

# **"The Two Armies"**

*The Present Truth* – July 5, 1900

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Have you a visited an Armoury, or seen the armour room at the Tower of London? If so you have seen the large, heavy suite of armour that man used to wear in battle when the most of the fighting was done hand to hand, instead of at long distances with cannon, guns and explosive shells, as it now is.

You will remember the experience of young David, when Saul had him dressed in his own heavy suit of armour. It did not fit him, and was such a weight that he could not move freely in it, and he said: "I cannot go with those, for I have not proved them."

Now the whole earth is a great battlefield where there is a battle always being fought, the great battle of sin with righteousness, of truth with error, of "the great Dragon," "called the Devil and Satan," with "Michael the Archangel," who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And no one in the world can be simply an onlooker in this great warfare. All must take either one side or the other, and have a part in the conflict. So we have each to choose which army we will enlist in, and who shall be our captain and leader.

The Lord Jesus is a kind and loving Master, who rules His army only by love, and all His soldiers are perfectly free and happy. Besides this, the victory is always on His side, for He has already taken away all the power of the Dragon, and made an open show of his defeat.

But the Dragon is, as you may well believe, a hard and cruel task-master, who keep his soldiers in cruel bondage, makes them his slaves, and gives them heavy burdens to carry. And besides this, his soldiers are always on the losing side.

You think it strange then, do you not, that he should get any followers at all; and wonder why every one does not enlist in the army of Jesus? Well, we must remember that the Dragon, when he is looking for recruits, does not go about in his real character, but he has terrible power to deceive.

He took the first woman captive "through his subtlety." He appeared in the form of the beautiful and wise serpent, and the fruit that he persuaded her to taste looked very sculpting, and at first no doubt tasted sweet and pleasant.

This is the way that he is still deceiving the people of this earth. He knows each one, and suits his temptations to their weaknesses. And he always promises something pleasant, some reward for yielding to his persuasions. But "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

However fair its fruits at first appear, however pleasant to the taste, remember, dear children, that they are deadly poison, and that tasting them will bring you under the cruel power of the Dragon, and place you among those who "through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Never think it a little thing to be disobedient, to be untruthful or deceitful in anyway, or to be unkind. For all these things show that the Dragon is getting his chains round you, and you will be "led captive by him at his will."

The Lord Jesus gives wisdom to His true soldiers, those who love and follow Him, and study the Guide Book that He has given to His army. He says that they shall not be ignorant of the devices of the Dragon,—they shall not be deceived by Satan. When they meet him in the name of Christ their Captain, and resist him with the sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God), his mask always disappears, and he has to show himself in his real hideousness.

There is another thing that keeps many in the army of the Dragon, and that is that they do not make a real, full, determined choice to be the soldiers of Jesus. All these the Dragon seizes and forces into His service, but Jesus will have none but those who love and choose Him.

Jesus said: "He that is not with Me is against Me." So all who do not put themselves by their own free choice right on His side, are in the army of His enemies, doing battle against Him.

But you, I am sure, all want to be the Lord's faithful little soldiers; so if you have not done it already, enlist in His army without delay. He enrolls all His soldiers in the Book of Life, and all who continue faithful to the end, have their names kept there for ever. That means that they live for ever, and the Great Conqueror gives them a seat on His own throne when the warfare is ended.

You know that all who wish to become soldiers in the British army have to go through an examination before their names are enrolled. They must be over a certain age, they must be more than a certain height, and they must be strong, to be able to bear the hardships of a soldier's life.

But Jesus says: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." None are too young, none too small, none too weak, for His army. This is because the Captain Himself has all power, and is able to give it all to each one of His soldiers. He clothes each one in a suit of His own tried and proved armour, and it is this armour that I am going to tell you about, but we must wait now until next week.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,  
A kingly crown to gain;  
His blood-red banner streams afar,  
Who follows in His train?"