

THE CONFLICT IS REAL

Many go through life not realizing that a conflict between good and evil, Truth and error, is raging about them. Some do not perceive the conflict, having become convinced that evil is not so bad, good is not all that good, and error is about as good as Truth. Others would have us believe that neither absolute good nor Truth even exist (so how can indistinguishable forces be in conflict?). However, as surely as God is God and Satan is Satan, this conflict rages.

God's people have always known conflict with the devil and his henchmen in this world. This unrelenting clash is first demonstrated in God's Edenic threat to Satan: "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). It can be tracked in the experiences of the patriarchs. It becomes more pronounced in the history of Israel, dating from her bondage in Egypt until she is finally given, over a millennium later, to her uncircumcised enemies due to her own, never-ending cycles, of acquiescence to evil. The conflict escalated while our Lord and His apostles were on earth. They often warned of trials and persecution for the sake of Truth and righteousness (e.g., Mat. 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 2 Tim. 3:12).

The Holy Spirit often applies the military motif--a figure of conflict--to the life of the disciple of Christ. Christians are soldiers at war, but this war is not fought with weapons of carnal warfare (2 Cor. 10:3-4). As soldiers, we are to "war the good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). Our archenemy attacks us by means of "fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). The good soldier of Christ will suffer hardship for his Commander-in-chief, even as Paul did (2 Tim. 2:3). His service requires the avoidance

of any entangling alliances that he may single-heartedly serve his Commander (2 Tim. 2:4).

We are not in a mock battle, but a real war, the "good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Paul, ever one to practice what he preached, could say as he saw the end nearing, "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). We are to "resist the devil" rather than compromise and surrender to him (Jam. 4:7). If we resist him not, our souls will become part of the spoils of war in his triumph over us (Col. 2:8). The conflict is very real, even as the principles of good and evil and the principals behind them are real. Let us awaken to the conflict and fight with all of our might for Truth and righteousness!

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