

The Christian Armed

by F.B. Meyer

The Christian warrior must possess certain personal qualities, such as truth, righteousness, and faith, in order to be victorious in the battle against evil.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "The Armor of God", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the spiritual warfare that every Christian faces, highlighting the need for believers to be equipped with the full armor of God to withstand the powers of evil. He stresses the importance of personal integrity, righteousness, and the pursuit of peace as essential qualities for a Christian warrior. Meyer encourages Christians to cultivate a vigorous faith and to experience God's salvation personally, which empowers them to share the Gospel effectively. He concludes by underscoring the necessity of relying on the Word of God and prayer as vital tools in this spiritual battle. Ultimately, through abiding in Christ, believers can achieve victory over the forces of darkness.

Transcript

EACH Christian has to meet with the powers of hell, in his own life, and in his capacity as a soldier of the Gospel of Christ. It is with the latter aspect of the conflict that the apostle is specially concerned, in the last chapter of the Epistle we have been studying. We do not question that there is a reference to the personal conflict which each believer has to maintain with the principalities and powers of evil. But the stress laid on the fact that they are the world-rulers, or the rulers of the darkness of this world, is significant of that wider conflict which the Church, and each member of it, is called upon to maintain with the grim hosts of evil that lie unseen behind those systems of superstition, cruelty, and pride, which oppose the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is well for us to recognise this supernatural element in the evil by which our work for God is confronted, and often sorely pressed. We have to wrestle, not simply with the stupidity, barbarism, or intellectual acumen of flesh and blood, but with the spiritual hosts of wickedness which are in the heavenly places. (See Dan. 16.)

There is no need, however, for us to abate one jot of courage, for in his Ascension all these principalities and powers were put under the feet of our Redeemer; and as we abide in Him, we share his conquest; we are more than a match for the mightiest forces of hell; we walk upon our high places.

But the apostle makes it clear that we must possess certain personal qualities before we can avail ourselves of the victory or power of the Captain of our Salvation. This is what he means by urging us to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Let us ponder this; for to neglect it is the cause of much of the failure of Christian workers. They are not careful enough as to their personal character, and so the devil laughs them to scorn; for by their inconsistencies they cut the sinews of their faith and dissociate themselves from the only source of victory that he dreads. (Compare 2 Peter 1:5-11)

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST BE TRUE. (Ephesians 4:14)

The loins are significant of strength; and girded loins represent the opposite of self-indulgence, slothful ease, or carelessness. Hence the need for the girded loin; and our Lord solemnly insists on it as a prime necessity for his servants. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning."

We must gird ourselves with truth. We must be true to the laws of our nature, never overstepping the limits of moderation, never using for self-indulgence the powers which were intended only for the maintenance of the fires of life; never yielding to that worse self which lurks in us all, as the miasma in the fairest landscapes of southern climes. We must be true to God who made and redeemed us; true to our best selves, our noblest ideals; true to those with whom we live, and who are certainly affected for good or evil by our self-restraint or the reverse.

There is the strongest obligation that we should often stand foursquare before the mirror of truth; which is Christ--Christ the Light that lighteth every man--Christ in conscience--Christ in the Word. There is no severer or straighter test than this. With unflinching accuracy we shall discover our true selves, as we come face to face with Him, who is girt with righteousness as the girdle of his reins, and faithfulness as the girdle of his loins. Let there be any obliqueness, or irregularity, or inconsistency, it will be at once and unerringly revealed. No distortion of the inner life can escape detection or condemnation before the judgment-seat, whose decisions are ratified by each soul's secret convictions of justice. Would that we were all in the habit of submitting to that faithful scrutiny--not the greater matters only, but all the smallest details of our lives!

Then let us, in the name and by the power of Jesus, put away all that has been shown to be inconsistent with his character and claims, and let us submit in everything to his control. It will cost us something. We may have difficulty with our judgment, warped and injured by self-preference. We may have to contend with our will, reluctant to sign the death-warrant of some favourite habit. We may feel singularly powerless to carry into effect what we know, in our loftiest moments, to be our only safe and blessed policy. But happy are we, if we dare to catch up the trailing robes of self-indulgence, and restrain them under the cincture of inexorable truth and purity.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST BE RIGHTEOUS. (Ephesians 6:14)

"Put on the breastplate of righteousness." This righteousness is not primarily that which is reckoned to us, so soon as we believe in Jesus, but rather that personal righteousness which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, and in virtue of which our characters are conformed to that of Jesus Christ the Righteous. The apostle refers to it when he reminds Titus that the grace of God instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world. It is the temper we should cultivate and manifest in all our dealings with men. The breastplate is worn upon the heart, the seat of our affections and emotions. In these especially we must be right.

It is very necessary to remember this. Of what use is it to speak of Jesus to those who are rankling under a sense of our injustice, or are sensible of some glaring inconsistency in our character? The effect of our most eloquent entreaties is neutralized by our deeds, which speak even louder.

What a beautiful contrast there is between the laxity of too many of us and the scrupulous care of the apostle Paul! How watchfully he exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence toward man as well as God! How sensitive to the least appearance of self-seeking, that he might cut off occasion from them which desired an occasion! How gladly he went without what was in itself lawful, lest his ministry should be blamed!

It becomes the Christian to put it beyond the power of man or devil to point to some inaccuracy in life or conversation, and to say, "This man belies his profession, and contradicts his own teaching." Rather let us suffer wrong, and submit to overcharge, and give men even more than they can justly claim. Anything of loss or suffering may be cheerfully met, in order that night after night we may wash our hands in innocency, and feel that we have not put a stumbling-block in the path of any man.

This is only possible as we abide by faith in Christ our righteousness. And when we have done our best, we shall have nothing to boast of. We are always unprofitable servants, who have only done what they ought.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST FOLLOW AFTER PEACE. (Ephesians 6:15)

"Your feet shod with the preparedness of the Gospel of Peace." There is undoubtedly a reference in these words to Isaiah's vision of the messengers, who, with beautiful feet, speed across the mountains to proclaim the good tidings of the Gospel. But there is the further thought, that those who carry the Gospel of Peace must tread gently and softly.

If the Gospel of Peace is our message, the peace of God should mantle our face with a holy calm; breathe through our lips like a benediction; and diffuse itself like the dew of the Lord over the places of human rivalry and hatred. Ours should be the blessedness of the peace-makers. Our tread should be only in the paths of peace, except when the trumpet of God clearly calls us to war against the sins and wrongs around. "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. So then, let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. The Lord's servant must not strive; but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves." Be it ours, then, always to be on the alert to promote peace and love amongst men; not incensed or irritated by their rancorous dealings with ourselves; not catching fire at the flame of their wrath and indignation.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST BE VIGOROUS IN FAITH. (Ephesians 6:16)

As each fiery dart, tipped with the flames of hellish hate, comes speeding to the soldier of the cross, deafened by the din and blinded by the smoke of battle, he must catch and quench it on the golden shield of faith, that it reach not his head or heart.

Sometimes a slander will be circulated, for which you have given no occasion; or a venomous speech or article will be hurled at you; or some horrible suggestion will be thrust between the joints of the armour; or some deadly reminder of the sins of the past, which you can never recall without burning remorse. At such times we are tempted to give back, to renounce our work, to withdraw from the battle. And those will

certainly yield to the temptation, who are not inspired by the faith that can hand these things over to the compassionate and mighty Saviour, who knows all, but loves better than He knows, and who interposes to cover our heads in the day of battle.

But faith like this is only possible to him whose hands are clean, and his heart pure; who is living in daily fellowship with Jesus, and whose soul is nurtured by daily feeding on the Word of God.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST KNOW GOD'S SALVATION IN HIS OWN EXPERIENCE. (Ephesians 6:17)

He must be saved from the guilt and penalty of sin before he can proclaim the plentitude of God's forgiveness to the chief of sinners. He must know the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation from the dominion of sin in his own heart. He must be anticipating the consummation of God's purpose in the redemption of the body. As the helmet glistens in the sunshine, so must the crown of the Christian's experience point upward to heaven and onward to the glory yet to be revealed. He must speak that which he knows, and declare what he has seen and heard. It is when we are experiencing the power of God's salvation that we can declare it to others, with a freedom and a power that needs no further corroboration. And it is when men see the salvation of God exemplified in our own life and character, that they will be prepared to accept it as indeed the Word of God.

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR MUST USE THE TWO ESSENTIAL MEANS OF GRACE--THE WORD OF GOD, AND PRAYER. (Ephesians 6:18)

Add to all the above the diligent use of the Word of God in the culture of our souls, in the preparation of our messages, and in dealing with the conscience of our hearers; and let there be besides the perpetual use of the weapon of All-prayer, and there is no enemy born of hell that shall be able to withstand us, who, in the feebleness of human weakness, are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Daily meditate on your union with the ascended Lord: reckon that in Him you have died to sin-and present your tempted members as instruments of righteousness unto Christ--and yours will be a course of unbroken victory.

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