

"unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places...the manifold wisdom of God." There is a mighty conflict in the spiritual realm. The early chapters of the book of Job give us an inkling of this situation. We are contending against spiritual forces that we could not possibly meet in our own strength. We need the whole armor of God.

We are wrestling against spiritual forces, not against flesh and blood. We should never forget this. Our attitude towards erring human beings should always be one of sympathy and compassion. It should be our earnest desire that they might be won from their errors and might to come to know the Lord. It is impossible to put any limit on the power of God to win even those who seem to be violently against him. In our contending against the spiritual forces of evil it is often necessary for us vigorously to resist their human agents, but we should always feel compassion for the erring men of flesh and blood and should pray that God will enable us to lead them to His truth.

In verse 13 Paul urges that we put on the whole armor of God that we may "be able to withstand in the evil day." The old adage, "In time of peace prepare for war," is still true. We never know what sort of spiritual conflict may be ahead of us. We never know what opportunity for service for Christ may come our way. If we are not ready when the time comes, we will accomplish little for Him. God wants us to be constantly preparing, learning to use the armor, so that when the time of real need comes, we may be able to stand.

When the young man David came to the camp of Israel, he found that he had arrived on a day of tremendous crisis. Goliath was calling for a champion. No Israelite dared to go and meet him. David saw that there was indeed a cause at stake (1 Sam.17:29), and ^{volunteered} ~~offered himself~~. Saul offered David his armor, but David declined to use the pieces of the armor, saying, "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." (1 Sam.17:39) He had not learned to maneuver with this armor. He could not make proper use of it. Instead, he took five smooth stones out of the brook and killed