

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

Dr. F. E. Marsh

CHAPTER THIRTY

THE WORKER'S MARKS

GENERALLY speaking, there are certain marks which a believer possesses, which evidence that he belongs to Christ:

- (1) Heart-Marks. The heart resting on Christ, cleansed, and possessed by Him (Romans 10:10; Matthew 5:8; Ephesians 3:17).
- (2) Eye-Marks. Looking to Christ for salvation, and gazing upon Him in sanctification (Isaiah 45:22; II Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 12:2).
- (3) Ear-Marks. Listening to Christ, thus learning of Him (John 10:27; Luke 10:39).
- (4) Face-Marks. The glory of Christ reflected by us, and shining from us because of communion with Him (Exodus 34:30; Acts 4:13; 6:15).
- (5) Hand-Marks. Laboring with Christ, and ministering to Him in supplying the need of others (II Corinthians 6:1; Matthew 25:40).
- (6) Tongue-Marks. Speaking as Christ, speaking for Him, and speaking to Him (II Corinthians 13:3; Acts 1:8; Philippians 4:6; John 14:14).
- (7) Forehead-Marks. Every thought in submission to Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).
- (8) Feet-Marks. Following Christ in service and suffering (Luke 9:23; John 10:27; 12:26).

While we call attention to these general marks, we specially refer to what the apostle says in writing to the Church in Galatia.

He says, "**From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus**" (Galatians 6:17).

These are the words of a faithful and fearless man.

Paul had been warning the Galatians of the insidious evils of Judaism, and though there were people who questioned his authority, in speaking as he did, still he could point to those who had been blessed by his ministry, and also to what he had endured for the Gospel's sake.

These are the words, too, of a determined man. He not only hoisted his colours - but nailed them up.

Satan might urge his enemies to bring the weapons of their carnal opinions to bear upon him; yet he fearlessly stood his ground against all comers, by the simple and soul-stirring truths of the Gospel, and he was prepared to continue to do so, for the Lord was beside him.

By the Lord's grace he had passed through much suffering and persecution, as the marks on his body reminded him. When he looked at those marks he was encouraged to go on, for he was not alone - as he implies, in calling these marks, not those of Paul, but of Jesus.

Marks!

- The horny hand of the labourer tells us that he is the servant of unceasing toil;
- The knit brow of the merchant indicates his service, as he sits in his counting-house, poring over his ledger and day-book;
- The thoughtful features of the student betoken his sacrifice to the love of knowledge;
- The sailor's weather-beaten face tells of the rough life he lives;
- The soldier's scars, and the medals which adorn his breast, speak of battles fought and victories won;
- The brow wrinkled, the hair white, the failing memory, the feeble step, the shaking hand, and the dull ear, are marks of old age; and
- The worn features, the pale cheeks, the furrows on the brow, the sunken eyes and the thin hands, are marks of suffering.

So the scars which were upon the body of the beloved Paul, told of his sufferings for Christ, and with Christ. And Paul glories in them, for they bear testimony to the apostle's loyalty to the Lord Jesus.

Five thoughts are suggested by the words of Paul.

I - Possession by the Lord.

In speaking of the marks of Jesus, the apostle seems to say, "as the slave bears branded upon his body the marks of his slavery, proving him a slave, so I glory in the marks that are branded upon my body, for they evidence that I am the slave of Jesus Christ."

There were four classes who were marked with brands.

- The runaway slave, as a mark of his rebellion;
- The slaves attached to some temple, or persons devoted to some heathen deity, thus speaking of their devotion;
- Captives, in some instances, in token of their captivity; and
- Soldiers, who sometimes marked the name of their commander on some part of their body, by way of denoting their willingness to serve him.

We may take it for granted that the apostle referred to his being the slave of Christ. It was a title in which he gloried - "**the servant**" of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:1).

II - *Suffering for the Lord.*

As the apostle saw the brands upon some runaway slave, stigmatizing the slave for life, so, looking at the marks on his own person, he counted an honour what others might reckon a disgrace.

- The scars on his back told of the rods of the Roman lictors, twice inflicted.
- The long lines on his body spoke of the two hundred stripes imposed in the synagogue.
- **“Once was I stoned,”** says the patient apostle, and traces of the cruel treatment were apparent.
- His wrists, too, bore marks of manacled restraint.

Endurance of such wrong proved the strong hold which the love of Christ had upon him. As has been hinted, he gloried in the knowledge of these marks, for they had been received in his service of the Gospel.

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

Paul seems to refer here to his life previous to his meeting with the risen Lord on the Damascus road, and also to his experience in suffering on behalf of the Church.

He seems to say, “I was causing Christ to suffer in His members, when stopped and reprovved in the **‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?’** So I see that my suffering now, is Christ suffering in, and through me;” hence, he gloried in the Cross of Christ.

The blood of Christ, the death of Christ, and the Cross of Christ, are not synonymous terms.

In connection with these expressions, the Holy Ghost attaches a distinct signification to each. The blood of Christ is the procuring cause of all blessings which the believer enjoys.

Hence we have:

- Pardon (Ephesians 1:7);
- Nearness (Ephesians 2:13);
- Justification (Romans 5:9);
- Peace (Colossians 1:20);
- Access (Hebrews 10:19);
- Sanctification (Hebrews 13:12);
- Liberty (Revelation 1:5);
- Victory (Revelation 12:11).

All through the Blood.

The death of Christ is connected with this deep truth, that in God’s reckoning, Christ not only died for us, but we died with Him.

This is seen, if we look at Romans 6:8; II Corinthians 5:14; Colossians 2:20; II Timothy 2:11.

The Cross of Christ indicates the treatment He underwent at the hands of sinful men, in carrying out the will of God (John 19:7; Matthew 27:40; Galatians 5:11; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2).

When the apostle glories in the Cross of Christ, he does not refer primarily to the blessings which were his, through the atonement made by the Blood of Christ, nor to the benefits which flow from association with Christ, and His death. He alludes to the sufferings which it was his lot to endure, through his faithfulness to Christ, **“who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame”** (Hebrews 12:2).

In Paul’s case, it was enough for the disciple that he was as his Lord.

III - Consecration to the Lord.

Only the truly consecrated man could speak and act as Paul did.

There were no half measures with him. He was thorough.

As the oak sends its roots down into the ground, and is thus firmly rooted and able to weather the storm, so the apostle was firmly rooted in the love of Christ. The fibers of his spirit, and the roots of his being, were impregnated with the love of God.

As the Eddystone lighthouse is built on, and into the rock, so the apostle was founded, and grounded in the truth of God, and could thus defy the fiercest onslaughts of the prince of the power of the air, and those through whom he worked.

As the “liner” is able to go ahead, in spite of the wind and tide, because of the power within which impels it, so the apostle pressed onward, braving the waves of public opinion, rising above error and persecution in their subtlety and annoyance, because empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Being right with God, Paul could be indifferent to what man did or said.

He had looked into the face of God, and, therefore, the face of man had no terrors for him. Have we these marks of Jesus in consecration to Him?

Bishop Hall says, in speaking of the practical power of Christ’s suffering, endured on account of the believer, and its application to him:-

“The crown of thorns pierces his head, when his sinful conceits are mortified. His lips are drenched with vinegar and gall, when sharp and severe restraints are given to his tongue. His hands and feet are nailed, when he is, by the power of God’s Spirit, disabled to the wonted courses of sin. His body is stripped, when all color and pretences are taken away from him. His heart is pierced, when the life-blood of his formerly reigning corruptions is let out.”

- Are we thus crucified with Christ? for we are only truly consecrated to Him, as we are.
- Are the marks of the purity and holiness of Jesus in our body?
- Are the marks of the patience, the humility, the cheerfulness, and the forgiveness of Jesus, seen in our character?
- Are the marks of the love, the compassion, and the tenderness of Jesus, manifest in our life?
- Are the marks of the faith and faithfulness of Jesus, evident to others?

IV - Determination in the Lord.

“**Let no man trouble me,**” says Paul. He seems to say, “If you think that by your persecutions you will move me, or by your devices ensnare me, you are mistaken. I have had too much experience, and I trust in an unfailing Friend, who will help me.”

Paul had backbone. He was no weather-vane to be turned by man’s fickle mind. He was contemptible in speech, weak in body, and not impressive in appearance; but he was rich in having holy stamina which was evidenced in the conflict he had with himself, when he said, “**I keep under my body**” (I Corinthians 9:27).

In his progress in the Divine life he was an ardent and determined athlete, saying, “**I press toward the mark for the prize**” (Philippians 3:14).

In his sufferings and persecutions for Christ’s sake he stood like a bold and solid rock in the sea, around which the angry waves lash in vain, as he states, “**None of these things move me**” (Acts 20:24).

There is a determination which is born of self-will, a refusing to give in because self-interest is at stake. Not so in the case of Paul. His was a determination in the Lord. That is, he was moving along the lines of God’s Word, and in His will; thus all that he had to endure came to him, because of his faithfulness to his Lord; and he, knowing this, was as fearless as a lion.

V - Honoured by the Lord.

Paul counted it an honour to have fellowship with the Lord in suffering, so he gloried in tribulations, knowing that they were to him what the grinding is to the diamond - working for him an experience like his Lord’s, so that Divine grace should sparkle out in his life (Romans 5:3-5).

He rejoiced in bodily weakness - the thorn in the flesh - because it was to him what the fire is to the sweet spices: it brought out, and gave Christ an opportunity for His power to rest upon him (II Corinthians 12:9, 10).

When John Clark, of Meldon, in France, was for Christ’s sake whipped for three several days, and afterwards received a mark in his forehead as a sign of infamy, his mother, instead of being influenced by angry feelings, exclaimed exultingly, “Blessed be Christ, and welcome be these prints and marks of Christ,” words which encouraged her son, and showed how much that mother gloried in suffering for Christ.

The early Christians rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.

- Latimer said that “suffering for Christ is the greatest promotion that Christ gives in this world.”
- Glover the martyr, wept for joy at his imprisonment.
- Bradford said, “God forgive me for my unthankfulness for His exceeding great mercy, that among so many thousands He chooseth me to be one in whom He will suffer.”
- Eusebius, in speaking in the days of Severus, of the martyrs’ release from prison, says, “They seemed to have come out of a perfuming house, rather than a prison-house, merry they were, and much cheered that they were so much honoured as to suffer for Christ.”

These early Christians, knowing that suffering and glory were coupled together, rejoiced in suffering.

An honoured servant of Christ, in company with the writer, and sharing in the conversation about the sufferings of the Apostle Paul, remarked, “Paul was what he was, because his eyes were fixed on the glory.” And so the Holy Spirit reminds us, through Paul,

“If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”
(Romans 8:17,15).

~ end of chapter 30 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
