

THE MAN CHRIST USES

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."
II Timothy 2:21.

Two great, consuming and dynamic convictions should be written large in every life. One of these is that the thing of supremest importance is the salvation of the soul. Our fathers were right when they sang:--

"Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below;
May we its great importance learn,
Its sovereign virtue know.

Religion should our thoughts engage
Amidst our youthful bloom;
'Twill fit us for declining age,
And for the solemn tomb."

Eternal life is to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Our fathers reminded themselves of personal responsibility in this matter when they sang:--

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
Who gave His Son my soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live;
And O, thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give."

The other great conviction is that we are redeemed for service. Salvation and service express these two great convictions. A Christian is not a saint preserved for future happiness, but a sinner redeemed for present service. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" should be the first question of every redeemed soul. In the first moments of his Christian life, Paul put Christ in His rightful place in his life by crowning Him Lord. Paul put himself in the right place--a servant's place. Throughout his life as a Christian, he gave himself unreservedly to the service of his Lord and Master.

The crowning privilege of the life of a believer is service for Christ. One of the greatest calamities that could befall any Christian would be to reach the place where God cannot use him. Paul was careful to qualify to serve. He was haunted by the fear that a time might come when his obedience might become imperfect, his enthusiasm cool, his interest lag, and his love wax cold, and God would be forced to say, "I cannot use you."

No real believer will ever be lost, but many who once served the Lord have lost the privilege of service and have missed the reward they might have had. Moses was a faithful servant of God but disobedience marred his record and Moses could not enter the Promised Land. What greater tragedy could come to any believer than to be cast off from service?

It is said that when Nathan Hale, that noble patriot of the early days of American history, was led out to execution by the British, he said: "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." We have but one life to live here. It behooves us to study how we can best invest it. What are the qualities that make it possible for God to use believers in Christian service? I am convinced that any man who is willing

to pay the price may be used of God regardless of his talents and gifts, not perhaps to the extent of some, but certainly to the full limit of his capacity, and, if not, the fault is his. What kind of a man can God use?

I. A Regenerated Man.

Sometimes God uses unregenerate men in some ways to accomplish His purposes. God can make the wrath of man to praise Him, but, generally speaking, unregenerate men accomplish nothing for God. They lose both their souls and their lives. The regenerate man is "a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Often we need to hear the challenging words from Isaiah, "Be clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord." 52:11.

II. A Surrendered Man.

Some of us act as though we were afraid of God, afraid to let Him have full sway in our lives. God says, "If any man willeth to do His will." What could the potter do if the clay refused to yield? What could the doctor do if the patient refused to trust? The man Christ uses must place himself absolutely at Christ's disposal.

What keeps you from being the kind of Christian you ought to be? Some people say, "If I had money to give as some people can give, I could be a better Christian." Others say, "If I had talents as other people have, I could be a better Christian." Still others say, "If I could pray as some people pray, I could be a better Christian." The truth is that it is not a lack of money, nor lack of time, nor lack of talents, nor even lack of ability that keeps one from being a better Christian. It is rather the lack of willingness to do the will of God.

There is no such thing as acceptable Christian service unless one's life is placed entirely at Christ's disposal. He demands the complete surrender of ourselves and our all to Him. This does not mean that we will be faultless or sinless, but wholly yielded to God. The great soul-winners and kingdom-builders through the centuries have been fully surrendered men and women. Christ asks that we give ourselves unreservedly and entirely to Him.

"Who answers Christ's insistent call,
Must give himself, his life, his all,
Without one backward look.
Who sets his hand unto the plow,
And glances back with anxious brow,
His calling hath mistook.
Christ claims him wholly for His own;
He must Be Christ's and Christ's alone."

When Dwight L. Moody had finished an engagement in England and was waiting at the pier to board a vessel for America, he talked with Henry Varley, an intimate friend, and in the course of the conversation Varley said, "It remains to be seen what God can do with any man who gives himself up wholly to God." Moody boarded the vessel presently and as he travelled across the Atlantic he meditated on Varley's statement. As the ship neared New York harbor, he knelt on the deck in a prayer of complete surrender and dedication to God. "If it remains to be seen what God can do with any man who completely surrenders himself to Him, I will be that man." The life of Moody from that hour proved the value of full and complete committal of one's self to God.

III. A Man With A Great Purpose.

Paul revealed the secret of his remarkable life in these words: "This one thing

I do." This is the prime qualification for success in any undertaking in life and especially so in the Christian life. No one with a divided heart will succeed anywhere. A divided heart can never bring complete satisfaction. The man of mingled interests will seldom make a success of anything.

Christ's cause demands our best. The work to which He has called us must claim our whole attention. Paul gave himself unreservedly, by day and by night, to his work of proclaiming Christ's message. The surging passion of his life was to make known the gospel.

Our trouble is that we are interested in too many things today to be used of God. Certainly there are many lives greatly hampered by circumstances over which they have no control, but there is no life so circumscribed that it cannot serve Christ. The great, victorious, sun-crowned men and women of God rise above circumstances. They recognize God's business as their chief concern on earth. When someone told William Carey that he was neglecting his business too much because of his enthusiastic efforts to promote missions, Carey replied, "My business on earth is to serve God. I peg shoes to make a living."

IV. A Man Who Can Prevail In Prayer.

The men who have been greatly used of the Lord have been men of prayer. As you read their biographies you discover that the spirit of prayer predominates. All of them are mighty in prayer. It is interesting to read the Bible through and to note how many things have happened when God's people were on their knees in prayer. Also, to note the transformations that have been wrought in human hearts and human lives as a result of prayer. The poet has well said:

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of."

Jacob said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Daniel prayed in spite of the decree that had been signed by the King. Jesus left us an example of a perfect prayer life. Queen Mary feared the prayers of John Knox more than she feared an army of men. The prayer room of John Knox sent forth streams of influence that shook the world. He prayed, "Give me Scotland or I die."

Jay Gould was a railroad magnate and a rich man. The story is told that on one occasion he and a railroad official were traveling in the West. It so happened that they had to lay over for a few hours in a small Western town on account of railroad connections. Going up the street they heard the cry of an auctioneer.

They stopped in¹ to inquire as to the sale. They learned that a preacher had built a church and the congregation could not pay for it, so the contractor put it up for sale. As they stepped up the auctioneer said: "Going, going, going."

The contractor had been pointed out to Gould and he went over to him and said: "How much will it take to satisfy you in cash?" At once he replied, "Fifteen hundred dollars." Taking from his pocket green back bills in large denominations, he asked for a receipt, and it was given him.

An officer of the church standing near watching the proceedings, asked Gould what he was going to do with the building. Gould asked him where the pastor and the officers of the church were, and he told him that they were at the church praying. He handed the officer the receipt and told him to give it to the pastor and walked away. The officer took it to the church, and announced the debt was paid. Then the pastor and officers and members sang the Hallelujah on their knees.

"And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they had assembled together."

How often our hearts rebuke us as we meditate on these lines:--

"Ere you left your room this morning
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ, our Saviour,
Did you sue for loving favor,
As a shield today?"

You may be marvelously gifted and equipped for the service of God, but if you have not learned how to prevail in prayer you can never expect God's blessing on your labours.

V. A Man Who Uses God's Word.

There is only one effective weapon in the armour of the Christian and that is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." God's Word is your weapon as a Christian. Three things concerning God's Word must engage the attention of the man who wants to be useful for Christ.

1. He must approach the Word of God with an unfaltering faith in it. No one who doubts it will ever be a great and stalwart Christian worker. Men and women who have moved the world have been those who believed the Bible is the very Word of God.
2. He must feed upon this Word. Study it daily and make it a part of yourself.
3. He must use the Word. One sentence from the Word will do more for a weary soul than volumes containing the words of men. People are hungry for the Word of God and will go where it is preached. Christ uses the man who makes much of the Word of God.

VI. A Man With A Message.

Men need it; they are hungry for it; they are starving for it; we have it; we should take it to them.

VII. A Man With Faith Enough To Expect Results.

The great trouble with the majority of us is that we do not expect anything to happen. We are not looking for results. We are content to go on in the same old hum-drum way.

A young preacher, who was discouraged because he was not seeing results, went to Spurgeon to discuss the matter with him. Spurgeon said, "Why, you don't mean to tell me that you expect results every time you preach, do you?" "Well, no," responded the young man, somewhat taken aback. "Then, that is why you don't get them," was the pointed reply.

Notice that when men play football they do not kick ball at random, but they endeavor to drive it into the goal. And thank God, we too can have a goal.

G. H. Knight said that there are three causes of spiritual inefficiency--"We are not still enough for God to come to us, nor empty enough for God to fill us, nor sanctified enough for God to use and honor us."

Christ wants men that He can use. He needs regenerated men, men completely yielded to Him, men mastered by a great purpose, men who have learned how to prevail in prayer, how to use God's Word, men who have a vital message for a lost

world, and men who have faith enough to expect results. He can and will use men who are willing to pay the price. Are we willing now to do His will regardless of the personal cost to ourselves? Can you gladly say:--

"All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

I surrender all, I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all."