

The
Christian Warfare
John Welsh

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Agape Chapel Ministries
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(Free List of Free Materials)

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John Welsh

gotten the victory over death, hell, the grave, and Satan himself; and has gone to heaven with the victory, and led captivity captive.

In conclusion, let the certain hope of victory encourage you to fight. For if ye fight, ye shall not lose the field; for there are none that lose, but those that lose willfully. This battle is not like the battles of this world, wherein the victory is doubtful and uncertain; but in this battle the victory is certain and sure. Remember, the battle is the Lord's, the armor is the Lord's, the power is the Lord's, the glory is the Lord's, and thou art the Lord's. Therefore, the Lord will not let thee lose!

Amen.

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The Christian Warfare John Welsh (Welch)

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Ephesians 6:10-11

Because the time of your hearing or my speaking unto you in the name of the Lord is uncertain, and we know not how soon the Lord will make an end of either my or your pilgrimage; therefore, it is the desire of my heart, being led by God at this time, to speak of the most needful things. And what is more needful to you than your Christian warfare? What is the life of a Christian, but a daily battle? The profane of the world spend hours and days in trifles, and other things concerning this life; yet as many as God has called and hath quickened, find that all the hours in their life are nothing but a continual falling or rising, wrestling or fighting, or one exercise or another.

Therefore I intend, by the grace of God, to inform you how ye shall fight your battle; how ye shall put on your armor, and take your weapons in your hands; how, if ye use them aright, ye shall get the victory. And when ye have gotten the victory, I shall show you how ye shall stand; and when ye are fallen, how ye shall arise again; for many never as yet have persuaded themselves that they are wounded, while in the mean time, they are most deadly wounded; and many, while they perceive themselves to be wounded, and to have fallen, know not how to rise again. Many are wounded with terrors and fears, and are overcome with one temptation or another, but they perceive not the enemy that has wounded them nor who has given them the stroke; neither can they tell how to recover.

Now, no man is crowned without striving, and to him that overcomes, it is promised that he shall inherit all things. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall

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have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Therefore, as ye would have the crown set upon your head, ye must first set your feet in the field to fight; and if ye would overcome and inherit all things, ye must first make yourself fit for the battle. The grounds of those things that I am to speak of are these:

First, I will tell you the necessity of this combat and warfare. Secondly, I will tell you the purpose of God in the dispensation of His grace. He who would sanctify thee here will yet leave as much sin in thy heart as shall keep thee under a perpetual exercise of a continual warfare all the days of thy life. It is good to know the cause why the Lord doeth this.

Thirdly, I am to give you such grounds as may undergird and encourage you, that ye faint not in the battle.

Fourthly, I am to tell you how ye are to prepare for your battles and comforts, that ye may know your enemies, not as they claim to be, but as Jesus Christ your Captain has explained in His Word.

Fifthly, I am to tell ye how ye shall furnish yourselves, with what armor ye shall fight and in the end to get the victory, the which armor if ye will put it on, and wear it, shall not bring a doubtful but a certain and sure victory.

Sixthly, then I am to come to the battle itself, and so I have in mind to tell you of all the cruel, violent, and deceitful dealings whereby the devil deceives God's saints and attempts to overcome them.

Seventhly, then I am to tell you of the policy which the enemy uses, whereby he will make use of every advantage in all your circumstances so that he may overcome thee. He will look to thy dispositions, thy company, thy calling, thy present state, and whether thou be in prosperity or adversity.

Eighthly, I come to tell you how each one of you shall behave yourselves in your fight, and how you shall be in readiness at all times to stand against the enemy by the power of the Lord in the day of your temptations; and when ye are fallen, how ye shall rise again.

After these general matters, I will come to the particulars, wherein I am to let you see how that from the beginning of the first link of your salvation grounded upon the love of God, until ye come to the last

There are yet two things that remain to be spoken of at this time, namely, the grounds that undergird and hold you up, that ye faint not in this battle; and then, secondly, I will tell you how ye shall carry yourselves to set your feet to this battle, and so be able to fight it out.

As to the first, a combat ye must have. It is inevitable. Therefore, to make you ready for it, ye must put on your armor, have your weapons in your hand, and thereby not only resist, but also pursue and slay the enemy.

Now the first ground to move you to do this proceeds verily from the author of this warfare. God has made the feud, and put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. After Satan had given the deadly stroke to the man and the woman in the Garden, the Lord said, 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel' (Gen. 3:15). Seeing, therefore, that the Lord is the author of it, the battle is the Lord's. And because it is His, He has given us a commandment to fight. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b). And also, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). So the first ground to uphold you, that ye may sustain the battle, is the command of God, joined with the promise, that commands all men to fight and overcome, and they would then be partakers of the crown.

As to the second, consider your Captain, and remember under whose banner ye fight, even the Lord of lords and King of kings, who has bound the devil, taken his weapons from him, and has

thou mayest beware to rush thyself into the fire again, and to stab thy heel on a prick, and to cast thyself over into the hands of an angry God, who is a consuming fire.

Fourthly, were it not for temptations, it were not possible to keep thy heart humble; and if thou hadst never so many graces, it would swell and puff thee up with pride; were it not for the manifold temptations that God sends purposely, pride would engulf thee, for the temptations serve for as many pricks thrust in thy heart, to let the wind of pride out of it.

Fifthly, by temptations God will make men acquainted with their own infirmities, so that seeing their own weakness, they may put their trust in God alone, and that they may see that they can only stand by grace. And when they fall, they may see that their falling comes of themselves, and hereby are taught to renounce self, and put their trust and confidence in God alone.

Sixthly, were it not for temptations we would rot in our sins, we would not even take up our armor, and we would fall asleep with the rest of the world. Therefore, the Lord purposely sends temptations, to keep us alert and wakeful, and to make us put on and wear our armor, and to cleanse our hearts daily by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seventhly, and last of all, God by temptations multiplies His graces to thee, and says, "My strength is made perfect in [thy] weakness [and infirmities.]" God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, for as the battles are renewed, so His grace is renewed to us, and He does it to this end, that we may see that present graces are only sufficient for each day. Therefore, we have need of every day's corroborating and strengthening grace, which may make us daily grow in grace, until we come unto perfection, which will not be in this life. Thus much for the causes why the Lord suffers his own to be tempted as long as they are in this life.

link, which is your glorification, Satan has his particular assaults against every one of these links.

The first fountain of thy salvation is the love of God to thee in Jesus Christ, and Satan will assay to bereave thee of that, and so withhold the sense of this love from thy heart.

Secondly, from this love comes thy election; therefore, he will try whether he can make thee presume or despair, and make thee believe thy name was never written in the Book of Life.

Thirdly, he will go about to hinder thy calling, trying to persuade thee that neither the Word nor the Spirit could ever call thee. Or if thou hast been called, he will make thee question if it was true, effectual, and if thy faith and repentance was genuine. Then he has his temptations against prayer, meditation, hearing of the Word, thanksgiving; temptations against all the parts of the worship of God, and against all the means whereby the Lord maintains His graces in the hearts of His own. Then he has temptations against thy justification, sanctification, perseverance, and hope. And last of all, he has his temptations at the last hour of thy death, the which combat will be the sorest of all.

Now, I have told you the ground of these things that by the grace of God I have in mind to speak of to you at this time.

First, That ye may not weary in coming to hear, that ye may know in what order and rank ye are in when ye are tempted, ye may furnish yourselves with the armor as is most fitting for your estate. Now, I hope that I am led by God in this, and, therefore, I beseech you to help me by your prayers, that ye would beseech God to vouchsafe His blessing and presence to this sermon.

I believe that there are many of you who never yet knew what it is to fight hand to hand with the enemy, and have never known either his craft or policy, and that sometimes he can present himself to you in his own visage and color, transform himself into an Angel of Light, and subtly prevail against you, and so bring his wicked and cruel purposes to pass. Many do not realize when

they have fallen, and if they do know, yet do not know how to rise again. Therefore, what can be more needful both to you and me, than to know our Christian warfare, seeing every hour of the day we have to do with the enemy. It is needful then for us to know sure grounds out of the Word of God, that the Lord has recorded to be infallible marks, whereby ye may know that He has loved us in His Son, Christ Jesus, from everlasting. That Christ was elected to be our Head; God hath put up our names in the Book of Life before the world was made: He has redeemed us by His only begotten Son. And is it not needful to know the particular grounds whereby we may know that we are truly called, justified, sanctified, and to know He has begun to work in you a glory which one day shall be perfected in heaven?

Secondly, let the experience of all the saints bear witness to you of the necessity of this combat. And if thou art one of them, thou wilt never be so soon brought out of the arms of the devil, and set in the bosom of the Church of God, but thou must as soon make thee ready for legions of devils to fight against thee. And, therefore, the apostle says here "*Now finally,*" as though he would say, this is the last thing ye must do, without which ye can do nothing, "[*Ye must*] *put on the whole armour of God.*"

And to prove this by examples: Abel, as soon as he had offered a sacrifice to God, because it was acceptable to God through faith, was slain by Cain who was stirred up by Satan against him. The Israelites, as soon as they came out of Egypt, and passed on to the wilderness to serve their God, are immediately pursued; Satan stirs up Pharaoh against them, who with a great army pursued them to the Red Sea. Notwithstanding, the Lord drowned Pharaoh and all his host, and brought His own people through safely. As soon as Paul was converted, he was persecuted. Our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, as soon as He was inaugurated and authorized in His calling, was tempted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. So then, as soon as you renounce the camp of the devil, and set thy feet in the Lord's camp, the devil will set upon thee.

Would Job's patience have been known had it not been that he was tried with manifold temptations, one after another? Would David's repentance ever have been known, were it not for the manifold conflicts he had? Or would Paul's strength or Peter's zeal have been known, were it not for the manifold conflicts that they had? So God will have the angels, the devil, and the world to be spectators of these hid mercies and graces that are in thee, that when the angels see it, they may glorify God for it, and may say, "Now we see there is faith, repentance, patience, hope, grace, and there is Christ." And by these means God makes known the riches of His grace in the hearts of His own, that otherwise would be hid, were it not for temptations, so long as they live.

Next, great is the good thou wilt get by temptations:

First, by temptations He will make thee confess the very sins of thy youth, as He did Job, which otherwise thou wouldst never have remembered nor repented of them. Therefore, by temptations He calls them to thy mind, He makes thee mourn for them, and will never let thee rest until thou gettest remission. For if thou hadst not known them, and repented of them, thou hadst never experienced forgiveness. For without knowledge, there is no remembrance; and without remembrance, there is no repentance; and without repentance, there is no remission or forgiveness. And except thou shouldst be forgiven in this life, thou shalt never see eternal life. So in calling to remembrance the sins of thy youth, the Lord sees to thy welfare in this.

Secondly, by temptations the Lord lets thee see a world of iniquities in thee; and there is so much sin within thee as were sufficient to condemn a world, much more then thee, who art but a creature. So by temptations the Lord brings out the secret monsters that lurk in thy heart, that if they got permission, would soon devour thee.

Thirdly, by temptations the Lord lets thee see the bitterness of sin that provokes the anger of God against thee; and seeing this,

Question: But if ye ask why it is that such a wise, mighty, gracious Lord, filled with love and compassion, having such power to perfect thy sanctification fully in this life, renew all thy heart in an instant, suffers so cruel a devil to pursue thee? Answer: Is this, believe ye, for lack of love? No, no, it is out of love He does it; and that for these two causes:

First, for His own honor and Name's sake.

Secondly, for thy welfare; therefore, thou must content thyself to be under this continual warfare all the days of thy life, seeing God is honored thereby. Also seeing it has been and shall be the lot of all the children of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, God, if thou art His, has ordained it for thee before thou wast born.

Question: Now wilt thou ask how does this serve to the glory of God, and to thy welfare? Answer: First, thy temptations bring glory to God, in two respects.

First, God gets great glory, not only when He makes thee, that art sold under sin, an impotent body, a silly, weak and feeble creature, a simple soldier, to overcome legions of devils, bring down the prince of the air and the god of this world, but also when He makes thee set thy foot upon his neck, and trample him under thy feet. It is true, He might do this Himself, yet He will not do it; but He will have thee that art a base and weak creature doing it, that His glory may appear the more. The weaker thou art, the more the power of God is seen in thy infirmity, by giving thee the victory. Therefore, as Joshua called all Israel, and charged them to set their feet on the necks of all those princes of Canaan (Josh. 10:24), so does the Lord Jesus, our true Joshua, call upon us, and charges us to set our feet upon principalities, powers, worldly governors, princes of the air, spiritual wickedness, and tramp on them, that they never rise nor get up anymore to do us harm.

Secondly, God will have thee exercised with temptations, that He may bring forth His high and excellent graces that are in thee.

Now, the cause why everyone does not see this, is this: As long as the strong man possesses the house, all things are in peace; but when a stronger than he comes in, then he is dispossessed. For while thou art yet unconverted thou mayest eat, drink, go, sit, lie, rise peacefully, in the camp where the devil is, because there is not a contrary power in thee, for God is not in thee. Therefore, the wicked may have peace, but it is a doleful peace. But the godly, because both God and the devil, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness, a Jacob and an Esau are within them, have, therefore, a continual warfare, and this is an argument of comfort to thee (Rev. 12:17). The dragon made war with the woman and her seed that feared God and kept His commandments. This should be a great consolation, for it makes the devil war against thee, when thou art at peace with God; and when the devil opposes thee, God loves thee. When the devil pursues thee, then God defends thee; and in a word, if the devil is angry with thee, then God is at peace with thee. This should bring comfort to thee that are entered into this warfare.

Now, ye see the necessity of it, for what is your life but a continual warfare? For as many of you as have been brought out of the arms of that strong man, ye know this to be true. But to the rest, he holds them in peace, and never troubles them. It may be that all of you do not understand this; therefore, I will expound it to you.

Who is this strong man? The devil. What is this house that he keeps? The soul or heart of a man or woman. What is this peace? It is such a rest and quietness in their mind, that the devil propines out of a golden cup to them, and they drink it sweetly; and there is such a rest in the pleasures of this world, that such as have it, have not so much of a desire to forsake them, and to get out of his arms. But it is otherwise with the children of God that have renounced the pleasures of this world, and have been taken out of the arms of the devil. They no longer have ease or peace within, but a continual warfare all the days of their life. Therefore, thou that art chosen, know and take heed: in that hour

thou settest thy foot in the camp of Jesus, and fightest under the banner of His blood, and resolveth to go out of this world to serve the Lord, in that same hour the red dragon will be on thee with all his might, as ye may see clearly by the examples previously mentioned. As long as the children of Israel were under the bondage of and in servitude to Pharaoh in Egypt, and as long as they desired the flesh-pots of Egypt, they had peace and rest with Pharaoh. But as soon as Moses came to Pharaoh, and desired him to let the people of God go, then Pharaoh laid heavier burdens on them. Even so, as soon as thou desirest to come out of the Egypt of this world, to serve the Lord thy God in the wilderness and quit Egypt; then cruel Pharaoh (I mean the devil), will labor to hold thee under the grievous burdens of thy sins; he does not desire that thou shalt get leave to serve the Lord thy God with such freedom and liberty of spirit as thou wouldst do. And if thou wilt come out despite him, then he will not cease to pursue thee, and follow thee to the Red Sea.

Likewise, as long as Moses was counted the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was well esteemed of all men. But as soon as he desired rather to suffer affliction with his poor brethren, the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; as soon did the devil tempt him to sin, and he then is compelled to flee out of Egypt, and to serve a stranger in a strange land, there to be a shepherd for the space of forty years. And as long as Paul was in nature, and not planted in grace, he had joy and peace enough, so much so that he thought his life and conversation unblamable. But as soon as he begins to bear the name of Jesus, then the devil rages against him and bears such malice at him that he is persecuted from city to city, and the enemy never leaves him, until he had fought the good fight, run his race, and finished his course. Meanwhile, he was comforted because he was persuaded that a crown of glory was laid up for him. Then Satan was disappointed, God was glorified, and Paul was more and more confirmed.

And last of all, we cite the example of Him that is Head and Captain of all. No sooner had He been inaugurated into His calling, and no sooner had the Holy Ghost come down and descended on Him in the likeness of a dove, thereafter He gets no longer leisure, but was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and the devil sorely tempts Him, not only once, but thrice, and never left Him during all the time of His humility until he brought Him to the grave. But in the end, Christ overcame sin, Satan, and the grave. He rises again, goes to heaven, and leads captivity captive.

But ye, as long as ye are sleeping in your sins, and drinking in the pleasures of this life, and as long as that armed and strong man holds the cause of your heart, then all things will be in peace, and there will be no trouble in your consciences. But as soon as the strong man is dispossessed, and beaten out of you, then there will be no more peace, but a daily war within and without, at home and abroad, waking or sleeping, or whatever thou art doing.

Now, what is the cause there is no war in thy heart, ye that are not in Christ? There cannot be a warfare unless there are two opposing enemies. And as for thee that are not yet renewed, God is not in thy heart, but only the devil, flesh, and darkness. But in thee that art renewed, there is God and the devil, the flesh and the spirit, light and darkness, and, therefore, a combat. So the man or woman that is not born again may well have remorses and pricks in their consciences, but as for a wrestling or striving, and combat to pull up sin by the root, they never have the experience of it. Therefore, thou that hast no warfare, thou hast no cause to rejoice, because there is nothing within thee but the devil, darkness, and the flesh. But thou hast cause to rejoice that findeth a battle within thee. For if thou wert not the spouse of Christ, and didst not fear God, and didst not endeavor to keep his commandments, the devil would never have made war against thee. Therefore, whosoever thou art that hast this combat, it is a sure argument to thee that thou art a child of God.