

# FULLY FURNISHED

or

## THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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### CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

#### THE WORKER'S WEAKNESS

THERE is one thing for which we are all crying to the Lord continually - and that is, more power. May I say, we do not need more power, but to be in such a condition of soul that we may realize the power we have. The Lord had distinctly given the disciples power to cast out devils, and yet we find that the disciples could not cast them out. This was because of their unbelief. They had the authority and the power to cast out demons, but they were not in the right condition of soul for God to use them; and this is often the case with us, as workers for Christ (compare Luke 9:1, 2; and 37-41).

Thus we need to be in the right condition of soul, that the power of Christ may rest upon us; and the one condition necessary, to realize the power of God, is weakness. If we have any strength of our own, if we think we have any ability of our own, we shall surely fail. Let us remember II Corinthians 12:9, Paul prayed to the Lord thrice, that the thorn in the flesh might be taken away; but the Lord said, **“My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength [power] is made perfect in weakness, Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”**

There are two words rendered **“power”** in the New Testament, one meaning *authority*, and the other meaning *ability*.

The first is in John 1:12, **“As many as received Him, to them gave He power [authority] to become the sons of God.”** The Lord Jesus Christ, in speaking of Himself says, **“The Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins;”** and **“All power [authority] is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.”**

It is one thing for a policeman to have the authority to apprehend a man, but it is another thing for him to have the strength to do it. There may be forces coming in between him and the man, so that he is hindered from doing what he is commissioned to do. we find the two words occurring together in Luke 4:36: **“And they were all amazed,”** - when they saw Christ casting out the demons - **“and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.”**

The Lord Jesus Christ had not only the authority, but He had the ability.

If we are in the right condition of soul, we not only have the authority to overcome sin, and go forth in work for the Master, but we have the ability; for, as Ralph Erskine says, "All God's biddings are His enablings." Or, as Augustine prayed, "Give what Thou dost command, and then command what Thou wilt."

When He tells us to do a thing, He gives us the power to do it. As workers we want power to go forth and testify for the Lord - power with men, power to be used of God. The only thing, then, for us, is to be weak enough and low enough, for God Himself to take us up and use us, that His own power may rest upon us, and that He Himself may be glorified in us.

There are five things mentioned in I Corinthians 1:27, 28, which God uses as instruments in His service to accomplish His purpose; and it is not without significance, there are five, for the number five as found in association with man, is symbolical of weakness, but when found in connection with God, the number five is typical of grace. These two thoughts are generally found together when this numeral is used.

- When God in His grace brought Israel out of Egypt, they came out "**five in a rank**" (Exodus 13:18, margin).
- God's promise to Israel was, "**Five of you shall chase an hundred**" (Leviticus 26:8), in speaking of their victories over their enemies.
- When David in his weakness went against Goliath in the power of God, he only took "**five smooth stones**" (I Samuel 17:40).
- When Christ fed the five thousand, He did it with "**five loaves**" and "**two small fishes**" (John 6:9).

There might be many other illustrations given, but the above will suffice to show that God uses the weak and insignificant things.

If we get into the lowest place we have got into the highest.

An old Methodist at Brighton, many years ago, used to pray a prayer we could not for some time understand. It was, "Help us to deeper sink, that we may higher rise." we said then, "Whatever does he mean?" but we think we have learned that he meant, the deeper he sank in his own estimation, and lost sight of himself, the higher he would rise, and the more God Himself would be able to use him.

Let us look at the five classes of workers the Lord uses in His service.

### ***I - God uses foolish things.***

**"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise."**

The word "**foolish**" means *a simpleton*. God can use a simpleton to confound the wise, or to put them to shame, as the sentence might be explained.

The same expression is found in Luke 13:17, where we read that Christ's adversaries were ashamed.

I remember being some years ago in a little village, called Bidford, near Stratford-on-Avon. A young fellow there, who is now a local preacher in connection with the Wesleyans was brought to the Lord during the meetings. Before his conversion he was very ignorant. His aunt said to him one day - "Charlie, find out who ' **whosoever** ' is."

He went to work, but puzzled his brain about it all day.

When he got home his aunt said, "Have you found out who ' **whosoever** ' is?"

"No," he replied.

"Why, of course it is you," she said.

A day or two after he was converted, he was working in a field: the devil came to him and began to tempt him: he fell upon his knees and prayed to the Lord. He did not know that some of his mates were watching him. When he got up from his knees they said, "Charlie, you are half-a-fool."

He was very much discouraged at this. The same night, he walked over to a meeting we were holding four miles from that place. The subject happened to be "*The fool*."

I said there were two kinds of fools mentioned in God's Word: first, "those who allow the devil to cheat them out of all Christ is willing to give them; and second, those who are willing to be fools and despised for Christ's sake, that God Himself may be glorified."

The young man went back to the village, and the next day met his mates, and said to them, "You called me half-a-fool yesterday; by God's grace I intend to be a whole fool for Christ."

We want to be "whole fools" for Christ in that sense - fools enough to follow Him, to do as He tells us, to be out and out for Him.

The people of Jericho must have thought the children of Israel fools as they were marching round Jericho, blowing the rams' horns. Can we not imagine them, saying, "Do they think they will pull down the walls of this strong city by blowing rams' horns?" They forgot that God was at His people's back, and, to their surprise, they found the walls did come down through the blowing of those rams' horns.

The late Dr. Gordon, of America, once related how a gentleman held a baby, while its mother was in the enquiry room. How foolish the man must have looked, as he tried to quiet the child, but he was amply rewarded, for the mother was brought to Christ. Dr. Gordon says of it, "I think a special blessing rested upon that work, for not only was the mother saved, but that little girl came to Christ when she was twelve years old, and I haven't a more aggressive Christian than that baby has grown to be."

## II - God uses weak things.

The meaning of the word “**weak**,” is *sickly, feeble, impotent, strengthless*.

It is used:

- Of the “**impotent man**” at the beautiful gate (Acts 4:9);
- Of Paul’s bodily infirmity, when he says he “**is weak**” (II Corinthians 12:10);
- Of the “**sick**” Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27);
- Of the “**sickly**” Corinthians (I Corinthians 11:30); and
- Of the state of the sinner, when he is described as being “**without strength**” (Romans 5:6).

**“God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty.”**

We not only need to be fools, but weak. When the Lord told Gideon to go against the Midianites, at first he had 32,000 men. **“The Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me.”** Then the Lord thinned the men out to 10,000, and so on until there were only 300. Then, He practically says, “Yes, that will do. Now, I have all the men who are whole-hearted, those who are willing to be used by Me, and give all the glory to Me.” Away they went; the Lord used them, and got glory by doing so. We want to be like them to lay ourselves down at the Master’s feet, that He may take us up, and He Himself get glory by us.

## III - God uses base things.

Yes, He not only uses weak things, but base things, that is, *ignoble ones, those who have no social standing*. Have you noticed the “**base things**” that God used (Matthew 1) in connection with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ? Of the four women mentioned, one played the harlot (Tamar), another was a Gentile (Ruth), another was an adulteress (wife of Urias), and the fourth a harlot (Rahab); yet God used these base things to accomplish His purpose.

## IV - God uses despised things.

**“Things which are despised hath God chosen.”**

The word “**despised**” means *contemptible*. It is rendered “**set at nought**,” in speaking of Christ being mocked by Herod and his men of war (Luke 23:11), and Paul uses the same word when he refers to what the Corinthians might say of his speech as being “**contemptible**” (II Corinthians 10:10).

When David went against Goliath he was despised in his eyes, for when the giant saw him, “**he disdained him**” (I Samuel 17:42); but David replied, “**I am come against you in the name of the Lord, and the Lord will deliver you into my hands to-day.**” Though David was despised, God used him for His own glory.

The Lord Jesus Himself was despised and rejected of men, but what wonders God has accomplished through Him! We are therefore in good company, when we, too, are despised.

***V - God uses things that are not.***

These also, He has chosen for His service.

**“What is that in thine hand, Moses?”** Only a rod; yet trace the history of that rod, and see what God accomplished by it.

Oh! If we are just willing to be low at the Master’s feet, the Lord Himself will use us. Let us ask, is there anything between our souls and God - anything that hinders God from using us, anything that hinders the life of Christ from being manifested through us - any Babylonish garment, any wedge of gold, any doubtful thing? How often we hear Christians say, “I do not think there is any harm in this or that! “ Well, it may be there is no harm in it; but remember, **“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”** That is the standard for us to go by. **“He that doubteth is condemned.”**

If we are satisfied with Christ, we shall not want any of these second-hand things.

Christ not only saves and sanctifies, but He satisfies the heart.

Does Christ satisfy? Of course, if we are going after worldly pleasures, it shows we are not satisfied with Christ.

Only recently I heard of one Christian who said to another, “Why, you are going to meetings again; you are always going to meetings.”

The Christian who is in communion with Christ loves to meet with those who love Him. Are we satisfied with Him? Let us be very practical. If Christ Himself satisfies us, we shall not want to compromise, and make bargains with the world; but the Lord Jesus will fill every nook of our heart. We shall be ready to do anything He wishes, if His love fills our hearts. It will thrust us forth. We shall say, with the apostle Paul, **“The love of Christ constraineth us, and we must tell others of it.”**

**~ end of chapter 25**

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