

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE WORKER'S ENEMY

THERE are three enemies that oppose the Christian. These are internal, external, and infernal:

First. The internal enemy. The internal enemy is the evil principle that is called the “**FLESH**” (John 3:6; Romans 7:18). This is opposed to the Holy Spirit, and can only be overcome by Him (Galatians 5:16-26).

Second. The external enemy. The external enemy is the “**WORLD**” (James 1:27; 4:4), and its trinity of evil (I John 2:15-17). This can only be conquered by the Father in the Almightyness of His love (I John 3 and 4).

Third. Infernal enemies. The infernal enemies are Satan and all the hosts of evil under him, as described in Ephesians 6:11, 12. These can only be defeated by the Lord, who has already annulled the power of the wicked one (Hebrews 2:14; I John 3:8).

Thus while we have three enemies to meet, we have a THREE-FOLD POWER to conquer them - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Milton relates, in his *Paradise Lost*, that, suspecting Satan to be in the garden of Eden, two angels instituted a search. They found a toad whispering evil in the ear of Eve, as she, together with her husband, reposed in one of its bowers. One of the angels (Ithuriel) touched the toad with his spear, and up rose, in all his fallen grandeur and malignity, the tempter, the devil. We are exposed to evil: when we would do good, evil is present with us. It is sometimes difficult to detect; but touch it with the sword of the Spirit, which is more powerful than Ithuriel's spear, and the evil will appear in its true colours.

As the imagined spear in the hand of the angel discovered Satan in his true character, so the Word of God is that which will reveal to us the working, as well as the person of the evil one. Satan's tactics lie in one of two extremes: he assumes one of two characters; and knowing this, the child of God is forearmed for his “**devices**” (II Corinthians 2:11) and also against his “**wiles**” (Ephesians 6:11).

There is nothing to fear, when the believer is accoutered in the whole armour of God.

I - Satan comes as a roaring lion to persecute: or as an angel of light to patronize

(I Peter 5:8; II Corinthians 11:14)

Satan as an “**angel of light**” is more to be dreaded than Satan as a “**roaring lion**.” A patronizing enemy is far worse than a persecuting one.

Bunyan brings this out strikingly, in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*. It was a hard fight, that Christian had with Apollyon, in the Valley of Humiliation, and the enemy nearly overcame him; but the sword of the Spirit, in the hand of Christian, put even his strong enemy to flight.

Mark the contrast which Bunyan elsewhere presents. After Christian and Hopeful had been up the Delectable mountains, and when they were proceeding on their journey, they came to two ways, and they stopped and conferred as to which they should take. Presently a black man in “a very light robe” asked the travelers the reason of their standing there. They told him of their perplexity, and were led by him, as they supposed, the right way. But, instead of conducting them aright, the black stranger brought the travelers into the compass of a net, and they woke up to know the wiles of the flatterer. It is a faithful picture of the deceitful workings of Satan. In the early Church, Satan’s policy was persecution, but persecution only caused the fire of truth to burn the more brightly, and made the Christians more zealous to spread the Gospel.

When Saul was persecuting the Church, the scattered flock “**went everywhere preaching the Word**” (Acts 8:1-4).

Latimer may have thought of this at the stake, when he turned to his companion, the saintly Ridley, with the cheering words, “We shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England as I trust will never be put out.”

Now, as of old, where persecution exists, it acts like a bellows to increase the flame of truth and godliness; while flattery, like water, puts out the fire. But has not Satan changed his policy to-day? He does not so much attack the truth in the front, as he seeks to undermine it, through professed supporters. He seeks to overthrow the kingdom of Christ - not so much by open persecution, as by leading his professed followers to compromise, by associating with the world, and adopting its suggestions as to carrying on Christian work.

II - Satan comes as the adversary to accuse, or as the serpent to beguile.

Satan is seen in the book of Job accusing that patriarch of serving God because it paid him to do so (Job 1:9-11).

He appears in the same character in the book of Zechariah. When God would act in grace towards His people, Satan stands up to resist the action (Zechariah 3:1, 2).

Again, in the book of Revelation, he is said to be the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).

These Scriptures warrant us in believing that Satan has access into the presence of God, and there he makes charges against the people of God.

As Satan sought to thwart Christ in His mission by claiming homage (Matthew 4:9);

- As he opposed Him by seeking to divert Him from the path of suffering, using Peter as spokesman (Matthew 16:23);
- As he filled the heart of Judas to sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver (John 13:2);
- As he sought to sift Peter that the Divine life in him might be shaken, so as to make him deny his Master (Luke 22:31);
- As he hindered Paul from going to Thessalonica (I Thessalonians. 2:18) - so he seeks by every means still to oppose the child and servant of God.

Not only does Satan oppose and accuse, but he seeks to corrupt our minds from **“the simplicity that is in Christ”** (II Corinthians 11:3).

He overcame Eve by casting a doubt on the word of God, and getting her to suspect the goodness of God. Thus we see, that as our adversary he accuses us to God, and as the father of lies, he misrepresents God to us. One has said, “Satan would make us think hard things of Divine providence, and wicked things about Divine grace. Let us not believe his slanders of our Heavenly Father, for our Father does not heed what he says of us.”

III - Satan seeks to make men represent him as an awful personage, or as a nobody.

The late Bishop Villiers was once heard to remark on “the dangerous tendency of those old pictures, so familiar to us all, and so often exhibited to children, in which Satan was represented as some grim, dark, ugly monster, the very sight of whom it was terrible to behold.”

A broad-shouldered Scotchman, looking at Schaefer’s painting of “The Temptation of Our Lord,” said, as he pointed to the figure of Satan, “If that chiel cam’ to me in sic an ugly shape, I think he wud hae a teuch job wi’ me too.”

“I could not help smiling,” adds John de Liefde, the narrator of the incident; “but I felt there was much truth in the remark.”

Satan, having overstepped the mark, in presenting himself as an ugly monster, which representation was more likely, perhaps, to suit his purpose in the dark ages than now, seeks rather in our day to persuade men that he is not a person, and that all the devil there is, is to be found in men’s hearts.

This theory is described in the following quaint lines:-

“Men don’t believe in a devil now,
As their fathers used to do;
They’ve forced the door of the broadest creed
To let his form pass through.

There isn't a print of his cloven foot,
Or a fiery dart from his bow,
To be found in earth or air to-day,
For the world has voted so.

But who is it mixing the fatal draught
That palsies heart and brain,
And loads the bier of each passing year
With ten hundred thousand slain?

Who blights the bloom of the land to-day
With the fiery breath of hell?
If the devil isn't, and never was,
Won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint,
And digs the pit for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time
Whenever God sows His wheat?

The devil is voted not to be,
And, of course, the thing is true;
But who is doing the kind of work
The devil alone should do?

We are told he does not go around
Like a roaring lion now;
But whom shall we hold responsible
For the everlasting row

To be heard in home, in Church and State,
To the earth's remotest bound,
If the devil by a unanimous vote
Is nowhere to be found?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith,
And make his bow and show
How the frauds and the crimes of a single day
Spring up? We want to know.

The devil was fairly voted out,
And, of course, the devil's gone;
But simple people would like to know
Who carries his business on."

If there is no devil, where does the devilishness come from? If there is no devil, then the Word of God is not true; the temptation in the Garden of Eden is a myth; and the recorded utterances of Satan are simple fables.

We shall suppose a band of brigands wishful to capture a party of travelers, who decline to pass a certain mountain because of reported danger, and who await the arrival of a powerful escort. The brigands could not adopt a better policy than to send one of their number in disguise to the travelers, with the assurance that their fear of danger is groundless, as no robbers frequent the mountain. If the travelers believe the story of the disguised brigand, one can easily see how fatal the issue is likely to be. Beware of this lie of the devil's, that there is no devil to lie. Mind this policy of the evil one, which asserts that there is no enemy to frame a policy.

IV - Satan seeks to induce men to attach little importance to doctrine, and to exalt life at its expense, or else to make much of doctrine, and little of the life.

A very popular statement just now is, "It does not matter what you believe, so long as you are right in your life." Can a building be constructed without a plan? Can a business be carried on without method? No. Neither can character be formed, apart from the truth.

"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20). Is the **"most holy faith"** here, the act of believing, or the thing believed? We apprehend that it is the same as that spoken of in verse 3 of the same Epistle - the **"faith which was once delivered unto the saints."**

What is this but the truth of God? What is the truth, but the doctrine or teaching of the Holy Spirit? The Apostle Paul, in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, speaks a great deal about doctrine.

He speaks of:

- Things that are **"contrary to sound doctrine";**
- Of being **"nourished up in the words . . . of good doctrine;"**
- counsels Timothy to **"give attendance to doctrine;"**
- To **"take heed unto the doctrine;"**
- To **"count worthy of double honour those elders who "rule well," "especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine."**
- Servants are to **"count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed."**

The Apostle teaches that anyone who propounds other than **"the doctrine which is according to godliness,"** is **"proud, knowing nothing;"**

- He tells Timothy, he has fully known his doctrine; and he declares, that the inspired Word is profitable for doctrine.
- He bids this **"son in the faith"** **"reprove with . . . doctrine;"**
- he also warns him of the time when men **"will not endure sound doctrine"** (I Timothy 1:10; 4:6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; II Timothy 3:10,16; 4:2,3).

In writing to Titus, he says that a bishop must be one who is “**able, by sound doctrine . . . to exhort**”;

- He charges him to “**speak the things which become sound doctrine**”;
- “**In doctrine**” to show “**uncorruptness**,”
- To admonish servants to “**adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things**” (Titus 1:9; 2:1,7,10).

Thus we see the importance which the Holy Spirit attaches to the teaching that is inspired by Himself. Dyer says, that “Christ is not only the Root upon which we grow, but the Rule by which we square.”

The straight rule of God’s truth, is the only means whereby we can have a straight life, therefore let us take heed to ourselves, by taking heed to the Word - the doctrine of Christ. But while Satan works, on the one hand, in the line of depreciating doctrine, he goes also to the other extreme with some, and says, “It is most important that you should take heed to the doctrine - that you should be orthodox; correct definitions of truth are essential, as also clear ideas. But the life - well - that will be all right.”

The man who acts upon this principle,

- Is like one who, while knowing that the ruler is straight, pays no heed to making a straight line with it;
- Or like a builder, who has laid the foundation of the house, and yet does not build on it.
- He is like a traveler, who, while knowing the way to his desired haven, fails to walk in it.
- He is like a diseased person, who knows a remedy, but refuses to take it.

V - Satan endeavors to introduce jealousy among believers; or else to make them indifferent to each other.

We have a painful record of the wrangling spirit possessing the disciples of the Lord Jesus, at a time when He stood in need of their sympathy. When grief should have been theirs, at knowing the treatment to which their Lord must be subjected at the hands of unrighteous men, they were occupied with inquiring which of them shall be greatest (see Luke 9:46).

The disciples seem never to have rejoiced the heart of Jesus, by seeking to know how they might the more resemble HIM, their perfect Example; on the contrary, we find them thus wrangling for position.

In discoursing on the damaging effect which dissension produces, an old writer well says, “Oh consider what a dishonour it is to the Gospel, that those who profess themselves sons of the same God, members of the same Christ, temples of the same Spirit, heirs of the same glory, should be jarring one with another; it is strange and unnatural, that they who are saints in profession should be devils in practice; that God’s diamonds should cut one another! For wolves to devour the lambs is no wonder, but for lambs to devour one another is a wonder, and monstrous.”

Now mark another device of the adversary. If he cannot cause open hostility and friction, he will seek to induce indifference; if he cannot stir up opposition, he will try what assumption will do.

Among the many things which wrung the heart of the Apostle Paul, were contentions, strifes, debates, variances *; of such divisions he had to complain, particularly in writing to the Church at Corinth.

*** “This same Greek word is translated “strife” in Romans 13:13; I Corinthians 3:3; Philippians 1:15; I Timothy 6:4; “variance” in Galatians 5:20; “debates” in II Corinthians 12:20; “contentions” in I Corinthians 1:11; Titus 3:9.**

There were quarrellings and wranglings among the believers there, which speedily caused “**divisions**” or parties in the Church, one saying, “**I am of Paul,**” another, “**I of Cephas,**” and another, “**I of Christ.**” Thus a *rent* was caused, and instead of the Corinthian Church being spiritual, it was carnal. The word rendered “**division**” in I Corinthians 1:10 is translated “**rent**” in Matthew 9:16.

To defeat this spirit, Paul enforces the truth that believers are members one of another, that all are in the mystical body of Christ - and that to set up divisions, is to deny the Lordship of Christ - to fail in discerning the Lord’s body, by not apprehending the oneness of believers with Christ, and consequent oneness with each other.

The secret of success and blessing in the Church of the first days, lay doubtless in the recognition of each member, as partaker of the one Spirit.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have a sevenfold unity;-

1. Unity in prayer (Acts 1:14).
2. Unity in obedience (Acts 2:1).
3. Unity of presence (Acts 2:1).
4. Unity of purpose (Acts 2:46).
5. Unity in praise (Acts 4:24).
6. Unity in service (Acts 5:12).
7. Unity in recognizing God’s servants (Acts 15:25).

Mark the words, “**one accord.**”

Christians should be like a well-tuned harp, upon which the Master of Assemblies can produce the melodies of righteousness of life, holiness of character, love to each other, and glory to God in the highest. But if we allow Satan to introduce jealousy, or lull us to indifference, our state will be like that of a harp out of tune, whose discord will offend.

VI - Satan seeks to inflate with pride, or else to cast down by discouragement.

Pride is like Joseph’s coat - of many colours. It presents itself in a variety of ways.

There is pride of gift. Some Christian workers give one the impression, that they are the only ones to do certain things, and that no one can come up to them in their chosen domain. They seem to think they are, like King Saul, head and shoulders above everybody else.

There is pride of attainment. Bunyan brings this out, in his picture of Christian outrunning Faithful: "Then did Christian vaingloriously smile, because he had gotten the start of his brother; but not taking good heed to his feet, he suddenly stumbled and fell, and could not rise again until Faithful came up to help him." Let us beware of being boastful of our attainments. Let us leave the things that are behind, and seek to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.

There is pride of dress. There is not much to be proud of in dress; as Matthew Henry says, "Clothes came in with sin; we had had no occasion for them, either for defence or decency, if sin had not made us naked to our shame. Little reason, therefore, have we to be proud of our clothes, which are but the badges of our poverty and shame."

There are many other phases of pride, for pride, like the chameleon, has many hues, but those to which we have called attention, show some of the indications of its workings.

As a rule its presence is prominent, for it climbs a tree - not to see Jesus, as Zacchaeus did, but to be seen itself.

Now if Satan fails in his attempt to puff us up with pride, and get us to think we are somebody, he will go to the opposite extreme, and try to persuade us that we are nobody.

The writer remembers reading somewhere, of a conference in hell, at which the subject discussed, was the most effectual way to overthrow the work of Christ in the heart of a faithful servant.

One demon suggested, putting before this saint the pleasures of the world, in the most fascinating array. Another sought to bring dismay into the heart of the saint, by picturing to him the sorrow and privations to which unflinching rectitude would probably lead, and thus to get him to relax his service and devotion. But these propositions were considered to be inadequate, from the fact that the pleasures at God's right hand were more powerful than those of sin; and that the glory hereafter would enable the saint to bear present suffering.

At last, one said confidently, that he had a plan which was sure to succeed: he would discourage the servant of God in his work.

An exulting shout rose from each demon, all agreeing that this temptation would result in fiendish triumph.

How well the enemy succeeded with Elijah we know, from the scene in I Kings 19, where the discouraged prophet requests that he may die. To be discouraged is a sin - it is disobedience to the injunction, "**Be strong and of a good courage.**"

Discouragement is a canker which eats faith and strength away, it tends to produce such conduct as that of the children of Israel, when they gave heed to the false report of the unbelieving spies (Deuteronomy 1:28).

VII - *Satan's policy is often to cause one to lean on self, or only partially to trust in Christ.*

“**Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat**” (Luke 22:31), said the Lord to Peter, in speaking of coming temptation. This should have put Peter on the alert, and caused him to ask for the Lord's intervention. Instead of that, in his self-confidence he declared, “**I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death.**” But Christ, who knew Peter better than Peter knew himself, told him that before the cock should crow, he should thrice deny Him. We know how successful Satan was in overthrowing Peter; and what a miserable spectacle he made, as he sat among the ungodly, and denied his Lord with oaths and curses.

Self-confidence is disobedience, for the Lord has told us to deny self itself, and to follow Him who pleased not Himself, but was always the dependent Man, in that He ever trusted His Father, and acted in the Spirit's might.

Self-confidence is damaging, for it precedes a fall, and the fall means loss of power and joy.

Self-confidence is presumption. Christ has said, that apart from Him we can do nothing, even as the branch of the vine cannot bring forth fruit of itself. Faith acts on the word of the Lord, as the children of Israel at the Red Sea did, when they had the command, “**Go forward;**” but self-confidence goes, like the Egyptians, without any command, and defeat and death are the consequences. Beware of this Satanic device, for it makes men like Satan himself: he fell because of his self-confidence, and all who walk in his steps, will meet with a fall.

On the other hand, Satan frequently pursues a different policy; if he cannot influence us to trust in self only, he will suggest that we trust partly in Christ, and partly in self. He turns preacher, and says, “It is quite right to trust in Christ; but do not go too far. Be cautious; be reasonable. Put Saul's armour on; that will protect you should you get a nasty knock; and with it, you can go in the name of the Lord as well.”

We can see at once, that this will not do, when we remember our relation to our Lord.

Is the Lord simply our guest? or is He indeed the Lord, and we His slaves? The latter most assuredly. We are what the Apostle Paul gloried in being, the “**servants of Jesus Christ.**”

Since we are the property of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is for us to remember, that all our responsibility is to do what He wills and says, and He has most distinctly told us, to be strong in Himself, and to trust in His arm alone.

The whole secret of our being able to detect the “**devices**” (*thoughts*) and “**wiles**” (*traps*) of the devil (II Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11) is to be found in the following:

THREE THINGS OF GOD

1. The Spirit of God is our power - “**Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might**” (Ephesians 6:10).

A similar expression occurs in Ephesians 1:19, and refers to the mightiness of the Almighty God, which He put forth when He raised Christ from the dead, - the power of the Holy Spirit, as we know from Romans 8:11. Can we think of defeat when we know the power that is behind us, nay, within us, if we are living in Christ our Lord, and under the control of His Spirit?

2. The armour of God is our panoply - “**Put on the whole armour of God**” (Ephesians 6:11).

We can obey this injunction only as we respond to the previous one. The Holy Spirit is the power to enable us to clothe ourselves in the armour of God. The Lord Jesus Himself, is the One who answers to every piece of the armour of God. Hence we are told, to “**put on the Lord Jesus Christ**” (Romans 13:14). We need a whole Christ to protect us, and if we apprehend Him as our Protector and Protection, we shall be safe.

3. The Word of God is our sword.

We are not only to stand on the defensive, but we are to be offensive, and to use the Word of God, which is able to give our enemy a thrust, setting him off to his confusion and defeat. Remember that Christ met Satan’s sophistry by wielding the sword of the Spirit.

Let us be valid, true, and upright, doing the will of God from the heart, and taking care that there is no communication with the fleshly enemy within, nor the infernal enemy without.

Let us be vigilant, as Satan is ever on the alert; and if he can only catch us napping, he is sure to place us in some Doubting Castle, or otherwise to hinder our usefulness.

Let us be valiant, not counting on defeat, but remembering that we have to do with a conquered foe, one whom Christ has already defeated. Therefore let us not be afraid, since the Lord says, “**FEAR THOU NOT**” (Isaiah 41:10).

~ end of chapter 31 ~

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