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# **THE PIONEER BAPTIST**

*"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"*

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## **Satan's Fortresses And Our Artillery**

By the late: C. D. Cole

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4,5).

The work of the Christian minister and personal worker is set forth under the figure of a warfare. Paul knew the Roman army and often employed military figures. The work of saving souls is like storming a fortress. In the capture of souls for Christ, strongholds have to be attacked and destroyed.

This world was created by Christ and for Him. He is its rightful Lord and Ruler. To Him, all homage and tribute should be paid. But Satan has introduced anarchy and rebellion into our world. Man revolted from God and allied himself with Satan, the usurper. It is a wonder of grace and patience and mercy that God did not put down this revolt in wrath and destroy His enemies.

Instead of giving His enemies what rebels deserve, God has undertaken a work of human redemption. He will bring His banished ones back to Himself and to His favor. He will save them from sin and Satan and from themselves.

The preaching of the Gospel is the instrumentality which God employs in human salva-

tion. But the Gospel has to encounter difficulties from Satan and from the sinner himself. The Gospel has to storm fortresses and can only conquer through the power of God.

### OUR WARFARE

It must be distinguished from all other kinds of conflict.

1. It is divine and not diabolical. War is generally the result of hellish passion and sin. But the warfare of our text is a holy warfare. Most wars originate from beneath, but this war is from above. Most wars are destructive of that which is good; this war is destructive of evil. Wars generally arise from avarice, or ambition, or revenge, and are wicked in the sight of God. This war is based upon righteousness. It is in the cause of truth and equity and justice. It is in the cause of holiness against sin. It is in the interest of obedience against rebellion. It is in the interest of the reign of God against the usurpation of the prince of darkness. It is a war to end war and bring peace to men.

2. It is a spiritual and not carnal war. War generally aims at spreading misery, devastation, and death. There are some who still remember Sherman's march to the sea, when he laid the South waste and left burning cities and starving people in his path. No wonder he exclaimed, "War is hell." A newspaper correspondent, back in Madrid from the horrors of Alcazar,

recovering from the shock of his experiences, exclaimed, "I am sick of humanity!" War is an insatiable monster that spreads terror, misery, and woes through the length and breadth of this world. Peace, comfort, health, and happiness are exiled by its terrible wrath. But the war of our text is one of compassion, goodness, and of sweetest mercy. Paradoxical as it is, our banners do not bear the symbol of a serpent or lion or eagle, but the symbol of the Lamb.

#### THE STRONGHOLDS THAT MUST BE TAKEN

Every sinner is a fort or citadel that must be taken in the war of salvation. Satan wants to keep men whom he has turned against God and so he has erected strongholds in the human mind to resist the Gospel appeal.

1. Ignorance. Satan blinds men to the Gospel. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4). "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Ignorance is essential to the duration of Satan's kingdom. It is the kingdom of darkness; darkness being a symbol of ignorance and evil. The lost do not know the true facts about sin and salvation. The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. It is not ignorance of arts and sciences, but ignorance of spiritual and eternal things.

2. Prejudice. This is seen in the trifling objections men give to religion. They object that the church is filled with hypocrites. But what of that? Grant that it is true. Is it worth going to hell for just to criticize the hypocrites? Better to live a few days here in the church than with them forever in hell. And after all, the hypocrite is a good witness to Christianity. If there were no true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. Men do not reject money because there is some of the counterfeit kind in circulation. Besides, the man who hides behind the hypocrite is smaller than he is.

3. Pride. This is the worst barrier to the salvation of souls. Pride is the root of self-righteousness, self-importance, and self-sufficiency. No man is too bad to be saved; but many are too good to be saved, that is, too good in their own esteem. Christ never means anything to the man who thinks he is good enough to go to heaven. Christ is for sinners. He has no interest in

anybody but sinners. He came to seek and to save the lost; to call sinners and not the righteous to repentance.

Men are weak in themselves—sin has paralyzed them so that they cannot do good in God's sight. But no man has to go to hell because of his weakness—because he cannot keep God's law. It is not the fact of sin, but the attitude towards sin that is fatal. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15).

4. Human wisdom. Satan puts reasonings in the human mind to oppose the truth of the Gospel. The world by wisdom knew not God. Left to himself, human reason will lead every man away from the Gospel. Men reason that the good will be saved; the truth is that nobody but the bad will be saved. Salvation of the good is a contradiction of terms—if good, then no salvation is necessary. Worldly wisdom says, "Be a good man, clean up, live right, be on the square, have confidence in yourself and all will be right in the end." The Bible says you must receive the kingdom of God as a little child, have no confidence in the flesh, recognize your failure and look to Christ for salvation.

#### OUR WEAPONS

They are described negatively, as not carnal; and positively, in their efficiency—mighty through God. Carnal weapons are set aside; like Saul's armour, they cannot be used by the spiritual Davids.

1. The sword. This is the weapon by which Mohammedism was extended. Men are not to be forced into making a profession of faith.

2. Temporal reward. Multitudes followed Christ for loaves and fishes, but He turned them back with unpalatable truth. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44). "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65). Men are still trying to strengthen their churches and win souls by offering worldly considerations, such as business, popularity, pleasure, entertainment, social prominence, and position in the church, etc.

3. Our weapons are the truths of the Gospel—the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The stronghold of ignorance is to be overthrown by the Gospel of truth. The stronghold of pride is to be destroyed by the Word which says God resisteth the proud, etc.

The Gospel is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. It is not mighty in human hands, but only in God's hands. God

makes the Gospel mighty in capturing souls for Christ.

Now since Satan's strongholds are in the human mind, the mind has to be taken for God. The sinner must repent or change his mind. His reasonings of worldly wisdom must be pulled down. He must, in his mind and heart, take the place of a sinner—a helpless sinner. He must lose confidence in himself—he must see that the only thing that can make him right with God is the work Christ did when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Now God makes the Gospel mighty in saving sinners by working this change in their mind. Ponder these Scriptures: "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" (II Tim. 2:25,26), "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:23,24).



"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2).

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