On Life's Spiritual Battlefield

By Lois J. Stucky

Brother W. C. Moore, co-founder of Herald of His Coming wrote an editorial years ago entitled, "Life Is A Battlefield." The introduction to the article reads as follows: "We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8)…But when we are saved, we are saved to serve, to follow the Lord Jesus, to do His will (Matt. 16:24; John 14:23; Matt. 12:46-50). And when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we do not move onto 'Easy Street' – but rather, onto a battlefield! But don't be frightened! His grace is sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9-10; Deut. 33:25). The Christian life is not a lazy life, not an indolent, dull, soft, good-for-nothing sort of an existence – but a gloriously interesting and active life…."

Having worked under Brother Moore's kindly leadership for twenty years, I believe this expresses well something he lived out in his life. He sometimes used as a closing to his letters, "In His wonderful and glorious service…." That indicated what he experienced his love-service to the Lord to be, for he was not one to use words lightly, nor to hypocritically claim something for himself that he did not sincerely mean.

Sometimes I almost cringed on behalf of Brother and Sister Moore as I learned of some additional problem they had to face – perhaps disappointment in someone they trusted, or financial shortage or the solving of some conflict among staff members. Often it was Sister Moore's physical weakness and suffering, or sometimes new governmental regulations for which adjustments must be made, etc. And always there was the burden for a languishing Church and a perishing world weighing upon them. They did not flinch, but oh, how they prayed! They took everything to the Lord, and they were sustained in their service to the Lord on the battlefield of life.

Greater trials come to leaders than to most of us. Still, if we but realized it, day by day each of us faces matters that – depending on how we meet them – can knock us down a notch spiritually or that can be a stepping stone to spiritual maturity and victory. Life for all of us is a testing on the battlefield in the spiritual realm. Three enemies of the overcoming, victorious Christian life sometimes pointed out to us are the world, the flesh and the devil. I am thinking especially of the enemy within, the flesh life, as I write briefly below of a few of the conflicts we face.

Reality versus routine. If we want reality in our love life with the Lord and His people, in our worship of God, in our abiding in Christ, in our being led by the Holy Spirit, etc., how we need to beware of living the Christian life on a fleshly level rather than in the energy of the Holy Spirit. *"The flesh profiteth nothing"* (John 6:63). We need to cultivate a genuine thirst for the Holy Spirit's presence and power in our life. God promises to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him (Luke 11:13). Drinking daily of the Holy Spirit along with daily Bible reading and prayer, will help keep our Christian life fresh and alive and more than a routine with little heart or strength in it.

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"Fresh oil from the Throne…" is the way one little prayer chorus expresses it: "…We need Thy power in this dark hour. Anoint us today with fresh oil from the Throne!" This is a good prayer and a secret of the abundant life Christ came to give us, or of what we might call, personal revival.

On one occasion Jesus graciously called out to the people: *"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive…"* (John 7:37-39). Might each of us seek that "flow" of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives, that we will be conquerors, yes, more than conquerors on the battlefield of life! (Rom. 8:35-37). As time goes on, some of us might face some of those fearsome battles in life that Paul speaks of in Romans 8, where he climaxes with the "more than conquerors" exclamation. Let's be developing our strength now in the lesser skirmishes with which we meet.

A roadway versus ruts. Isaiah chapter 35 begins with a beautiful picture of how joyous life is and the wonderful things that happen when the glory of God is manifested among His people. The desert blossoms; there is joy and singing and glory; blind eyes are opened; the lame leap; the deaf hear and the tongue of the mute sings! Hallelujah! It goes on to say in verse 8: *"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it…"*

Instead of walking on the highway of holiness, many Christians become bogged down in some rut of sin, some besetting sin, something we may have struggled against without success and which we gradually have accepted as part of our life. God has something better for us!

"God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

How blessed is the cleansing from all sin that He performs as we humble ourselves before Him, confess our sins and seek His deliverance, with the confidence that if we seek, we shall find (Matt. 7:8).

Commitment versus compromise. Brother Moore used to warn us about "pussy footing" around in our Christian lives, about shying away from making a full-hearted commitment to our Lord and His cause. I don't recall hearing that expression since Brother Moore used to speak it to us, but even if it is out of our vocabulary nowadays, might the concept of commitment still be in our lives. Oh, may God help us not to fail Him who is so faithful to us, by our being reticent to make and keep commitment to Him! Let us be people of purpose, be resolved, be determined to serve the Lord, even if we are in a lowly place where it seems few if any would notice whether we are faithful or not. God knows. Will He be pleased or grieved by our choice? Will we be strengthened or weakened in our Christian character?

Let us follow where He leads and do His bidding always. Even if we go alone, be sure we are standing with the Lord and then stand firm, as Richard Owen Roberts exhorts us in his article.

Living the Christ-life versus living the self-life. Basically, in the battlefield of the spiritual life,

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what it comes down to is, will it be Himself or myself who is dominating my life? Will I live for Christ, the altogether worthy one, or for self, in whom dwells no good thing, for eternity which is so enduring or for time which is so fleeting, pressing on to know Christ better or content to maintain the "status quo"?

Like the Apostle Paul, we can say – and give ourselves to living it out whatever it entails of hardship: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). This is the secret to the life that overcomes on the battlefield of life. Might we be among those pressing on for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! (Phil. 3:14).

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