

## The Christian's Weapon.

BY GEO. W. TRUETT.

The child of God is a warrior. His whole earthly life is one of conflict. He is not to be carried to heaven on flowery beds of ease. He cannot play the Meroz act with impunity, in the holy cause of our Saviour's kingdom in the world. He is a soldier, and he is to endure hardness after the fashion of the most heroic endurance. Disregard of all this has got Christian people, not a few, into the most serious sort of trouble—trouble for the cause of God, because they were unfaithful to it, and trouble for themselves, for there is inevitable trouble, sooner or later, for any and every Christian who is unfaithful to duty. Job's counsel of old, is the word for us: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." There is never to be any neutrality or compromise upon the part of God's people, touching God's work.

But, since the Christian is a soldier, this article is to speak a few words about the Christian's weapon. What is that weapon? Paul tells us in his injunction to the saints at Ephesus, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." It will be observed that of the whole armor which the Christian soldier is to put on, this is the only weapon of offense. Certainly, such fact is a very significant one.

This was the weapon which our Lord used, when here among men. Take the crucial occasion of his rare temptation in the wilderness. What was the weapon that he wielded? This only: "It is written." There in that long-testing trial he had infinite choice of weapons with which to meet his adversary, but he chose "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." He might have summoned angels to fight his battles for him. Did he not say just before his crucifixion, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." But his weapon was not an angel. Nor was it the arts of rhetoric, neither the power of logic. His weapon was the infallible and unchanging word of God. Time and again he repulsed the tempter with the mighty sword, "It is written." Recall his trying circumstances. Note the subtleties of the great Adversary, with all his changing devices. Yet, though Satan presents his temptation in changing forms, Jesus employs one and the same weapon through it all. Let us not lose the lesson.

This same weapon is the great weapon yielded by the Holy Spirit. He does not come to bear witness of himself. He is the Author of God's word and its Teacher, and he comes to bring to our remembrance the things spoken by Christ. He will not put his blessing upon error and falsehood, no matter by whom nor how earnestly spoken. He will bless the truth of God when and where it is faithfully preached. Do we take to heart as we ought the infinite importance of preaching and teaching the truth of God's word? The book that has most of God's word in it, so also the sermon, or poem, or any other writing of men, is the production that will most of all be honored and blessed by the Divine Spirit. "Preach the word" is an injunction of mightiest meaning to the preacher called of God to preach his gospel, and to all others who in any way are called upon to teach it. The Bible is the sword in the hands of the Spirit of God. Note what Paul says of its power: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Dwell upon these words for a few moments, and let their mighty meaning be taken to your heart. The Bible is the word of God. It is as much higher than mere human writings as God is greater than man. Why should it not be revered with all possible reverence. "Where the word of a king is, there is power." This book comes down from heaven, and the breath of God is on its every page. Its power no man can measure. Its enemies could thrust Paul into prison, but he would send out the triumphant statement: "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." Catch those invincible words: "The word of God is not bound." Its advocates may be imprisoned and martyred, but it will live on and on, unconquerable and triumphant. In the dark days only a few centuries in the past, men sought to manacle the Holy Scriptures, and for a season it seemed that the old book was fading badly, but Luther unchained it, and lo, in a little while, all Europe thrills with its power, and rulers are by it made to tremble on their thrones. "The word of God is not bound."

This weapon, wielded by the Divine Son, and the Divine Spirit, is also to be wielded by the blood-washed disciple of the Lord Jesus. How is he to wield it? Does it need to be said that a sword is to be used and not simply admired? That it is not the handle but the point of the sword that does the work? First of all, then, God's people need to know the book. Their ignorance of it is nothing short of appalling. To an awful degree is it true today, as it was of old, that God's people are destroyed for lack of the knowledge of him, which know-

ledge is to be found in his word. Because of the lack of true Bible knowledge, people are easily misled as to spiritual matters, and a spurious evangelium has a large field and many votaries. Oh, for the Berean spirit in all our churches! Remember the testimony concerning them, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." One sometimes is made to wonder if it would not be a good thing if all other books in the world were piled in one great pile and burned, if only their destruction would lead the people to the better study of God's holy word. One ounce of God's word outweighs in wisdom and value whole tons of books written by men.

A right study of the Bible will prepare us for its ready and proper use in the hour of our emergency and need. We will be able to give the portion in season to the different classes of our fellows, and to our own life in its varying moods and environments. Knowing the Bible as we can and ought, will save us from being as the foolish boatman who had an anchor, but who did not take it with him into the boat, and was therefore overwhelmed by the coming of the storm.

By no means let the students of the Bible forget this—that he is to study the holy book with all reverence. It is God's book. In it he talks to us. It has been rightly called "The talking book." It does talk to us and with us. It speaks to our inmost souls. Who that has reverently read it does not know this to be true? By reason of this, it is hard to have any great appreciation of those gentlemen who give us their learned dissertations on the book, with an irreverent and self-sufficient spirit. To every true student of Scripture the word needs to be said that of old was said to Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

This final word needs to be earnestly said: the Divine Spirit is the teacher and revealer of God's word. If we had a letter from a friend, on some very important subject, about which we needed to have clear and definite knowledge, and if part of the letter were unintelligible to us, would we not hasten to write to the author of the letter for his explanation and interpretation of the difficult part? In like manner are we to study the Holy Scriptures. The Divine Spirit is their Author. Let us continually seek for his explanation and interpretation. The interpretation of the commentaries may be helpful, but far more so will be the interpretation from the Divine Author Himself. Who questions that God's people would speedily be brought nearer to him and to the true, full meaning of his glorious gospel, if thus they would all wait upon him in the study of his word? Oh, isn't it worth the while of every one of us?—Baptist Standard.

## Are You a Dissipated Christian?

BY REV. WILLIAM P. MERRILL.

Every earnest young man or woman wants to live a life of power for good. You can go to no better teacher than Paul. He was energy itself. All the men of his day felt the almost terrifying power of his life. He was too strong a man even for the other apostles to appreciate him. The men of the world who met him thought him insane. When he laid down his life outside the Roman gate, his power was not cut off. It has grown with the years. The world of today is largely what Paul has made it.

What was the secret of this power? Paul gives it in the little verse, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

That means, first, that his life was one of Concentration, not of Dissipation. It may sound almost ridiculous to say that Paul's success came from the fact that he was not dissipated. But that word is broader than we often make it. There is many a man who never drinks or gambles, who yet is dissipated, for that words means scattered, as opposed to concentrated. Many a good moral man is a failure so far as being a power in the progress of the kingdom of Christ is concerned, just because he is dissipated, one part of him here, another there, no one object and calling always before him.

It is a beautiful picture we get when we use the spectroscope. The sunlight is broken into its component parts, and the bands of varying color are very pleasing to the eye. But, if you want heat, throw away the spectroscope, and use a burning-glass, which concentrates the rays of the sun on a single point. Paul let the divine life into him through a burning-glass.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge impressed all who knew him with his wonderful possibilities. He was always going to do great things. But his great poems never were written, except a few fragments; his social plans never got beyond paper, and many of them not beyond talk. Compare Macaulay's actual work, or Gladstone's with Coleridge's. There you see what concentration can do, as compared with dissipation. Edison's success is due not alone to great insight. His motto is, "Never look at the clock." His whole mind is concentrated on the thing before him.

Napoleon's theory of victory is well known. "Victory," he said, "depends on always being stronger than

the enemy at a given point." If he met an enemy with more men than he had, he would hurl his whole force at the centre, break it, and then turn against the two parts, meeting each with his whole army.

Paul's motto was, "This one thing I do." This burning-glass quality of concentration is the first essential of success. Without it a gifted mind will never be really scholarly, or an æsthetic mind make an artist, or the most saintly nature make a successful Christian.

Paul says he was strong because he was constrained. That means hemmed in, confined, like a river where the banks converge. How its quickens its pace, and fairly leaps through the gorge, because the way is narrowed! So Paul was confined to one course. The love of Christ shut him out from everything but being a Christian, and his whole nature went into that. If you would be a strong Christian, be a concentrated Christian.

Again, Paul's success was due to concentration on a supremely worthy object.

A life may be concentrated on an evil or unworthy object. Napoleon devoted his great intellect to satisfying his ambition, and he failed to help the world's progress. The miser is an example of concentration that is bad, not good. The German schoolboy who "gave his life to the dative case" brought his powers to one focus, but for what? What was Paul's one supremely worthy object? To live for God and man. His whole life, with all its powers, was turned down the channel of "unselfish love."

Paul did other things than preach. He made tents for some months. And we may be sure he made them well. If a Corinthian had gone to Paul to get some tent work done, he would have been pleased with the work, and would have received it when it was promised. But he would also have gone away with the thought, "Here is a man who has one great idea in life, and even his tent-making is used to further the cause of one he calls Christ."

One more thing note: Paul's life was concentrated by a great motive. Here is the strongest element. There was a mighty force at work to make and keep him wholly devoted; that force was Christ's love. As the knight of olden days fought at best under the eyes of his lady-love, so this man, Christ's knight fought best when most conscious of the watching eye of his Master, and the inspiration of his love. His strength was "as the strength of ten" because Christ's love was so vividly real to him.

Christ needs such concentrated Christians, devoted because constrained by the love of Christ. Paul was such a Christian that people thought him insane. Small danger that we shall be thought crazy for such a reason. Is not one need of the church that the dissipated Christian should reform, that those who are spending their energies a bit here and a bit there should let the love of Jesus come into them and constrain them down the one channel of love to God and man?

"What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But take the vapor, and constrain it, shut it up to one outlet, and it becomes steam-power, and does the work of the world. So is our life.

The traveller through Leyden crosses a little canal, and is astonished to be told that that is the Rhine. The proud river, the glory of Europe, has dwindled to this. Before it reaches the sea it divides and divides again, till at last it becomes this sluggish little stream, which until a few years ago perished in the sand, and never reached the sea. Type of many a finely promising young life.

Yield yourself to the constraining love of Christ; let every thought be brought into captivity to his obedience, and your life shall be a power for him.—Rendevour World.

## Seeing Jesus.

BY REV. THRODORR L. CUYLER, D. D.

"I went to St. Andrew's church, and there heard a little fair man; and he showed me the loveliness of Christ." That is the description given two centuries and a half ago of the preaching of the celebrated Samuel Rutherford, whose "Letters" are among the half dozen chief classics in religious literature. "Would it not be well if all of us ministers would ask ourselves when we leave the pulpit—did I make those people see me or see my Master? Certainly the preacher who can so effectually hide himself behind the cross that his auditors can 'see no man save Jesus only,' comes up to the true standard of gospel preaching. That king of preachers, the Apostle Paul, tells us that 'he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' His own conversion had been produced by a revelation of Christ to him. The main thing which he tells us about his conversion is that 'he saw the Lord in the way,' and the Christ thus manifested to him had made a new man of him.

The vast majority of all the people who attend our churches believe in Christianity; they admit its excellence and admire its beauty. But that faith in Christianity works no change in the heart or in the daily life. Jesus Christ himself did not formulate a creed and call upon his hearers to accept that; he simply cried out,