

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE WORKER'S WINNING

“He that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30),

WILLIAM ARNOT says, on soul-winning, “To win an immortal soul from sin and wrath to hope and holiness - this is honourable and difficult work. It is a work for wise men, and we lack wisdom. On this point, there is a special promise from God. Those who need wisdom, and desire to use it in this work, will get it for the asking. The wisdom needed is very different from the wisdom of men. It is very closely allied to the simplicity of a little child. Much of it lies in plainness and promptness. Those who try to win souls must not muffle up their meaning; both by their lips and their lives they must let it be seen that their aim is not to make the good better, but to save the lost.”

Thus, tersely, does Arnot put the whole subject, and yet we may look at it in detail, as the architect does, when he has, not only the ground plan of the house, but the detailed plans as well.

I - He that would win others to Christ, must be won himself.

Proverbs 11:30 may mean one of two things, namely, either the winning of souls demonstrates the wisdom of the winner, or, that he becomes wise by so doing.

Who is the wise man? There are at least three things which demonstrate his wisdom.

(1) The wise man is one who knows the Embodiment of all the Wisdom of God, namely, Christ Himself (I Corinthians 1:24). To know Him is to trust Him (Psalm 9:10), to possess eternal life (John 17:3), and to be at peace (Job 22:21).

(2) The wise man is one who is in touch with the Spirit of Wisdom (Acts 6:3, 10). As it is the wisdom of a moving army to keep their communications open with headquarters, that supplies may not be cut off; so the believer in Christ knows, that the secret of all prosperity in spiritual life, and power in service is found by living in constant touch with the Holy Spirit by an obedient faith.

(3) The wise man is one who is instructed by the Word of Wisdom. The Scripture is that which makes one “**wise unto salvation**” by assuring us we are delivered from condemnation, and it also makes us wise unto salvation in instructing us, so as to avoid the deceitfulness of sin, the allurements of the world, and the craft of the evil one. From what we have stated, it will be seen it is essential that we should be wise unto salvation. In other words, be won by Christ and to Him.

It is a sorry thing that any should seek to save others, who are not saved themselves. “First be trimmed thyself, and then adorn thy brother,” say the Rabbins. And, as Gregory says, “The hand that would make others clean, must not itself be dirty.” The priests were fitted for their service before they entered upon it; and that preparation was a threefold application, namely, they were cleansed by water, consecrated by blood, and anointed with oil (Exodus 29:4-21).

These must have their counterpart in our experience.

The cleansing by water is typical of the application of Christ’s atonement, by the Holy Spirit, to the believer, whereby he is cleansed from condemnation and an accusing conscience (Hebrews 9:14; 10:10).

The consecration by blood is typical of the cleansed one’s separation to God, for His fellowship and service, by the death of Christ (Hebrews 13:13, 20, 21; II Corinthians 5:15); and the anointing is typical of the power which is to rest upon the believer, in order that he may be equipped for the service to which he is called (Luke 4:18; I John 2:27; II Corinthians 1:21).

Richard Baxter puts the whole case in his *Reformed Pastor*, when he says, “Many a tailor goes in rags that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarce licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes. Believe me, God never saved any man for being a preacher, nor because he was an able preacher; but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and, consequently, faithful in his master’s work. Take heed, therefore, to yourselves first, that you be that which you persuade others to be, and believe that, which you daily persuade them daily to believe, and have heartily entertained that Christ, and that Spirit, which you offer to others. He that bade you love your neighbour as yourselves, did imply that you should love yourselves, and not hate and destroy both yourselves and them.”

II - *He that would win others, must win Christ.*

One of the seven “**that I may’s**” in Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians is, “**That I may win Christ**” (Philippians 3:8).

The word win signifies to acquire as gain, as when

- The merchantman gains wealth by his trade,
- The scholar gains knowledge by his study,
- The athlete gains strength by his exercise,
- The miner gains gold by his labour,
- The fisherman gains the fish by his fishing,

- The husbandman gains the harvest by his toil, and
- The employee gains promotion by his attention to his master's business.

Thus the believer wins Christ by whole-hearted devotion to Him, by believing prayer in Him, and by prayerful study of Him through the Word.

From whatever aspect we look at the subject, we find it absolutely essential that we should first know the truth in our own experience before we pass it on to others.

- The disciples must receive the bread from the hand of Christ before they could give it to the multitude (John 6:11).
- The Water of Life must be springing up in our inner being as the well of the Spirit's abiding grace, before it can flow out from us, as rivers of blessing bringing refreshment to others (John 4:14; 7:37).
- We must cultivate the garden of the inner life before we endeavor to put the vineyards of other people in order, for should we fail to do this we shall have to make the sorry confession, "**My own vineyard have I not kept**" (Song of Solomon 1:5).

It is essential that we should exercise the priesthood which is holy, before we exercise the priesthood which is royal, for we are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and we are a royal priesthood to show forth His praises (I Peter 2:5,9). The strength to run in the way of the Lord's commandments is obtained by waiting upon God, for "**They that wait upon the Lord shall renew (change) their strength**" (Isaiah 40:31).

From this we gather that there is no running without first waiting upon God.

- The shining face of Moses, as seen by men, was the outcome of his private communion with God.
- The mantle of Elijah was obtained by Elisha's persistence in following his master.
- The commission of Isaiah was preceded by his cleansing.
- Paul found Christ's strength all-sufficient through his tarrying at the throne of grace.

All this goes to prove that the inner life which is fed by winning Christ is requisite, in order to make the outer life effective in winning others.

The late Dr. A. A. Bonar summarizes the whole subject as follows:- "If a man wins Christ, and gets at His unsearchable riches, there is no question but he will discover much about himself and sin. The prophet Isaiah, when he saw the King, the Lord of Hosts on the throne, in a moment felt self was withered into nothingness. And just as little doubt is there that a man who wins much of Christ's riches, will win souls. Who has not observed that when those who conduct meetings, and have been at the first greatly blessed, afterwards lose their power, it is almost without exception because they have not been winning Christ. They have been giving out what they once had, just the same thing over and over again, but making no advances, getting no fresh insight into Christ; and so their words have begun to fall without power. The audience, though they cannot define what the difference is, soon know that there is a difference.

There never can be the same unction and power when a man is not winning Christ, bringing out fresh ore from the mine, and laying it down before the hearer. If, therefore, we would be more useful, there is no other way but by winning Christ. This is the shorthand method. Win Christ every day, and the Holy Ghost will bless what you tell of Him, for He delights to glorify Christ.”

III - He that would win others, must be consistent.

The most potent influence which a godly wife can exert in winning her ungodly husband to Christ is, as the Holy Spirit says, a “**chaste conversation** [manner of life] *coupled with fear*” (I Peter 3:1, 2). It is not what she says, but what she is, which tells, as the Word puts it, “**They may without the word be won,**” or as Bengel paraphrases it, “without word;” that is, without saying anything.

Thus, the consistent life of the godly one, is the means of the conversion of the ungodly one.

There is no speech so powerful as the action which is after godliness, as Ecumenius says, “Unspoken acting is more powerful than unperformed speaking.”

How careful we should be that our life is consistent.

Being so, we can never tell the influence we exert, nor the souls we may win, through the Spirit’s operation. And a soul converted, as Leighton says, “Is gained to itself, gained to the pastor, or friend, or wife, or husband, who sought it, and gained to Jesus Christ; added to His treasury, who thought not His precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain.”

Let us remember that consistency is essential and indispensable in soul-winning.

To say well and do ill, is to bring upon us the censure that was once passed upon an inconsistent minister who had an eloquent tongue but a lying life. It was said that when he was in the pulpit, he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it, he ought never to enter again.

Reynolds has made some weighty and timely remarks upon the subject before us. He said, “The star that led the wise men to Christ, the pillar of fire which led the children of Israel unto Canaan, did not only shine, but went before them. The voice of Jacob will do little good, if the hands be the hands of Esau. In the law, no person who had any blemish was to offer the oblations of the Lord. The priest was to have in his robes, bells and pomegranates; the one a figure of sound doctrine, and the other of a fruitful life. The Lord will be sanctified in all them that draw near unto Him (Isaiah 52:11); for the sins of the priests made the people abhor the offering of the Lord (I Samuel 2:17); their wicked lives do shame their doctrine, as Austin says, ‘With their doctrine they build, and with their lives destroy.’ “

IV - He that would win others, must be used by Christ.

Among the many “**I will**’s” of promise which Christ gives to His disciples is, “**I will make you fishers of men.**”

There are three things necessary for successful fishing: we must go where the fish are; we must fish with the right materials; and in the right manner.

1. We must go where the fish are.

On two occasions when Christ brought a miraculous draught of fishes to His disciples' nets, He indicated where the fish were to be found.

On the first occasion He said, "**Launch out into the deep**" (Luke 5:4), and on the next He said, "**Cast the net on the right side of the ship**" (John 21:6).

This illustrates the fact that we must be acting under the direction of Christ, and as we do so, He will lead us to where we shall catch men for Him.

In the Acts there are many illustrations of this; for instance, in Acts 16, we find that Paul and Silas were "**forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,**" and when they "**assayed to go into Bithynia,**" He again stepped in, and "**suffered them not**" (Acts 16:6, 7); on the other hand, when Paul saw in a vision a man of Macedonia, beseeching him to help, he took it as an indication that the Lord wished him to go to Macedonia, as he says, "**Assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them**" (Acts 16:10).

All this goes to show that we not only need to pray, "**Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do,**" but we need to pray, "*Lord, where wilt Thou have me to go.*"

2. We must fish with the right materials.

No one knows better than the skilled angler how essential it is for him to have right hooks, and to have them baited with suitable bait. The same thing holds good with reference to deep-sea fishing. The seine net will do for a shoal of fish near to the land, but for deep-sea fishing there must be the drag net. If we would catch men for Christ we must see that we use the Gospel net, for it alone will catch men.

- The iron net of the law will only frighten.
- The silken net of ordinances will break, and
- The wide net of sociology will not avail, for its meshes are too large.

The Gospel-net will catch and keep.

We have abundant evidence of its effectiveness to catch people for Christ, no matter what kind they are, or how great sinners they have been. In the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have an account of three conversions. Cultured Lydia, the demonized damsel; and the cruel jailer. The same Lord of the Gospel brought blessing to each, although the action was different in dealing with them. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia to her conversion. The power of the name of Jesus brought deliverance to the possessed damsel; and the same Saviour brought salvation to the jailer and his house.

3. We must fish in the right manner.

And for this we must be used by Christ, for His word is, “**I will make.**”

There are many graces which the Christian worker needs, that his manner may be winning.

He should be:

- Compassionate in heart,
- Earnest in purpose,
- Zealous in work,
- Patient in method,
- Holy in life,
- Scriptural in testimony,
- Single in aim, and
- Pure in motive.

But all these things have their rise in the person of Christ, even as the waters of Ezekiel’s temple shall have their rise from under the threshold of the house and by the altar (Ezekiel 47:1).

- Christ’s compassion shall make us compassionate in heart, even as the oil of the lampstand made it to burn (Exodus 35:14).
- Christ’s earnestness shall make us earnest in utterance, even as the word of the Lord in Jeremiah made him speak (Jeremiah 1:7).
- Christ’s zeal shall make us intense in our interest, even as the Spirit of the living creatures moved the wheels, and made them go whithersoever He went (Ezekiel 1:19-21).
- Christ’s patience shall make us enduring in labour, even as Paul testified, when he says, “**I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me**” (I Corinthians 15:10).
- Christ’s holiness shall make us consecrated in life, even as the glory of God sanctified the tabernacle at its consecration (Exodus 40:34).
- Christ’s word shall make us faithful in testimony, even as Moses who did all the work of the tabernacle according to the word of the Lord (Exodus 40).
- Christ’s direction shall make us single in aim, even as the kine took the straight way to Bethshemesh, when the ark was restored by the Philistines to Israel (I Samuel 6:12); and
- Christ’s love shall make us pure in motive, even as Jonathan’s affection for David was disinterested (I Samuel 18:1; 20:31,32).

V - He that would win others, must have a message.

We are not left in the dark as to what the message is; our Lord’s word is clear and emphatic, “**Go and preach the Gospel**” (Mark 16:15).

There are many things to which the Gospel may be compared. The following three things fairly cover the ground. The Gospel is a stethoscope to reveal the state of man; a telescope to manifest the love of God, and an electroscope to indicate God’s power.

The Gospel is a stethoscope to reveal the state of man.

Many a doctor, in applying the instrument to the chest of his patient, has found the lungs unsound, and the heart diseased.

There are two incidents in the life of Christ which illustrate that the Gospel, directly or indirectly proclaimed, brings home to the sinner his individual state before God.

Christ's conversation with the woman of Samaria about Himself as the Water of Life in its cleansing, satisfying, and inspiring influence, not only brought home to her her need and the want of it, but revealed to her her past life in all its uncleanness, for when she got back to the village she said, "**Come, see a Man, who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?**" (John 4:29).

The other case is that of the dying thief. Like his companion, he was also railing at Christ (Matthew 27:44); but afterwards a distinct change came over him. What caused that change? Methinks it must have been as he listened to Christ's thrilling prayer, as in accents of pained love, He exclaimed, "**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**" (Luke 23:34). There is more in the prayer than we find in the recorded words, for does He not seem to say, "Father, see the atoning blood which is flowing from My body, and which is shed for sinners, in order that they may be forgiven; give Me, in this hour of My direst need, some trophy as a firstfruit of My passion." Anyway, we are warranted in saying that Christ's words were a gleam of heaven's light, which penetrated into the dark dungeon of the mind of one of the thieves, for we find him directly afterwards crying, "**Lord, remember me.**" And further, he gave proof of the change which had come over his inner being, for when his companion continued to rail at Christ, he said to him, "**Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss**" (Luke 23:40, 41). The Gospel which Christ made known in His wondrous prayer of love, was that which revealed the thief to himself in all his sinful hatefulness.

The Gospel is a telescope to manifest the love of God.

"**The Gospel of God**" is one of the many titles which is given to the Gospel (I Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9).

It has been happily said, "The thought you make of God is the thought that makes you." How important, then, it is, that we should have a clear conception of the Gospel as to its origin. If we say that Christ came to make God love us, we misrepresent both Him and God. The fact is, Christ came because God loved us. This is the Gospel as taught by Christ, for He Himself has said, "**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.**"

As one gazes upon the force and flow of the mighty waters which tumble over the Falls of Niagara, one is led to ask, where is the mighty source from whence these waters come? The answer is, from the rocky mountains.

“Through the meadows, past the cities, still the brimming streams are rolled,
Now in torrents, now expanding into silver lakes and gold,
Wafting life and increase with them, wealth and beauty manifold.

“Whence descends the ceaseless fulness, ever giving, never dry?
Yonder, o’er the climbing forest, see the shining cause on high -
Mountain - snows their watery treasures pouring everlastingly.”

Similarly as we gaze upon the beautiful life, the satisfying atonement, and the mighty resurrection of Christ, and know the blessings which flow from Him, we discover that He is not an isolated individual acting on the authority of His own personality, but that **“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”**

As we take up the telescope of the Gospel, and look through it at the glorious arc of the Divine nature, there is not a single star of blessing but what is stamped with the name of God; thus,

- The blood that atones, is the blood of God (Acts 20:28);
- The grace that saves, is the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8);
- The salvation which emancipates, is the salvation at God (Acts 28:28);
- The love that satisfies, is the love of God (I John 3:1);
- The peace that calms, is the peace of God (Philippians 4:7);
- The power which keeps, is the power of God; and
- The Heaven which fascinates, is the glory of God (I Peter 1:5).

3. The Gospel is the electroscope to indicate God’s power.

An electroscope is an instrument for observing the existence of free electricity. In a word, it is an instrument which indicates the presence and power of electricity.

The Gospel is similar, it declares and defines the power of God; hence, we read, the Gospel is **“the power of God unto salvation”** (Romans 1:16).

The character of that power is defined in many ways. Its operation may be summed up under the words, Displacement and Placement.

(1) displacement.

The one peculiar and pertinent feature of Christianity is, it is pregnant with life, and wherever it goes it brings life, light, and liberty. The dead leaves of bad habits are thrown off by the living sap of the Gospel, as it courses through the one who has received Christ; this is seen in the experience of those in Ephesus, who no sooner believed in Christ, than they threw off the old sinful pursuits of witchcraft. They **“showed their deeds . . . so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed;”** thus, the Holy Spirit describes the cause and effect of the Gospel’s working.

When the morning light kisses the distant hills, and the sun bathes the valleys with its glow and beauty, then the darkness and the shadows flee away.

The same is true of the Gospel's displacing power, for as its light of knowledge and warmth of love enter the human mind, the darkness of sin, and the shadows of unbelief pass away, as is manifest in the experience of the Thessalonians who, when the Gospel came to them in power, immediately turned to Him who is Light and Love, abandoned their idols, and henceforth walked in the ways of holy service, and were filled with a longing expectancy to see the Saviour they loved (I Thessalonians 1:5-10).

The nineteenth century abounds with evidences of the displacing power of the Gospel, as we think of its influence upon communities. The slavery of America, the cannibalism of the New Hebrides, the barbarism of Fiji, the cruelty of Madagascar, the beastliness of many places in Central Africa, the idolatry of the Sandwich Islands, and the degradation of the Falkland Islands, have all been displaced by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Of the latter place, Admiral Sullivan, at the annual meeting of the South American Missionary Society, in 1881, stated, that after residing at the Falkland Islands, he had informed Darwin of the great changes which had taken place in his human monkeys - of kindness shown to shipwrecked crews by the converted natives - how fowl-houses remained unlocked without even the theft of an egg; and stated, that in reply Darwin candidly confessed, "I could not have believed that all the missionaries in the world could ever have made the Fuegians honest."

(2). Placement.

The Gospel of God is not merely a negative power, removing the evil; but it is a positive power, placing us in a new sphere in which we find unlimited supplies for all things that pertain to life and godliness.

As we take a bird's-eye view of the many blessings of the Gospel, it is difficult to locate our thought, and to indicate them all.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is one of the richest mines of the New Testament, and there we find many precious jewels of blessing. We can only indicate what some of these blessings are by the following alphabetical list. Each one of these is found in connection with the Greek preposition "en."

Acceptance. "**Accepted in the Beloved**" (Ephesians 1:6).

Blessing. "**Blessed us with all spiritual blessings . . . in Christ**" (1:3).

Chosen. "**He hath chosen us in Him**" (1:4).

Dwelling. "**Christ may dwell in your hearts**" (3:17).

Enduement. "**Strong in the Lord**" (6:10).

Filling. "**Be filled with the Spirit**" (5:18).

Growth. "**Groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord**" (2:21).

Heritage. "**In whom also we have obtained an inheritance**" (1:11).

Instruction. "**Taught by Him even as truth is in Jesus**" (4:21)

Joined. "**In whom ye also are builded together**" (2:22).

Kindness. "**His grace in kindness toward us through Christ Jesus**" (2:7)

Light. “**Light in the Lord**” (5:8).

Might. “**His mighty power which He wrought in Christ and you**” (1:19, 20; 2:1).

Nearness. “**Made nigh by the blood of Christ**” (2:13)

Oneness. “**To make in Himself of twain, one new man**” (2:15).

Power. “**The power that worketh in us**” (3:20).

Quickened. “**Quickened us together with Christ**” (2:5)

Redemption. “**In whom we have redemption**” (1:7).

Sealing. “**In whom . . . ye are sealed**” (1:13).

Translation. “**Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**” (2:6).

Unity. “**In whom all the building fitly framed together**” (2:21).

In the multiplicity of the above Scriptures, it is impossible to take more than one by way of illustrating the position in which the Gospel places the believer, and that one “**Light in the Lord.**”

“There were two artists, close friends, one of whom excelled in landscape painting, and the other in depicting the human figure. The former had painted a picture in which wood, and rock, and sky, were combined in the artist’s best manner. But the picture remained unsold-no one cared to buy it. It lacked something. The artist’s friend came and said, ‘Let me take your painting,’ A few days later he brought it back. He had added a lovely human figure to the matchless landscape. Soon the picture was sold. It had lacked the interest of life.”

Thus, when Christ comes into the life, we are found in Him, and He in us; He lights us up by His presence.

- The light of His knowledge, illuminates the understanding (II Corinthians 4:6);
- The light of His love, warms the heart (Psalm 27:1);
- The light of His joy, gladdens the spirit (Esther 8:16);
- The light of His grace, strengthens the soul (II Samuel 23:4);
- The light of His Word, guides the feet (Psalm 119:105);
- The light of His countenance, encourages the life (Psalm 89:15); and
- The light of His presence, satisfies the mind (Revelation 21:23).

~ end of chapter 19 ~

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