

practice them. The Christian who practices the presence of God and who lives the Christ-life most transparently is the one who is most thoroughly saturated with God's Word and who deliberately has given himself to live out that Word in deed.

The Word of God is a Weapon.

EPH. 6: 17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

The Spirit-filled man has enemies; he is engaged in a warfare. The powers of hell are all against him. He is always open to attack and momentarily liable to defeat. He needs both defensive and offensive weapons. He must be able both to stand and to withstand in every assault of Satan.

There is but one way this can be done and it is the way the God-man used. His only weapon in the wilderness was the Sword of the Spirit. "It is written," repeated three times in the threefold attack, repulsed the enemy.

Let us note that the God-man had His sword buried and ready. He did not wait to draw out the scroll of Scripture and read from it to get an answer for the devil. In the years of seclusion in the Nazareth home He had stored away the Words of God in His heart, and in the hours of quiet work in the carpenter's shop He had meditated upon them. It may be that the Son of Man had gone into the wilderness fresh from the study of Deuteronomy. His mind was so saturated with its truth that when Satan attacked Him, the Spirit instantly brought to His re-

membrane the very words that utterly routed him. He was kept in the moment of temptation by the Word hid in His heart.

DEUT. 11: 18, "*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.*"

PS. 119: 11, "*Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.*"

COR. 3: 16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

Often the reason we yield so quickly to temptation is because our sword is rusty. This gives Satan the advantage over us. Temptation comes to us on the street, in the office, when we may not have a Bible with us. It comes unexpectedly. There is no time to stop and search for an effectual portion of Scripture. It is only that part of the Word that is hid in the heart that will become a Sword in action at the moment most needed. It is the portion of the Word of God which we have learned and lived that will be effectual in the fight with Satan.

Another essential to success is confidence in the weapon we use. I feel sure there was the certitude of victory in the very tone of the voice when the Lord Jesus said, "It is written!" To Him the Word was authoritative and final. His confidence in the absolute authority of Deuteronomy had not been weakened by

a doubtful attitude toward its authorship. To Him it was the Word of God forever settled in Heaven. He had no question concerning its potency because He had no doubt concerning its purity or its permanence.

PS. 12: 6, "*The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*"

PROV. 30: 5, "*Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*"

LUKE 21: 33, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*"

Many Christians are defeated to-day in the warfare against sin and Satan because of doubt regarding their weapon, the Word of God. To them the Word is not the Sword of the Spirit but it is merely a staff of man's making to assist him on the pathway of life which he feels at liberty to whittle down to the measure of his own intellect and experience. Belief in the absolute trustworthiness and final authority of the Word is an essential to the potent use of it as the Sword.

The Word of God is a Fire that both Burns and Warms.

JER. 20: 9, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. *But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*"

The Bible is like a fire that burns out the dross, purifying and purging. It is a devouring flame before

which nothing that is contrary to God's will and ways can stand.

JER. 5: 14, "Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."

1 PET. 1: 22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

It is at the same time a fire that warms with comfort and cheer the heart desolated by sorrow and distressed through suffering.

1 THESS. 4: 18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

PS. 119: 50, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me."

PS. 119: 165, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

The Word of God is a Hammer to Break.

JER. 23: 29, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

There is such a residue of stubbornness, resistance and rebellion in every life! The man who has been accustomed to go his own way, seek his own pleasure and do his own will is not easily made submissive and humble. There is much in every one of us that is

hard which needs to be broken; much that is resisting which needs to be melted.

As the Christian studies the Word and comes under the softening rays of God's loving-kindness, tender mercy, unflinching faithfulness, unquenchable love and exhaustless grace, his heart is melted, his will is broken and his life is turned into joyous, humble submission to the loving will of God.

The Word of God is a Seed that Matures and Multiplies.

LUKE 8: 11, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

JAMES 1: 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

PS. 126: 6, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

A seed in itself is but a small hard substance which, if laid away in a drawer will remain only a seed. But put into suitable soil, given needed nurture, it will become a plant or a tree. The Word of God is seed. Laid on the drawing-room table to give semblance of religion to the home or carried when travelling to fulfil a promise to a praying mother at home, or as a sacred charm to ward off disaster, it will never influence or change the life in any way whatsoever. But let that incorruptible seed which has the very germ of life in it—"My words are life"—be sown in the soil of

the human heart by the Holy Ghost and it fructifies in a new creation.

Nor is it enough to accept the Bible as historically true. Before it can manifest its power to save and to sanctify it must be engrafted upon the inner life.

JAMES 1: 21, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

The seed needs to be fostered and nurtured by earnest study and eager searching. Seed needs time to grow. The Word must be pondered and meditated upon. It must lie fallow in the mind, heart, conscience and will to bring forth its full fruitage. The seed must be kept abiding in the soil of faith. The Christian must continue in the Word. The Word must abide in him by day and by night.

Ps. 119: 97, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

Ps. 119: 148, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word."

JOHN 15: 7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Countless times have I seen the maturing, multiplying power of the Word of God when engrafted upon a human life but in none more beautifully illustrated than in the life of a Chinese teacher who came to a summer Conference as an interpreter. Although he

had been a Christian for many years and was active in Christian work yet he was lamentably ignorant of the Word of God. This fact was so borne in upon him as he interpreted the missionary's message that he determined to leave his position as teacher immediately and devote himself to the study of the Bible. He went to a seminary for a short time, then spent several months alone with only the Holy Spirit as Teacher and Revealer of the deep things of the Book. At the end of a year of such intensive Bible study he returned to the community where he had lived formerly.

Shortly afterward I received a letter from a missionary in that city, in which she said:

"It would delight your very soul could you see and know all the wonderful way in which the Lord has led and used W—— in the last six or eight months. His Bible classes last fall and winter numbering about two hundred, were very fine indeed. He had them for all classes, from college boys down to the cooks and other servants on our compounds. His year away made a new man of him. That year's study did worlds for him in the Scriptures. His familiarity with the Bible now is as marked as his lack of it was before this year of close application, and of course he is going on too, gaining ground all the time. He is probably going to be ordained in a few weeks now and become assistant pastor of the —— church. The strongest thing about W—— is his life of prayer. Partly through the instrumentality of him and his sister, if not mostly, there are now being held three meetings a day just for prayer. And praise His Name, there have been some extraordinary answers to the prayers of this little circle which has for many months met every Sunday morning very early, really before the dawn. Now they have it every day."

Coldness of heart, callousness of conscience, weakness of will, febleness of testimony, joylessness in worship, fruitlessness in service, powerlessness in prayer all are traceable to just one thing—ignorance of and indifference to God's Word. "Ye seek to kill me, *because my word hath no place in you*" (John 8: 37). But, when the Word is given its rightful place in any life, it has power to convict, to convert, to cleanse, to control, to criticize, to correct and to consecrate. It becomes a mould that fashions the life into ever growing likeness to the image of Christ Jesus. "The Word is an expulsive power to turn out the tyranny of sin; an enlightening power to dispel the darkness of ignorance; an ennobling power to elevate the mind; an eradicating power to cleanse the heart; an endowing power to enrich the being, and an effectual power to bless in every way to the glory of God."*

Bible Study for Personal Spiritual Growth.