physical creation] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).

Faith is assurance. It is positiveness. It is doubtless. It is solid, knowing conviction.

A perfect definition of faith is found in reference to the great test God placed before Abraham concerning Isaac's birth: "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; AND BEING FULLY PERSUADED THAT, WHAT HE HAD PROMISED, HE WAS ABLE ALSO TO PERFORM" (Romans 4:19-21).

When God said it, Abraham believed it.

Abraham is called "the father of the faithful" because of his example of faith, coupled with obedience.

James writes of the evidence of our faith: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:17,18).

Faith is how thousands of families over the decades trusted God with regard to their jobs and income when they lost a job because of God's Sabbath or annual holy days. Faith is how thousands have been healed of sickness and disease.

Faith is a shield against doubt, against mistrust of God.

But faith cannot be "whipped up" by we human beings. We cannot simply say to ourselves, "Now, I must have faith about this or that problem."

Believe it or not, it is not our faith in Christ that is the kind of faith God wants us to have, but His faith placed in us!

Notice: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith OF the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

God gives us faith.

It takes faith to forgive. When Christ told His disciples they must forgive their brother up to seven times in one day for sinning against them, they said, "Lord, INCREASE our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed [one of the smallest of all seeds], ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you" (Luke 17:1-6).

A huge gap in the armor of God would be the lack of faith to forgive a brother or sister for sin. God says, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured unto you again" (Luke 6:37,38).

Faith means absolute, unquestioning belief. It means knowing, not just thinking maybe. Consider: If you are on Social Security, like so many millions of America's elderly, and you receive your government check, do you have the slightest iota of a doubt that when you endorse it and cash it or deposit it in your bank it is good? Of course not!

So you have faith in the U.S. government to that extent.

If you set out in your automobile to a distant location which you have never seen before, with a map before you, do you have faith that the map is correct? Of course you do!

It seems easy to place our faith in human cartographers, or automobile salesmen, or employers, or the government. It should be even easier to place our faith in God!

A final caution: Many people "worry" their faith! When sick, or in terrible trauma, emotionally, or in financial trouble, they cannot seem to let go of the situation. They seem unable to turn the entire matter over to God, IN FAITH, and then patiently wait for His answer.

Instead, many people "pick at" their faith. They "worry" it, like a puppy shaking a rag, or a kitten playing with a roll of yam.

Often when we ministers pray, we acknowledge in our prayer to God our utter helplessness to really "do" anything about the heart-rending letters read. Some months ago, we read of a precious little three year old girl whose mother had a live-in "boyfriend." The girl was illegitimate, from another boyfriend. The live-in urged his girlfriend to have an abortion. She refused, and gave birth to her baby.

We had to hear the horrible story of how the boyfriend had beaten the little girl until she is so badly brain damaged she will never walk again. Tears welled up in my eyes, and my breath came short, as happens every now and then when we hear such sickening, cruel stories.

All we can do is tell God, "We have no strength or power of our own. We can do nothing of ourselves. All we can do is hold up these sad, pleading letters to you; to pray over them, to ask in faith for your divine intervention. Then, we must get up, go our way, doing our work for this day, and leave the result with you!"

So it is with our own daily lives. We need to let go of the faith we have—not "worry it," and keep looking on the negative side of things. We need to learn to leave the result with God!

When we do this, in faith, we have a big, strong, thick shield in place against Satan's evil influences.

"And Take the Helmet of Salvation"

The most important part of your body is protected by the strongest bones—the bones of your skull. Your brain is encased, like a helmet, more than any other part.

It is the part of your body that, if grievously injured, can more quickly kill you, or completely incapacitate you. You truly are your mind. You "live" inside your brain.

Perhaps you have known a person who has lost a limb. He or she might say, "I lost my leg in an automobile accident." The person is still there, with perhaps a prosthetic leg. But the personality, the memory, the character, the conscience, the decision-making ability—all are intact, for the mind is unhampered by even such a massive injury to the body as loss of a limb.

God's Holy Spirit comes to engender a new spirit creature in our minds when we surrender, in heart-broken repentance to God; when we are baptized, symbolizing the death, burial and resurrection of the "old man" (Ephesians 4:22), and have hands laid upon us for the receiving of His Spirit (Acts 2:38).

You and I have a human spirit. Millions call it the "soul," thinking it survives, consciously, when the body dies. This is not true. It IS true that there is a spirit connected to our brain; that the "spirit in man" gives us our humanity, our conscience, our ability to feel empathy for others, and our capacity for forgiveness. It is this "human spirit" that lifts man above all animals.

It took two lives to produce your one life. Your father's life united with your mother's life in her womb, and in an instant of time you were a living, human creature, destined to be formed, shaped and created in the womb of your mother. From the instant of conception, the genetic code from your two parents had already determined your general characteristics; your appearance, coloring, kind of hair and skin, your proclivities—even talents, such as music, art, sports, and the like.

This is merely a physical analogy for how God begets each of us as His own child, to be formed and shaped through prayer, study of God's Word, living a life of overcoming Satan and the world; being gradually developed within the "womb" of the Church of God, until we are finally to be born into God's own family (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

God's Holy Spirit does not come into our elbow, or our ankles, or our kneecap. It comes into our mind, but into the part of our mind, the frontal lobes of our brain, that contains the spirit, the human spirit that God gives us at our first breath, if not earlier.

Paul wrote, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin [the "old man" has died, for the wages of sin is death], but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive!] your mortal bodies by His Spirit That dwelleth in you For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of sonship [margin], whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:8-15).

These are vitally important scriptures.

First, notice that God has not given us the spirit of "fear." Fear is the deadly enemy of faith. Fear is uncertain, unknowing, apprehensive, unsure.

Unfortunately, there are thousands of believing, professing Christians who are not really sure of their salvation!

Worse, there are thousands whose own ministers have KEPT them in constant fear of "losing out" on salvation! Have you been one such?

Think back. Do you remember sermons which have beaten you down, frightened you, made you fearful that you would be "put out," or that you would not "make it" into God's Kingdom? Have you left church meetings on occasions where you were virtually trembling in fear because you knew you could never become as "righteous" and "close to God" as you assumed the minister in the pulpit was?

Now, notice: "The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:16).

When you were being formed in the womb, the life of your father bore witness with the life of your mother that you were to become a member of your own family. You would inherit your place as a full-fledged family member. You were not born as a lesser creature, placed in a little house out back, or a cage. No, you were tenderly nurtured, nursed, changed, powdered, fed, protected, and taught. You were lovingly received into the bosom of your family!

If we are heirs with Christ, what did Christ inherit?

He said, "All POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). "All the gold and silver is Mine," God says. Christ rules the universe. He will soon return to this earth to rule it with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26; 20:4). If you and I are to be co-heirs with Christ, we are to share in HIS vast, powerful inheritance!

This is what salvation is all about! Salvation is to receive the very Mind, Nature, and Spirit of our Heavenly Father into our minds, coupled with our human spirit, to create a new creature in Christ within us!

Notice: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To possess the "helmet of salvation," you need to know you are saved! Notice that! I did not say "think" you are saved; or "hope" you are saved! I said you need to KNOW your ARE SAVED!

God's Word tells us that salvation is complete when God's Holy Spirit begets us as His children! Just as you were human, and a member of your family from the instant of conception, so it is that, at the moment God places His Holy Spirit with your human spirit, you become a child of God, a "new creature in Christ."

Scripture tells us, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record..." NOTICE THIS! NEVER FORGET IT! "...that God HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. "

This is past tense! It is a past act. It is something which has already been accomplished, not something which is yet to be decided, or something still in doubt!

Notice further these absolutely wondrous, encouraging, inspiring words: "He that hath the Son HATH LIFE;

and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11,12).

I know of thousands of people who were continually kept in doubt of their salvation. They were never given the peace of mind to know that they HAD BEEN SAVED when they were baptized after repentance, when they received God's Holy Spirit through the laying-on of hands.

It was terrible of harsh, overbearing "ministers" to keep thousands of God's children in doubt; in trembling fear; not knowing, always wondering!

Instead, they should have been encouraged to pick up, and put on, the "helmet of salvation," knowing they were saved, and to face the decisions of each day with confidence and with faith!

The way to wear the "helmet of salvation" is to know you are saved, to know you are the child of God, to know you are a "new creature in Christ," to know you will be in God's Kingdom. That way, you will be wearing the "helmet of salvation" when you wage your daily battle against Satan and the world!

The Sword of the Spirit

Notice that each piece of the armor of God we have learned of to this point is defensive armor. Now, we come to a weapon which is at once defensive and offensive.

A sword, together with a spear, is known as the most ancient weapon fashioned by man. Dozens of massive battles mentioned in the Bible are described as fought with swords and spears. During the time of Jesus Christ, the Roman "short sword" was worn by the hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Roman legions. It was thick, powerful, and for battle close up and personal.

As you know, a sword is a cutting weapon. Many swords were designed to cut through body armor, or to slice through shields of leather or thin metal. The famous Claymore of the Scots was a two-handed sword. The sword of Goliath was huge. It was wielded by David after he took it from the dead body of the giant (1 Samuel 21:9; 22: 10). The famous samurai swords of Japan were noted for their incredible strength, temper, and razor sharpness.

God tells us, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which IS the word of God."

The sword of the soldiers of Christ is not a sword of metal. It is neither a rapier, or a Claymore, or a samurai, or a Roman short sword. It is the Word of God.

The Word of God is the whole Bible, the revelation from God, the divine Sovereign, to His creation. His Word begins at the beginning, "Genesis," which is what the word means, and ends with the "Revelation" into the future beyond the end of the writing of the Bible.

Jesus Christ said to Satan, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). What is that Word? It is all of the Holy Scriptures.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:13-15).

The only "Holy Scriptures" which were extant from Timothy's childhood (Paul wrote these words only about thirty to forty years after Christ's resurrection) were the Scriptures we know as the Old Testament. Yet, millions of professing Christians have been totally deceived into thinking the Old Testament is done away. Millions go to churches each week, hearing only a few flowery platitudes, but are not taken through detailed studies of

God's Word, including the Old Testament.

Notice that the Old Testament Scriptures are able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Paul continued, "All scripture [the Old Testament—he did not presume to call his own letters "scripture"] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished [equipped! wearing his armor!] unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

When Satan thrust his evil temptations at Christ, Christ parried his thrusts with the Word of God, then used the Word of God to defeat the devil.

Satan would twist scripture. He would deliberately quote a portion of a passage, and then misapply it. He said to Jesus, after taking Him to the pinnacle of the Temple, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:5,16).

Notice Satan said "IF Thou be the Son of God." He was attempting to appeal to vanity . He wanted Christ to bridle, to react angrily, and retort, "What do you mean, IF?" He wanted Christ to say, like so many carnal humans would have, "I'll show you whether I am the Son of God or not," and plunge down.

There is a story I heard in the Navy which beautifully illustrates this vain quirk of human nature. It seems a raw recruit, called a "boot," with his close-cropped head and brand-new blue work clothes had been assigned to buff the floors of the administration building at the Navy Training Depot in San Diego.

As he was working, the admiral, who was commandant of the whole base, came walking by. The boot looked up from his work, pulled out a pack of cigarettes, and said, "Hey, buddy! Gotta match?" Smiling, the admiral approached him.

Just as this happened, a chief petty officer rushed up, commanded the boot, "Atten-HUT!" He grabbed the cigarette out of the trembling boot's hand, made him salute the admiral, who returned the salute. The chief said in a loud voice, "You stupid boot! Don't you know who this? This is the admiral! This is the commanding officer of this base!" He then apologized to the admiral.

The admiral chuckled, then said to the boot, "That's alright son—but just never do something like that to an ensign! " An ensign is the lowest commissioned rank in the Navy, equivalent to a second lieutenant in the Army.

The lower the level of authority some people have over others, the more vain, conceited, and jealous of the "rank" they possess. It was this vanity of human nature to which the devil appealed.

But vanity, was wholly absent from Christ! He paid no attention to the barbs of Satan about whether He was the Son of God. Instead, He quoted Scripture correctly! He said, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God!" (Matthew 4:7)

Paul wrote, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow [down into the bone, even splitting them!], and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Unless you know the Word of God, you cannot possibly wield it like a quick, flashing sword. Unless you study God's Word, you cannot know which concepts, which examples, which teachings of Christ, which writings of

Paul, which doctrines, which prophecies to use as a weapon in your daily spiritual warfare!

Have you ever sat down, and decided to read the Bible right straight through, just as you would any other book? Many have. Yet, many have found themselves bogged down in ancient genealogies, or ancient history. They grow bored, and fail to persevere. But with a couple of good Bible handbooks, like Halley's, or a Bible encyclopedia, or an exhaustive concordance, or a Bible commentary, one can learn a great deal about the Bible. Of course, these are books written by men, and are by no means infallible, but they can be a definite help to the discerning student of the Bible.

Jesus said, "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:3 1). He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the "Word of God" personified!

Don't misunderstand. This is metaphor, or an example. This is not to say that Jesus Christ is a vague "principle" or a "concept" of truth. But He was the divine SPOKESMAN, the Logos (the Greek word for Spokesman), Who did the commanding when the earth was created!

Notice: "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ, long, long prior to His human birth], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own [the Jews], and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Which were born [Greek: gennao, which can mean either "begotten" or born"] not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us [the Greek means, literally, "tabernacled among us "] (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1: 1-14).

There is absolutely no question that this is speaking of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! It is telling us that Christ was a Member of the divine family of God; that He was very GOD long, long prior to His human, physical birth.

Do you know what this means? It means it was the One the world calls "Jesus Christ," Who said, "Let there be light." He said, "Let the dry land appear." He was the One who dealt with Adam and Eve, with Noah, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, and said, "I AM THAT I AM." He is the One who wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger!

He is the One Who plagued Egypt, sent the death angel, spared the Israelites, brought them out of the land of Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and was with them for forty years in the wilderness.

The Word of God is the whole Word of God, not just selected verses that appeal to rebellious, lawless, posturing pseudo Christians who will not OBEY God!

If you are wielding the "sword of the spirit" as your only offensive weapon against Satan, then you are a "workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing [discerning, understanding] the word of truth." You are knowledgeable about the Bible. You are able to explain why you believe what you do, and you are able to take that sword of the Spirit, and slash to the marrow of the bone the false doctrines, lies, half-truths, and Satanic delusions that are believed by so many millions of people today!

Christ is the Word. When you have Jesus Christ living His life over again with you (Galatians 2:20); when you have studied, pondered, meditated, prayed over, read, and then read again the life and teachings of Christ, as well as the whole Bible, you are better equipped to parry the wicked thrusts of Satan and his false ministers.

The Word of God cuts. But sometimes, it is necessary to inflict a wound upon some people before they will

wake up, come to themselves, realize they have been sinners, and deeply repent before God!

The Word of God cuts into our consciences. It cuts into our memories. It cuts into our minds. It cuts into our past. It cuts into our personalities, our associations, our way of life, our very innermost thoughts.

The more you study the Word of God, the more you are convicted by it! The more you give yourself in surrender to God, allowing His Holy Word to correct you, the more you are equipped to wield the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Study the beautiful fifty-first Psalm, and see how David, a man after God's own heart, prayed the prayer of heart-broken repentance! Let David's Psalms sink down into your innermost heart. Study the gospels, the epistles of Paul, the writings of James, Peter, and John. Read the Bible!

By doing so, you are sharpening your sword. You are preparing yourself for a daily struggle against Satan, this evil world, and your own carnal nature.

The fully-equipped soldier of Jesus Christ must know the Word of God to wield the "sword of the Spirit."

The Word of God is "of the Spirit" because it comes from a divine spiritual source. It is not the wisdom or philosophy of man, but the divinely-revealed knowledge, wisdom, purpose, and plan of Almighty God. The Bible is the living witness from God to man, not mere words on paper, musty with age.

Jude wrote that "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Obviously, if the devil had caused the location of the body of Moses to be known, it would have become a world-famous shrine, a place of worshipful idolatry to millions of people.

God didn't want Moses' burial place known. Satan wanted to cause it to become an idolatrous shrine. In the dispute between Michael, a powerful archangel at the same rank in God's kingdom as was Lucifer, Michael did not have the responsibility to bring "railing accusation" against Satan. Rather, he deferred to the spiritual power of God by pronouncing the words, "The Lord rebuke thee!"

Michael was using the "sword of the Spirit" by using the Word of God to actually rebuke the devil!

So it is with us, on a daily basis. If we are continually pondering, studying, thinking on the Word of God, we are filling our minds with God's spiritual truth. The way to get the air out of a glass is to fill it with water. The way to force evil thoughts out of our minds is to fill them with God's Word.

Read some inspiring Psalms! Study Ephesians 4, Colossians 3, Hebrews 1-5; read all four Gospels! In addition to selected reading or study, set yourself to read the whole Bible completely through!

In this way, you will be equipped with your offensive weapon against the devil, this evil world, and even your own carnal nature, by wearing the "sword of the Spirit."

"Praying Always"

Concluding this inspiring passage about God's armor, Paul wrote, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:18,19).

Jesus did not tell His disciples, "IF you pray"! Notice: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may

be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:5,6).

Jesus Christ prayed, and prayed, and prayed. He would fast and pray, crying out to His Father in heaven to strengthen Him for the monumental task He had to accomplish. He would be missing from His bed in the very earliest, dark hours of the morning when His sleepy disciples arose. They would find Him up on a hillside, deep in prayer.

Many of David's Psalms are written in the form of a prayer to God. There are many examples of prayer in the Bible. When Elijah faced down the evil false prophets of Baal, His prayer lasted only about eleven or twelve seconds, yet great miracles occurred!

Notice what happened: "And Elijah said unto all the people, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Eternal be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I even I only, remain a prophet of the Eternal: but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men..... (1 Kings 18:21-40).

Elijah then had them set up an altar; had them dress a calf and place it upon the stones. Then, he told them to cry out to their false god, Baal.

They began shuffling around the altar, limping, cavorting (verse 26), performing ridiculous, ritualistic dances. Elijah chided them. He shouted, "Cry aloud! For he is a god! Either he is talking, or he is pursuing [hunting], or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened!"

The Bible says "Elijah MOCKED them!"

Many thousands of people today would be outraged at God's prophet Elijah! "Why, how dare you 'make fun' of these sincere ministers?" they would bleat. Why, doesn't the Bible say "Judge not?" they would wail.

I have had a significant number of angry telephone calls and nasty letters over my more than forty years of radio and television broadcasting when I would mimic and mock the false prophets of Baal. The "wheezers and gaspers" who follow the same ridiculous cadence of shouting, moaning, gasping for breath, and putting a grunting "UH!" on the ends of their words; those who pace back and forth, holding the Bible like a limp rag; those who adopt the supercilious, sickly grin, and speak with a whisper; those who preach the false mythology of the pagan past; who speak like namby-pamby, weak, wimpish, wheedling, whining, pleading beggars—when I expose their antics, some are made angry at me!

But Elijah mocked the ridiculous prophets of Baal!

Elijah's name means "Yahweh [Jah] is God [El]." He was one of the most powerful prophets of all time. And God Almighty inspired Him to mock the prophets of Baal.

Notice that immediately after Elijah's mocking challenge, they increased their ridiculous efforts. "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with their knives and lancets [short spears, or swords], till the blood gushed out upon them" (verse 28). Even today, in some religions, people believe they can get their deity's attention if they lash their back or cut themselves!

Finally, when they were exhausted, Elijah ordered the men to take twelve stones, signifying the tribes of Israel, and build an altar. Then, he had them dig a deep trench all about it. Then, he placed the wood and bullock atop the altar.

Next, he had them fill four barrels full of water and pour it over the bullock, the wood, and the stones. He had them do it the second, and then the third time (verses 31-34).

Now, notice: "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said [this is his prayer! time it with a stop watch if you have one, and notice how brief it is!], Eternal God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Eternal, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Eternal God, and that thou has turned their heart back again!"

Following this brief, eleven or twelve-second prayer, which was delivered for their benefit, and as a witness against the false prophets, "Then the fire of the Eternal fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench! And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Eternal [Yahweh, commonly pronounced Jehovah] He is the God; the Eternal, He is the God" (verses 30-39).

As a result of Elijah's powerful prayer, a great miracle occurred. It resulted in the extermination of the false prophets of Baal, and the "turning back" of the children of Israel to the "fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their relationship with the true God.

When Peter, John, and several of the other disciples were thrown in jail because they preached in the name of Christ, and after the high priest and his relatives had threatened them "that they speak henceforth to no man in this name," Peter and the others prayed to God.

They prayed, "Lord, Thou art God, Which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of Thy servant David has said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy Child [or Servant—margin] Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word. By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy Child [Servant] Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:1-31).

There are many examples of moving prayer in God's Word—prayers made to God at a time of great danger, of great stress, and under great threat.

When King Jehoshaphat knew that the Moabites and Ammonites had amassed a huge army against Israel, and knew they would not be able to stand against this massive host, he "feared, and set himself to seek the Eternal, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah" (2 Chronicles 20:3).

He gathered the people together after they had fasted and prayed. He "stood in the congregation of Judah, and Jerusalem, in the house of the Eternal, before the new court. And said, O Eternal God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? And rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee? Art not Thou our God, Who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend forever? And they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a sanctuary therein for Thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in Thy presence (for Thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

"And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom Thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I

say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee. And all Judah stood before the Eternal, with their little ones, their wives, and their children" (2 Chronicles 20:1-13).

Read the remainder of this beautiful chapter! The prophet of God told the people to go out in the vanguard of the army of Judah unarmed! They would go with songs to God!

They would not go with swords and spears, but with prayers and singing!

"And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Eternal unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but Gods Ye need not fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Eternal with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Eternal will be with you And when they began to sing and to praise, the Eternal set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir utterly to slay and destroy them; and then they had made an end of the inhabitants of mount Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped" (2 Chronicles 20:15-24).

This is one of the most stupendous miracles in the Bible!

Here, a righteous king set himself to fast and pray, and commanded all the people to fast and pray. Then, they took the whole armor of God upon themselves. It was not the armor of a soldier, with heavy metal helmet, greaves, breastplate, shield, spear, and sword. No, they were wearing only their own everyday clothing!

But they advanced toward the combined armies of three nations with prayers on their lips, and with songs in their hearts!

God hear their prayers. He answered them by a mighty miracle, causing the allied enemies to become confused, and to attack each other!

Your daily problems and mine are like those massed armies of the Moabites, the Ammonites, and mount Seir. Whether financial, mental, physical, or spiritual; whether of Satan and his evil world; whether of the sick, perverted false values of this sin-sick society; whether of our own weaknesses and compulsions of the flesh—we can advance toward our problems with a song in our hearts and prayer on our lips!

We can take up, not guns and knives, but the whole armor of God our loins girt about with truth, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; having put on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation; and having taken up the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God!

Then, so equipped, we must pray with all prayer and supplication in the spirit!

Notice that after Paul explains all these wonderful weapons of our spiritual warfare, he asks that Christ's soldiers would pray for him, that "utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel!"

So it is that I close this booklet. Take up the whole armor of God. Put it on. And when you are waging the daily spiritual battles as a "good soldier of Jesus Christ," please remember now and then to pray for me, that I may lift up my voice like a trumpet, that I may preach the gospel of Christ boldly, that I may fulfill the purpose for my life, that I may serve as a watchman for God's people!

-End-

You may copy and distribute this information only to friends and family without changes, without charge and with full credit given to the author and publisher. You may not publish it for general audiences.

This publication is intended to be used as a personal study tool. Please know it is not wise to take any man's word for anything, so prove all things for yourself from the pages of your own Bible.

The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association
P.O. Box 747
Flint, TX 75762
Phone: (903) 561-7070 • Fax: (903) 561-4141

More FREE literature is available at our Internet Web Site:

www.garnertedarmstrong.ws

The activities of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association are paid for by tithes, offerings and donations freely given by Christians and co-workers who are dedicated to preaching the gospel according to Jesus Christ.