

# MY OTHER SELF.

## Dr. Gordon Eulogizes the Federal Soldier.

### The Man Who Fought Not for Himself, But for Us.

#### Memorial Sermon by the Patriotic Boston Pastor.

The following Memorial Sermon by Dr. A. J. Gordon of this city, is published in response to numerous requests. The text and discourse, in full, is as follows:

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."—[Timothy ii. 3.]

It is our fortune to have with us, this morning, a large company of those who stood for the defence of our country in the recent civil war. It is a good thing to have these war-worn veterans pass in review before us occasionally. Otherwise the memory of what they suffered and what they purchased for us might wear away from our minds. There are no persons on earth who are so closely related to us as these. They were our substitutes. They stood in our place. They exposed themselves to shot and shell, not for themselves, but for us. The soldier is my other self. I live because he has died. I am at peace, because he fought. I have a home because he had a camp and a bivouac upon the battlefield. "To arms!" "To the front!" "The Union is in danger!" That is the cry which we heard 30 years ago. And it concerned every man—one as much as another. For every citizen is bound to be a soldier when his country gives the order.

War is one vast system of substitution. As the renowned Arnold von Winkelried bared his breast and caught the spears and arrows of the foe in his own heart, in order to save his little band of followers, so every soldier on the field is baring his bosom for some home, and interposing his body as a shield of flesh and blood for the defence of some fellow-countryman.

In my text the apostle uses the soldier to illustrate what the Christian warrior ought to be. Let us follow the lesson and see what the character and service of those who are with us today may teach us.

"Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." And what is the hardness which we are especially called to endure?

I. We must all endure the hardness of exposure.

The church can always get gentlemen cadets, enough dress-parade Christians, who like to wear the uniform and keep step to the music of Christianity; but real fighting-men, who are able to close in with the devil, and charge bayonets on the prince of darkness are not so easily found. "Fight the good fight of faith," the Bible says, and that is not any holiday business. It takes courage and energy, and the grip of tremendous perseverance for all that. I think the Church of Christ is full enough of home guards—Christians who are defending the ordinances, and protecting the doctrines, and burnishing up the accoutrements of the gospel, but who never go to the front from one end of the year to another. But the enemy are upon us. The watchful pickets, the men and women who have their eyes open, will tell you that the foe is encamped at our very doors. The rumshops have entrenched the selves right under the shadow of our churches, and they are killing off more men with their battles every year than the rebellion killed with its battles. And the ground is all mined with the dens of vice, and the liquor league is completely entrenched in the strongholds of law and license; and the black artillery of hell is shaking out shrapnel every day

something, certainly. This is the day of strife. As long as Satan is loose and sin is rampant, we must fight or surrender; we must be soldiers or cowards, for even the prince of the power of the air will not allow us to be neutrals. Of course there are lulls in the battle, there are alternations of excitement and stillness. The roar of a terrific engagement cannot always be kept up. This must be followed by the quiet of planning and recruiting and reinforcing; but the pickets can never be called in unless we propose to surrender the field.

"Oh, watch and fight and pray. The battle ne'er give o'er."

We shall not be always in the fight, but we must be always on the watch; and when we have struck every blow and won every victory in our power, then we are not invited to sit down in some cool retreat and rest upon our laurels, but "having done all, stand," says God. When the old city of Pompeii was dug out after having been for eighteen centuries buried, a sentinel was found still standing at his post, his skeleton fingers grasping his sword and bony feet firmly planted on the pavement. He had time to run before the black smoke had choked him or the black ashes had buried him, but having done all, he stood. Faithful unto death, and faithful in death. And that is a sermon in effigy for us all. We are to endure hardness; to stand, though blackened with the smoke of detraction and riddled through and through with ridicule—and having done all, to stand.

The good soldier must endure the peril of death. "Be thou faithful unto death," says the Master, which means not merely that we must be faithful as long as we live, but that we must be ready to die if need be. That is the soldier's calling. Other men make their preparations to live; he makes his to die. The hospital and the surgeon and the ambulance and the nurses go with him. The ghastly preparations for bloodshed and burial are made beforehand. Every advance is for some one of the regiment a march to the tomb and a bivouac to the grave. Soldiers who have escaped with your life, you cannot forget those who fell by your side. The sacred duty of strewing their graves with flowers you are soon to fulfil. But it is not the wreaths and garlands and the martial music that will most occupy your thoughts. It is the dead thousands—their silent faces seeming and look up from the bed of earth, where they are resting; their still bodies wrapped in the blanket of sod, waiting for the trumpet-sound that calls not to war any more, but to eternal peace in the resurrection morning. They come no more to the roll-call of their regiment; they hear not any longer the summons to fall into line; they are resting after battle, and their sleep no mortal bugle call can break. But, oh, remember, soldiers, that you are fast hastening to join their ranks. Your numbers are thinning. Year by year you miss your comrades that have dropped out of your ranks. The draft of death never stops. "More men, more men," cries the terrible captain. Mortality, and his quota must be furnished each year, at whatever cost. Therefore seek I pray you to be soldiers of peace as you have been soldiers of war; brave defenders of right and virtue, firm friends of justice and truth; soldiers of Christ Jesus, by a voluntary enlistment and a glad acceptance of his call to service. Be Christian men. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Captain worthy to lead and mighty to conquer.

And brethren and friends, if you shall go to their honored graves, forget not to thank those who lie there for what they have done for you. They died that you might not have to die. They fought to give you peace.

And God grant that we may all learn the lesson of this hour, and by our rigid discipline, by our martial bearing in the presence of the foe, and by our heart conquest over sin and self, we all receive at last from the great Captain the soldier's laurel and the Commander's "well done."

II. But, secondly, as the soldiers of Christ we must endure the hardness of wounds and mutilations.

It has always seemed to me the severest trial for a soldier that he must walk through life with an empty coat-

lence than for her vehement speech. She is slow to attack crying sins and outrages, public wrongs, for fear of getting the enmity of the world when the Master told her distinctly at the outset, "if the world hated me it will hate you," and the most dreadful temptation to which we are exposed is that we shall compromise with the enemy and love our own ease better than God's eternal war upon evil. But the church's wounds are her glory, the seal and signature of her fidelity. It was when she stood with a drawn sword, facing and charging upon the corruptions of the Roman empire, that she stood forth "fair as the morn, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners."

Let us learn a lesson from the soldier's profession which is today brought before us. His business is to attack the enemy, and not simply to make himself comfortable in camp. His business is to fight, and not simply to appear on dress parade and be prompt in drawing his rations.

"Right about face," said a young soldier, in giving an account of his conversion. "This is what I did when I was converted. My face was toward sin, and pleasure, and self-indulgence, and I turned squarely about and set my face toward God, and bared my breast to the devil, and said 'Come on, old tempter and soul-destroyer, I am going to fight you to the'

And this, soldiers of Christ and soldiers of the country, is the attitude for you all. Your face toward death." God, your breast presented to the enemy; for the peace of God means war with the devil and all his legions.

and whiskey wagons, with bottles pointing at every angle, and then the criminal carts, the devil's ambulances, carrying the wounded and the half dead to prison and to jail. Oh, Christian! There is no ending to the war for which you have enlisted—no truce, no furlough, no retreat. And learn from the history of those who are before you that the country was never saved by "home guards." The true home guards were those who left their homes and went to the front. And the men and women who are the "good soldiers of Jesus Christ" today, and the true defenders of his church, are those who are in the aggressive campaign against sin, those who are leaving their cushioned ease and putting off the holiday uniform of religion, and are going into the fight ready to be pelted with the mud of ridicule; and to stand the hot fire of coldness and contempt from their brethren, because they hear the clear ringing orders of their captain urging them on.

Nothing truly great or heroic can ever be done for Christ without exposure, criticism, ridicule, dissuasion, contempt and abuse, these will rattle like grape shot about every man's ears, who presumes to advance on the foe and be easiest enough to down his fire. And the Christian who never heard the whizz of these small missiles, may be pretty sure that he is behind a stump, or in the rear, or down in a trench, and not out in the open field of conquest. Tell us, brother soldiers, what you got by enlisting in your country's service. Long and fatiguing marches! did you not? Hard exposure to cold rains and burning heats; sometimes only a crust for your rations, and muddy water for your drink; a hard bed on the ground, with your musket for a pillow and the open sky for your curtain—and all this but a preparation for still sorer hardships, when an engagement should be reached. The yell of the shot, the bursting of shells, the gleaming of bayonets, the explosion of mines, the sickly sight of the wounded—this is what the brave soldier has to fear. And can we be soldiers of Christ, and expect no hardships and meet no trials; the cushioned entrenchment of a pew, and showers of applause from the world,—is this the lot of a good soldier of Jesus Christ? No! The greatest peril to which we are exposed is that of skulking. The sentiment of our popular Christianity is largely in favor of it. "What is the use," say your wise and conservative Christians, "what is the use of firing on the respectable sins of society, when they would let you alone if you would let them alone? What is the use of drawing the fire of the rum-sellers on you or to bring on an engagement with the whiskey ring?"

What need is there to stir up the roughs and ward politicians by throwing a hand grenade among them in the shape of a public exposure of the iniquity? What possible good can there be in the pulpit bombarding the gin palace or the fashionable club? All of which is the exhortation of cowardice and spiritual poltroonery. It is saying, not, "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," but "seek softness as an easygoing soldier. Don't come to a close engagement with sin if you can help it. Fire blank cartridges if you must preach for the name of the thing. Guard the peace of the church with Quaker guns, rather than wake the enemy's wrath." Seek for peace above all things, yes, peace among ourselves, that is the bond of union, the *esprit du corps*, the very tie of strength in the army of Christ; but war upon sin. "Think not that I came to bring peace but a sword," says Christ. "See to it, oh church of God, that you do not sheathe that sword in a breast scabbard of respectability, or dull its edge with an easygoing conscience.

Of course, I do not mean by all this that Christians should make it a principle to be pugnacious and quarrelsome; but the Bible certainly means something when it tells us that we must please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers, that we must "fight the good fight of faith," that we must "war a good warfare." And when Christ is called "the Captain of our salvation," the language signifies

days upon a wooden leg, or feel one constant ache or festering pain of a leaden ball within his flesh. The battle lasts for an hour or a day, but the wounds and disfigurements follow men to the grave. And it is these permanent disabilities of war that constitute its hardest trial. The old soldier hobbling on crutches, while those for whom he fought trip lightly by with never a look of recognition, this grinds a sensitive heart. "I had rather be in my grave," says the old veteran, "than to carry my grave about with me in the shape of an empty sleeve or a wooden limb for everybody to stare at, people never stopping to think whether I lost my arm at Gettysburg or had it taken off in a saw mill. Who cares where I was wounded so long as he escaped? Who thinks to honor the stump of my arm so long, as he has a whole arm himself?" And the complaint is true enough. Men are shamefully ungrateful to those who have stood for them and suffered for them. I have two friends who each lost a limb at Gettysburg. And though they have now occupied pulpits in two cities of New England, they complained that they had to wait for a long time for places because churches did not want ministers with wooden limbs. Talk about honorable scars and illustrious wounds! Few men live, I judge, who would not prefer a sound body to a maimed one, and a whole arm to a half of one. But remember, oh soldiers and saviours of your country, that two rewards are certain—the praise of a good conscience, which is better than the noisy huzzas of the fickle multitude, and the praise of the great Captain in so far as you have sought to honor him and fight for his glory in your campaigns. Paul, the bravest soldier whom Christ ever had, said exultingly, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He gloried in his wounds. And he tells us why he did so. They had schooled him in the great lesson of self-denial; they had made him stronger to help others, through the very weakness which they brought upon him. "He that will lose his life shall save it," says Christ. Self-denial is a great training for usefulness, for the man who has wounds of his own is best fitted to bring healing to others. It was a saying among the ancient warriors, "That ball is sure to hit the mark which has first been dipped in the soldier's own blood." It was an apt proverb, meaning, if I rightly understand it, that self-denial is the surest course to success. If your bullet has been dipped in your own blood it goes straight to the mark. If your words have been dipped in your own heart they go swift to the hearts of others. If your consolations have been baptized in your own sorrows they bring sure relief to others. If your counsel has been first saturated with your own experience, it finds straight course to the experience of others. It is only what you are and what you know that you can make others know and be.

And so learn thy lesson as Christian soldiers, my hearers, that your wounds are your strength rather than your weakness. Wounded pride, wounded feelings, wounded reputations, wounded sensibilities, how hard these are to bear. And any Christian who is aggressive and uncompromising will get enough of them. You know the states which rebelled were always saying that all they asked was to be let alone. And that is just what the whole confederacy of sin and wickedness is saying today—only let us alone. Public fraud and dishonesty want to be let alone. Social corruption and impurity ask to be let alone. Gilded temptation and legalized seduction wish to be let alone. All the venders of distilled damnation, all the dealers in poisoned literature, all the advertisers of fraudulent medicines, all the plotters against youthful innocence, all the poisoners-general of mankind, ask to be let alone. And if you do not let them alone you will get wounded in your heart, and wounded in your good name, and wounded in your sensibilities. And what if you do? The reproach of the church is that she has so few scars and battle marks. She is more to be blamed for her guilty si-