

the man had turned to him and said: "Do you realize that you and I are the two outstanding men in Christian service today?" He said that he immediately replied: "Don't ever say such a thing; don't even think it. If anyone of us ever gets the idea that he is necessary to the Lord's work, the Lord can put him on the shelf so quickly that he will hardly know what has happened." ^{The speaker then} He said that, as a matter of fact, that was exactly what did occur. Within two or three years the other man had disappeared from sight so completely that soon most people had forgotten that he had ever been in Christian service. God wants humble people who are drawing on His resources and using them--people who are strong, but strong in the Lord.

In verse 11 Paul tells us that we should put on this armor in order that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." This has a strange sound at first. We might think that what we need most is power to resist the direct onslaughts of Satan, who, we are told "comes as a roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). But Paul is thinking here of something even more dangerous than the direct onslaughts of Satan. He is thinking of his wiles. Satan is very clever. When he finds himself unable to destroy us by coming as a roaring lion, he usually returns "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14), and thus succeeds in leading many astray. The Christian needs always to be on his guard.

It has often seemed to me that the relation of Satan to many a Christian group is like that of a wily contestant in a tug of war. He pulls and pulls, in order to drag us away from some aspect of God's truth. When he finds that he cannot succeed in compelling us to abandon this particular aspect of truth, he then suddenly lets go of the rope, hoping that we will fall backward into fanaticism or extremism of some sort or another, and thus cut down the effectiveness of our service to the Lord.

In verse 12 Paul calls our attention to the vital fact that it is not flesh and blood that we are wrestling against, but the great forces of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Stress has already been laid, in this book of Ephesians, upon the mighty conflict in the spiritual realm. Thus in Ephesians 3:10 Paul declared that one of the great purposes of the sanctification of believers is to make known