

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 13:11:2007

Reading: Psalm 19:7-11 Ephesians 6:17

THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN

8. SPIRITUAL SWORDMANSHIP

It is recorded that during the coronation of Edward the sixth that after various ceremonial swords had been brought to him the King said to his nobles, “ there is one sword yet lacking, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Without that sword we are nothing and we can do nothing.” It is our purpose in this study to examine this sword in order that we may employ this sword without which we are nothing and can do nothing. “ *And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*” (6:17) The phrase, “ *the Word of God,*” is the Bible’s most frequently used designation of the Scriptures. In the first five books, “ *God said,*” is repeated seven hundred times. Four thousand times in the Old Testament we read, “ *the Word of the Lord.*” It all testifies that when the Bible speaks, God speaks. An old saint said that “ *the Bible is an armoury of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. It is a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, a balm for every wound. Rob us of our Bible and our sky has lost its sun.*”

The famous English preacher Samuel Chadwick said, “ *I have guided my life by the Bible for more than sixty years, and I tell you there is no book like it. It is a miracle of*

literature, a perennial spring of wisdom, a wonder of surprises, a revelation of mystery, an infallible guide of conduct, and unspeakable source of comfort. Pay no attention to people who discredit, for they speak without knowledge. The Bible is the Word of God. Study it according to its own direction. Live by its principles. Believe its message. Follow its precepts. No man is truly uneducated who knows the Bible, and no one is wise who is ignorant of its teachings.

Now I want to speak to you about “ **Spiritual Swordmanship,**” and I have divided our study into 3 parts.

(1) TREASURE YOUR SWORD

Do you recall the words of the Psalmist ? “ *Oh, how I love Thy law it is my meditation all the day,*” (119:97) again, “ *Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold.*” (119:127) Do you treasure, love, appreciate the Word of the Lord ? Now the previous pieces of the armour that we have looked at have been primarily defensive, but now we come to a piece of the armour that is both defensive and offensive. There were at least two swords that the Roman soldier would be aware of. One was a large broadsword (rhomphaia) that could be as long as forty inches. It was a two-edged sword that was wielded with two hands. But that is not the sword that Paul has in view here in (6:17) Rather he is referring to the normal sword carried by the soldier. *Its length was anywhere from six to eighteen inches. It was carried in a sheath or scabbard at the soldiers side and was used in hand to hand combat.* The word that Paul uses here for sword (machaira) was used to.

- To describe the swords carried by the Roman soldiers who came to capture the Lord Jesus, while He was in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matt 26:47)
- It is the same word used to describe the sword that Peter used to cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. (Matt 26:51)
- It is the same word used to describe the sword used to kill James the brother of John. (Acts 12:2)
- It's the same word used to describe the sword used against the heroes of the faith. (Heb 11:37)

You see, this was the routine sword used by the Roman soldiers and it is this sword that Paul has in mind. Paul identifies the sword, “ *and take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.* ” (1) Now you will treasure your sword if you keep 2 things in mind. We must,

(a) RECOGNISE THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE:

Paul says, “ *it is the sword of the Spirit,* ” it could be translated “ *spiritual,* ” or “ *by the Spirit.* ” This refers to where it comes from, the sword given by the Spirit. The Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was given to us through the ministry of the Spirit. Peter says, “ *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.* ” (2 Pet 1:21) Moreover, the Holy Spirit is the One who teaches us the Word of God (Jn 14:26) and who guides us into all truth. (Jn 16:13) My the Bible is a remarkable book. It is the only book in the world where the author is

immediately available to guide us in understanding as we read it. It is the only book in the world that when you attempt to practice its teachings, the author is there to give you the strength and grace you need. It is “ *the sword given by the Spirit.* ” Look if you will at Paul’s classic statement on the inspiration of Scripture. (2 Tim 3:16) Now there are three words here that deserve our attention.

1. INSPIRATION:

Now what does inspiration mean ? Our word “ *inspired,* ” comes from a Latin root meaning “ *to breathe into.* ” But the concept of “ *breathing in,* ” is not found in this passage. Some have assumed that God breathed some kind of divine life into the words of those who penned the original documents of Scripture. But the Greek term for “ *inspiration,* ” here means “ *God breathed.* ” Literally, this verse says “ *All Scripture is God breathed.* ” That is, Scripture is not the words of men into which God puffed divine life. It is the very breathe of God. Scripture is God Himself speaking. Inspiration does not mean that wrote God’s truth in their own words. It does not mean that God merely assisted the writers. *It means that the words of the Bible are the words of God Himself. Every Scripture was breathed out by God.*

You see, when the Scripture speaks, God speaks. (Gal 3:8) In every sense, when you pick up the Word and read it, you’re hearing God’s voice. That’s exciting. God is the author of this book. The Bible is the very Word of God. But now the question arises, “ *how much of Scripture is God-breathed ?* ” Some of it, most of it, or all of it. That brings me

to the second word in (2 Tim 3:16)

2. ALL:

“ *All Scripture*, ” the word “ *all*, ” can be translated “ *every*. ” So we see that all Scripture and every Scripture is inspired. Let me illustrate. Listen to this statement. All ducks waddle. Does that mean that only ducks of the past waddle ? No. Ducks still waddle today. What about future ducks ? Future ducks will also waddle. *In other words, in whatever period of history ducks live, ducks waddle.* Now here is the point, to say that Scripture is God breathed means all Scripture, regardless of when it was written, is God breathed. The Lord meant all that had been written, all that was being written, and all that would be written. All Scripture is God breathed. Scholars refer to this as the plenary inspiration of the Bible. But notice the 3rd word.

3. SCRIPTURE:

“ *All Scripture*, ” the word Paul uses here means “ *writing*. ” (graphe) Did Paul mean that all kinds of writing was inspired ? Obviously not. (3:15) So Paul is talking here about the Holy Scriptures. It is the Holy Scripture that is God breathed. *Theologians call this, the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture.* Plenary means all. Nothing is missing. Verbal means every word. So every word in the Bible is God-breathed. Do you recall what Christ to the Devil ? “ *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* ” (Matt 4:4) No better testimony to the extent of inspiration could be borne than that by Dean Burgon. “ *The Bible is none other*

than the voice of Him that sitteth on the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. ” My in days when liberals and modernists tell us that the Scriptures may contain the Word of God, but in totality are not to be reckoned as such, we affirm that the Bible not only contains the Word of God, it is the Word of God from beginning to end. But if you treasure your sword, you will also,

(b) REALISE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE BIBLE:

Do you realise what kind of book the Bible is ? Let me show you what the Bible claims ?

1. The Bible is Infallible:

The Bible in its totality has no mistakes. It is flawless, flawless and without blemish, because it was written by God and He is flawless. According to the psalmist, “ *the law of the Lord is perfect.* ” (19:7) Here is the only book that never makes a mistake. Everything it says is the truth.

2. The Bible is Authoritative:

It is the last Word, the final authority. Isaiah said, “ *Hear O heavens and give ear O earth for the Lord hath spoken.* ” (Is 1:2) That says it all. This is God’s voice recorded in Scripture and we’d better hear it.

3. The Bible is Determinative:

You see, what a person does with the Bible reveals his relationship to God. Do you know what the Lord Jesus said ? “ *He that is of God heareth God’s words, ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God.* ” (Jn 8:47) If obedience to God’s Word is the pattern of your life, it reveals you belong to God. On the other hand if you are perpetually disobeying God’s Word it shows that you do not belong to Him.

4. The Bible is Inerrant:

For it contains no factual errors, historical fallacies, scientific blunders, or spiritual delusions. It is perfect in every jot and tittle. According to (Prov 30:5) “ *Every word of God is pure.* ” That is, every word is pure and true.

The Bible tells the truth about life and death, time and eternity, heaven and hell, and right and wrong.

5. The Bible is Sufficient:

It is sufficient to make you “ *perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* ” (2 Tim 3:17) When we say that the Bible is sufficient, we mean nothing is missing. The Bible is all anyone needs to find salvation and to become mature in Christ. (2 Tim 3:15) My when some charismatic comes along and says, “ *Oh, you need this spiritual or mystical experience don’t believe it.* ” The Spirit of God acting through the Word of God is sufficient to make you fully mature in Christ. Then again,

6. The Bible is Complete:

We don’t need a vision. We don’t need a new revelation or a voice from heaven. My when John wrote (Rev 22:21) and wip[ed] his pen, inspiration stopped. We don’t need new revelations for the Scriptures are “ *the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.* ” (Jude 3) Do you recall what God says to those who add to this book ? (Reve 22:18-19) Finally,

7. The Bible is Effective:

For when the Bible speaks, things happen. Do you believe that this Word transforms lives ? Well, in (Is 55:11) the Lord gave this promise, “ *My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* ” Now if didn’t believe that, I wouldn’t preach it. Now you see, when you become engaged in battle against Satan and his army, then you can be confident of the Divine quality of your sword. You see, when you became a Christian you received the sword in the form of the Bible. Now an unsaved person may have the Bible, but he does not have within him, the resident truth teacher, the Holy Spirit who makes the Bible meaningful. That’s why he does not understand the things of God. (1 Cor 2:14)

Christ said, “ *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you (believers) all things.* ” (Jn 14:26) The Spirit of God indwells the believer and enlightens his understanding of what the Word teaches. My we can get to know the Word of God because we have the Spirit of God. (1 Jn 2:20) (1)

(2) TRUST YOUR SWORD

Do you remember the children's story of the magic sword ? This mysterious sword had in its construction a kind of life of its own. It was put in the hand of a coward in order to cure him and to develop courage on his part. When he tried to run away the sword kept him right up to the front of the battle. Whenever he attempted to fling it from it clung to his hand. Whenever he sought to hide the blade in his uniform, by itself it would leap from the scabbard and begin smiting the first foe it could find. *Gradually, the coward leaned to put confidence in his sword, he realised he could never be beaten as long as that invincible blade was in his hand.* My such a weapon is the sword of the Spirit. It will fight by itself, it will conquer by itself and in the end defend and deliver every person who trusts it. (2) Now we must trust our sword,

(a) AS BEING DIVINE:

For it is a sword that is given by the Spirit. King Arthur's legendary supernatural sword Excalibur was wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake in 9 years, but the supernatural sword the Christian wields was formed and fashioned by the Holy Spirit during the course of many centuries. My the Bible is a miracle book. It is divine in its origin. It is the Word of God. Do you know something ? *In this book there are 40 different writers who produced 66 books, written over a period of 1600 years, in different countries, yet there is only one Author, the Holy Spirit, and they all have one common theme which is Jesus Christ.* (Lk 24:44)

G. Campbell Morgan the renowned Bible teacher had grown up in a Christian home, never questioning that the Bible was

the Word of God. But in College his faith was severely challenged and he began to entertain doubts. *" The whole intellectual world was under the mastery of the physical scientists,"* he later said, *" and of a materialistic and rationalistic philosophy. There came a moment when I was sure of nothing."* In those days opponents of the Bible appeared every Sunday in great lecture and concert halls across England attacking Christianity and the Bible, and these atheists and agnostics troubled the young student. He read every book he could find both for and against the Bible, both for and against Christianity, until he was so confused, so riddled with doubt that he felt he could not go on.

In desperation he closed his books, put them in his cupboard and turned the lock. Going down to a book shop he bought a new Bible, returned to his room, sat down at his desk and opened it. He said, *" I am no longer sure that this is what my father claims it to be, the Word of God. Bit of this I am sure. If it be the Word of God and if I come to it with an unprejudiced and open mind, it will bring assurance to my soul of itself."* As Campbell Morgan looked into the book before him, studying its form and structure, its unity and message he was amazed. He later said, *" That Bible found me. I began to read and study it then, in 1883 and I have been a student ever since."* What about you ? Have you doubts about the Bible ? Do you accept it, as God's Word ? Without reservation ? Do you realise that the Bible is the sword the Spirit employs in His attack on the citadel of human arguments ?

I think its Dr. Ted Rendall who tells the story that when Saladin saw the sword which Richard Coeur de Lion carried

in battle and with which he had fought so valiantly, he marvelled that so common a blade should have wrought such mighty deeds on the field of battle. “ *It was not the sword,*” replied on the English officers, “ *it was the arm of Richard.*” Can we not give similar testimony? Its because the Holy Spirit wields the Word that it has such tremendous force. Do we not need to pray?

*Thou sword of the Spirit
Put error to flight
And banish the forces
Of darkness and night*

(b) AS BEING DEPENDABLE:

The author of Hebrews declared, “ *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 marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” (4:12) My the physical sword is dead, but the sword of the Spirit is living, a physical sword penetrates only the body dividing flesh and bones, but the sword of the Spirit penetrates the heart diving between soul and spirit, the carnal sword stabs living men to death, but the sword of the Spirit stirs dead men to life. On one occasion Dr. Caesar Malan of Geneva was travelling to Paris, when he fell into conversation with a man who began to reason with him about Christianity. The Doctor answered every argument with a quotation from the Bible, not venturing a single remark or argument. Every quotation his companion sought to evade was only to be met by another passage. At last Dr. Milan’s companion could stand it no longer. “ *Don’t you*

understand,” he remarked “ *I don’t believe your Bible. What’s the use of quoting it to me ?*” The only reply was another thrust of the sword of the Spirit, “ *If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*” Some years later Dr. Milan received a letter in an unfamiliar hand writing. The letter was in the form of a testimony, “ *You took the sword of the Spirit,*” claimed the writer “ *and stabbed me through and through. And every time I tried to parry the blade and get you to use your hands, and not the heavenly steel, you simply gave me another stab. You made me feel, I was not fighting you but God.*” As he read on, Dr. Milan recognised that the letter was from his Paris bound companion of years before. The sword of the Spirit had done its work. (a) (b)

(c) AS BEING DURABLE:

For as the writer to the Hebrews says this book “ *is quick and powerful.*” My this is a **living** book. It pulsates with life.

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “ *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.*” (Jn 6:63)

The Word of God is also **life-giving.** (1 Pet 1:23) It’s the only book that can quicken men and women. Of course this book is lasting, for it will never wear out nor will it ever wear done. Dr. Rendall says, “ *it’s not the book of the month, it’s not the book of the year, or decade, or century. It’s the book of the ages.* It is the living Word of the living God. So we must
(1) (2)

(3) TEST YOUR SWORD

G. Woods prayed this prayer,

*O Word of power,
Of pure design
Help me Thy sword thrusts
Well to use*

In the Wakefield Tower of the Tower of London there is to be seen a jewelled sword of state. It is one of the most beautiful and valuable swords in the world. Emeralds and diamonds, sapphires and rubies, along with other precious stones, encase it so thickly that the gold setting beneath can hardly be seen. Yet, strange to say, during the reign of Queen Victoria, this sword was lost for some decades. Packed away in an old box that closely resembled an ordinary gun case, it got pushed aside and was accidentally found at the back of a disused cupboard. *It's hard to imagine how such a treasure could be treated so carelessly.* Yet are there not many Christians who treat the sword of the Spirit in the same way? You see, we need to put this sword to the test and use it,

(a) DEFENSIVELY:

For a sword is used just as much to parry a blow as it is to inflict one. Satan attacks you with temptation but you can parry his blows with the Word of God.

1. Look at the Lord Jesus:

Look if you will at (Matt 4:1-11) Here He was tempted by the Devil and He used the sword of the Spirit three times over. He grasps the sword, wields it by faith, and puts the Devil to flight.

2. Look at the Apostle Paul:

Do you remember when he was in Lystra ? That crippled man was healed. “ *And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices saying, the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* ” (Acts 14:11) Do you know what Paul did? He took out the sword of the Spirit and fought his shining antagonist with a word from the 146th Psalm.
(146:6 Acts 14:15)

Now using the sword of the Spirit is much more than merely owning a Bible. It is knowing the specific Scriptural principle that applies to the specific temptation. Look again at (6:17) The Greek word for “ *Word,* ” here is not “ *logos,* ” which means “ *a broad, general reference,* ” it is “ *rhema,* ” which means “ *a specific statement.* ” You see, when Satan confronts you with temptation or false teaching, you need to respond with verses that specifically address whatever he is troubling you with. It won' t do any good just to wave a Bible in front of him. You need to use the sword as an instrument of precision. For example, when Satan hits you with discouragement, you need to think of verses that relate to that. What Bible verses do you use when you get

depressed ?

Do you know where to go to defend yourself against sorrow, discouragement, the lust of the flesh ?

My we will only know victory in the Christian life by daily studying the principles of God' s Word. You must saturate your mind with the Word of God. Are you doing that ? Are you using this sword defensively ? (a)

(b) OFFENSIVELY:

Would you not hate to live on the defensive all the time ? You see, when you witness, and when I preach, we don' t have time for any temptations, we are just trying to whack away some of the jungle in Satan' s kingdom. You see, every time we take the gospel to an unbeliever we should see ourselves blazing through Satan' s dominion. Do you know something ? The Devil will do anything he can to nullify the efforts of those who present the gospel to the lost. *This is the very point that the Saviour makes in the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soil.* Look if you will at (Matt 13:3-8)

Now in

(Matt 13:18-23) the Lord Jesus explained the meaning of this parable. The sower is anyone who proclaims the Word of God, the seed is the Word of God. Now when you sow seed you are using your sword. In (13:8) Christ said that when the seed finds good ground, a receptive heart, it will bear fruit. Now Satan knows God' s Word is capable of bearing

fruit, so he is busy trying to make sure it does' nt. How ? Well, do you see how he attacks ?

1. Through Demons:

Look if you will (13:4) This refers to Satan' s demonic hosts. Somehow they are able to snatch the Word away so that the person has forgotten what he has heard. Perhaps you have talked to someone about the Word, but they go away and forget about it. Satan snatches it out of their minds.

2. Through Persecution:

(13:5) In (13:21) Christ refers this to persecution. That person could not take the heat.

3. Through Worldliness:

(13:7) This refers to people who seem to believe for a while, but they are not willing to say no to the evil system. (13:22) Because they want the World, they walk away from the Word. Do you see what Satan is doing ? *He is twisting people' s perspective of the world, persecuting them, or snatching the Word away so they won' t remember it.* He will do all in his power to stop the sowing of the seed because he knows it will produce fruit in good soil. Is it not encouraging to know that when you get the Word out in that Sunday School class, in that senior citizens meeting, in that youth work, from the pulpit, it will never return void but will always accomplish what it should. (Is 55:11) (1) (2) (3)

A person described three things he saw in a garden among the plants and flowers. The first was *a butterfly* that landed

on an attractive flower. It sat for a second or two and then moved on to another, seeing and touching many lovely blossoms but deriving no benefit from them. Next came *a botanist* with a large notebook and microscope. He spent some time over each flower, making notes of each. But when he had finished, his knowledge was shut away in his notebook, very little of it remained with him. Then *a bee* came along, entering a flower here and there, and spending time in each, emerging from each blossom laden with pollen. It went in empty and came out full. There are those who read the Bible, flitting from one favourite passage to another, but getting little from their reading. Others really study and take notes but do not apply the teachings of Scripture.

Others like the bee spend time over the Word, reading, marking, inwardly digesting and applying it. Their minds are filled with wisdom, and their lives are filled with heavenly sunshine. Now which one are you ? *A butterfly*, flipping from class to class, from Bible study to Bible study, from book to book flapping your pretty wings but never changing ? Or are you *a botanist* ? With enough notebooks to sink a small battleship ? Or are you *a bee* ? Coming in empty and going out full, turning your knowledge into the honey that makes life sweet ? The sword is available. Are you using it as a weapon to win the victory that's already yours in Christ ?