

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE WORKER'S STUDY I

BACON says, "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. The chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse and or ability, is judgment and disposition of business. Bacon practically says, that study is a means of enjoyment in privacy, a means of illustration in testimony, and a means of determination in business. In other words, it is what luscious fruit is to the thirsty traveler, refreshment; it is what windows are to the building, illumination; and it is what knowledge is to the experienced mariner, safety.

Study is of vital importance in any position in life, in order to gain success, and it is of equal, if not of more pressing importance, for the Christian Worker.

There is one Book which occupies the chief place, and that is the Word of God. Therefore, in directing attention to the Worker's Study, we would call special attention, in the first instance, to the Worker's treatment of his Bible in marking it, for as he carefully marks it, it will be a source of enjoyment to himself, it will be a means of help to others, and a trusted teacher to guide in the way of peace.

There are three points to which I call attention.

First, Meditation - the Prelude to marking the Bible. Second, Method - the Plan in marking the Bible. Third, Materials - the Plant for marking the Bible.

I - Meditation, the Prelude to marking the Bible.

Imitation may be good, that is, copying into our Bibles what others have gathered from it; but the more excellent way is to gather our own fruit. There is a great difference between the strawberries which are bought at the shop, and those which are gathered and eaten direct from the plants in the garden. There is as much difference between the truth which is found as the result of personal and prayerful research, and that which we receive through the medium of another. There are two things, among others, which we should do in relation to the Scriptures. They are found in connection with the words, "search," "meditate."

1. *Search.* We read of the Jews in Berea, that they “**searched the Scriptures daily**” (Acts 17:11).

The word which is rendered “**searched,**” is translated “**discerned**” and “**judgeth**” in calling attention to the fact that “**the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things**” (I Corinthians 2:14,15).

The significance of the word in each case is, to examine carefully, as when a judge examines a prisoner.

The word is thus given in Luke 23:14, where Pilate says to the rulers about the Lord Jesus, “**I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him.**” This implies a qualification to examine. Not every man is qualified to act as a judge, neither is everyone fitted to examine the Scriptures. It is “**he that is spiritual,**” who judgeth (discerneth) all things.

A writer in the *Contemporary Review*, in calling attention to the fact that tits will find out a piece of meat which is hidden, while sparrows cannot, quoted the following words of Longfellow-

“Never stoops the soaring titmouse
On the bacon-rind or suet,
But another titmouse watching,
Wonders what he’s got and follows,
And a third pursues the second,
First a speck, and then a titmouse,
Till the place is full of titmice,”

“How do the tits find out the meat? The robin seems to be the only bird that shares the faculty with them, and it appears to me that it distinctly marks off these two birds as carnivorous, and possessed of ‘a meat-sense’ for which our own senses afford no better explanation than they do of the bee’s’ honey-sense.’ “

As the tits have a sense which enables them to discover the secreted bacon rind, so the one who has spiritual life, and is living in the Spirit, has the Divine sense and spiritual faculty to discern and understand spiritual things.

Having the spiritual sense, we are called upon to carefully estimate the things revealed in the Scriptures, that all our decisions may be in accordance therewith.

There is another expression rendered “**search,**” which we find in connection with the study of the truth, and that is found in I Peter 1:10, 11, where we are told, that “**the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**”

The use of the word is very suggestive; it is used to describe a lioness tracking a man, who has robbed her of her cubs; of dogs following the scent of the game, and of spies exploring a country.

The same Greek term is found in a variety of connections in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.

- To search in a sack, as when the steward of Joseph searched in the sacks of Joseph's brethren to find the hidden cup (Genesis 44:12).
- To search a house, as when the King of Syria threatened to search the house of Ahab (I Kings 20:6).

Coleridge says, "there are four kinds of readers. The first class may be compared to an hour-glass, their reading being as the sand; it runs in and runs out, and leaves not a vestige behind. A second class resembles a sponge, which imbibes everything, and returns it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtier. A third class is like a jelly-bag, which allows all that is pure to pass away, and retains only the refuse and dregs. The fourth class may be compared to the slave of Golconda, who, casting aside all that is worthless, preserves only the pure gems."

We shall resemble the slaves of Golconda if we consistently practice what we know, for he that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine; we shall discover fresh gems of God's grace, and the precious jewels of His truth, as we meditate upon the Word of His love, for as there were two things that characterized the clean animals upon which Israel could feed, namely, the divided hoof and the chewing of the cud; so we must have the divided hoof of a holy walk in separation from evil, and in separation to God: and also the chewing of the cud in meditating upon the truths of God's Word, and in contemplating the Living Word as He is revealed therein.

2. *Meditate.* Paul, in writing, by the Holy Spirit, to Timothy, urges him to "**give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,**" &c.; and says, "**meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them**" (I Timothy 4:13-15).

The meaning of the term meditate, is *to think upon anything, so as to be able to perform it.* It comes from the same root as the term "**careth,**" when we are told that the "**Lord careth**" (I Peter 5:7).

The Lord not only thinks of us, but He thinks to a purpose, namely, to help.

Christ uses the word in a negative sense when He charges His disciples not to "**premeditate**" what they shall say when they are brought before magistrates (Mark 13:11). To premeditate in this case means *to think, in order to act.*

Timothy was not to be in a listless and dreamy mood, with no practical end in view, but he was to think in order to act. This is further brought out when Paul uses the expressions, "**give attendance,**" and "**give thyself wholly to them.**" The latter suggests an ardent student, and the former a diligent servant . . . I put my soul into it," was the reply of one, who had risen from the position of an errand boy to be the head of a large business, when he was asked for the secret of his success; and there is no success in anything without the soul is put into it.

This is specially true with regard to meditating upon God's Word. There are two things always to remember - first, in order to get the precious gems of God's truth, there must be patient, persistent, and careful study; and second, we must put to use by prayerful practice what we get, or else it will be like the manna which was not eaten, it will breed worms. In other words, merely knowing the truth and not practicing it, will puff up, while practicing what we know will build us up and make us strong and healthy in soul.

We have been looking at, and pondering God's Word, mainly from the human standpoint. There is one essential thing we must always remember, and that is, the illuminating presence of the Holy Spirit.

In the dusk of the evening we go into some grand cathedral with a friend. The friend begins to describe the beauty of the colored windows, but owing to the absence of light no beauty is to be seen. The following day, at noon, we go again to the cathedral, when the sun is shining into the place, and lighting up the scenes depicted upon the windows, and making them stand out in unmistakable splendor. What has made the difference? We had the power of seeing before, but there was no illumination around.

What the sun was to the windows, the Holy Spirit is to the prayerful student of God's Word. He illuminates it.

When He gives the *inner* illumination, namely, the spiritual sense to see; and *outer* illumination, namely, the unveiling of the truth, as in Jesus, then we see light in His light.

Let us take an illustration of the fitness and fullness of the Word, in noting a few of the appellations which are applied to it.

The Word is the Word of the Lord *to reveal* (I Thessalonians 4:15).

The Word of Christ *to inspire* (Colossians 3:16).

The Word of the Gospel *to gladden* (Acts 15:7).

The Word of Reconciliation *to communicate* (II Corinthians 5:19).

The Word of Salvation *to deliver* (Acts 13:26).

The Word of Grace *to invigorate* (Acts 20:32).

The Word of Faith *to assure* (Romans 10:8).

The Word of Truth *to arm* (II Corinthians 6:7).

The Word of Righteousness *to feed* (Hebrews 5:13).

The Word of Life *to attract* (Philippians 2:16).

The Word of God *to command* (Hebrews 4:12).

These designations of God's Word are not given in a haphazard way, neither can the terms be interchanged.

There is a distinct and definite thought associated with each. Let us take the last by way of illustration, namely, "**The Word of God.**"

The Word of God is said to be, “**Quick (living) and powerful;**” hence, where the Word of God is spoken of as such, one of these thoughts will be found in connection with it.

The following instances, where the expression occurs, will illustrate:-

Powerful, *to create* - “**The worlds were framed by the Word of God**” (Hebrews 11:3).

Powerful, *to beget* - “**Begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God**” (I Peter 1:23).

Powerful, *to implant* - “**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God**” (Romans 10:17).

Powerful, *to command* - “**Ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe**” (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Powerful, *to keep* - “**The Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one**” (I John 2:14).

Powerful, *to sanctify* - “**Sanctified by the Word of God**” (I Timothy 4:5).

Powerful, *to make way* - “**The Word of God is not bound**” (II Timothy 2:9).

The one practical result that flows out of the searching of God’s Word is, that it makes us like it as we feed upon it, for it communicates its nature to us.

It is a well-known scientific fact that birds are changed by the food they take. Seagulls which feed upon fish, if confined and fed upon grain, have had their stomachs entirely changed. “Hunter, for example, in a classical experiment, so changed the environment of a seagull by keeping it in captivity, that it could only secure a grain diet.

The effect was to modify the stomach of the bird, normally adapted to a fish diet, until in time it came to resemble in structure the gizzard of an ordinary grain-feeder, such as the pigeon. Holmgren again, reversed this experiment by feeding pigeons for a lengthened period on a meat diet, with the result that the gizzard became transformed into a carnivorous stomach. Mr. A. R. Wallace mentions the case of a Brazilian parrot, which changes its color from green to red or yellow when fed upon the fat of certain fishes.”

I have seen canaries which had a red hue about their yellow feathers, and on asking the cause, was informed that it was the result of giving cayenne pepper to them when molting.

What is true in the natural world is also true in the spiritual realm: that is, we become like the thing upon which we feed.

The Word of God is:

- Holy in its nature,
- Powerful in its utterance,
- Living in its composition,
- Pure in its character,
- Righteous in its structure,

- Christ-honoring in its revelation,
- Separating in its tendency,
- God-glorifying in its aim,
- Inspiring in its working, and
- Consecrating in its influence;

And as that Word lives in and operates through us,

- We shall be holy in nature,
- Powerful in utterance,
- Living in God's purpose,
- Pure in heart,
- Righteous in action,
- Christ-honoring in life,
- Separate from evil,
- God-glorifying in conduct,
- Inspiring in service, and
- Consecrated to God.

II - *Materials, or the plant for marking.*

It may seem unnecessary to say what I am about to say, as the suggestions will be obvious without the saying, but my experience has taught me that they do not occur to all.

There are seven things that are essential in Bible marking-

- (1) A clean, fine-pointed pen; a drawing pen is not necessary; Gillott's school pen, No. 351, will do admirably.
- (2) Good ink; any good maker will do.
- (3) A new piece of blotting-paper.
- (4) A round ruler.
- (5) A writing-paper Bible.
- (6) A sheet of blank paper for making notes.
- (7) A discriminating eye.

III - *Method, or plan in marking.*

Don't mark the Bible for the sake of marking. There are three things to which attention may be directed.

First, Railways. Certain similar expressions can be connected, such as we might see in Philippians 4-

“Rejoice in the Lord” (verse 4) ----- **“I rejoiced in the Lord”** (verse 10).

And if the connected words are pondered, it will be seen that in the first we have Paul's injunction, and in the second his experience, telling us that he practiced what he preached.

"The peace of God" (verse 7) ----- **"The God of peace"** (verse 9).

In the first, we find the blessing of peace, but in the second we discover the Blessor Himself. The former is what comes from Him, but the latter is what He is Himself.

"Be careful for nothing" (verse 6) ----- **"My God shall supply all"** (verse 10).

In the first, we have the command not to worry, and in the second we have the reason. There is no cause for anxiety, since the Lord cares and supplies.

"I have learned" (verse 11) ----- **"I am instructed"** (verse 12).

The instructed man is the one who has learned. He who has the experience speaks with authority.

"Glory unto God" (verse 20) ----- **"Grace with you"** (verse 23).

In these sentences we have Paul's doxology and desire, or what he would give to God, and what he wished from God.

The above will suffice to indicate what I mean by railways.

Sometimes it may be a given word that is of frequent occurrence, as the words **"joy"** and **"rejoice"** in the Epistle to the Philippians: or it may be a thought that is railwayed, as the threefold action of love in I John 4:9-17, where we read of:

"Love toward us" (verse 9) ===== **"Love in us"** (verse 12) ===== **"Love with us"** (Margin, verse 17).

Second, *Notes*.

To refer again to a page from our Bible, Philippians 4, we could place two notes of Bible readings at the bottom of the page.

Perhaps one on Philippians 3:10 on the three characters in the home at Bethany.

If Martha had known the Lord better, she would never have found fault with her sister Mary, as Christ indicates in His gentle rebuke (Luke 10:38-42).

Lazarus illustrates the power of **"His resurrection,"** for he experienced Christ's raising power, while Mary illustrates the **"fellowship of His sufferings,"** for she was the only one who apprehended that He came into the world to die; hence she anointed Him for His burial, and thus had fellowship with Him in His sufferings.

Third, *Marginal References*.

Again referring to the illustrative page, if the attention is turned to verse 11, it will be seen that the words, "**I have learned**," are connected with an arrow which points to the margin, in which is found the reference, "Hebrews 5:8," and if this Scripture is turned up, it will be discovered that Christ is our Example in learning.

Again, the words, "**I can do all things**," in verse 13, are connected in the printed margin with John 15:5, where Christ says, "**Without me ye can do nothing**;" and in the opposite blank margin, references are given to Zechariah 10:12, and Numbers 13:30; in the former Scripture, we have a promise to strengthen, and in the latter we have an example of one who was strengthened by the Lord, and hence, in the face of great difficulties, was able to say, "**We are able**."

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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