

50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

GOING ON

The Christian Mission Magazine, April 1873

How many things have you left off doing, since your conversion? Why have you given them up?

Oh well, you know, people's dispositions are not all alike. Some people seem to have gone straight on from their birth without an idea of moving out of the beaten track, while some like variety, and can't bear to be always repeating the same thing.

Ah, my friend! All very true; but it is only the people who keep on doing the same thing who get changes for the better; the others rarely change but for the worse.

Well, I believe there is some truth in that, and I would like to be more steady and plodding; but, someway, I can't. I begin attending to private prayer and reading the Bible, going to meetings and doing my share of Christian work every now and then; but something always seems to come in the way, or turn me aside, and then I leave off. I only wish I knew how to keep at it. – Well, let us try and show you.

1. BE SURE THAT GOD REQUIRES YOU TO DO THE THING.

Noah could never have kept at his great work for long if he had not been fully convinced God required him to build the ark, and it is no wonder you are not particular about doing this or that if you do not feel profoundly your obligation before God to do it. Come now, halt for a moment. Close your eyes to every earthly thing. See the Maker of the universe standing alone before you – YOUR GOD – YOUR SAVIOR. He speaks to you. He says, "Be not weary in well-doing." He directs you to do this and that. Dare you trifle with Him? When the world is gone, you will have to tell Him what you have done, and what you have left undone. He is looking at you when you let the time for prayer, reading, meeting, and service glide by unheeded. It is God who is your Master. Do you treat the



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work of any other master like His? Surely you should hear His voice more plainly than any voice of earth. If you do not, it is because you are too little in the closet of your heart with the Almighty. His voice is sounding in its power of love so that all the world can hear it, if they will but listen. Listen now.

But when you hear the command,

2. COUNT THE COST OF OBEDIENCE

Every Christian almost is a contractor. When you first heard your Master's voice, you jumped and ran to obey; but, perhaps, you never thought what was implied in the order given.

It is possible to reckon up the square yards of earth and rock that must be excavated to make a railway a thousand miles long. It is possible to calculate to a pound the weight of coal that will be necessary to run an engine over the line. And you can tell, if you please, how many hours of time, how many of your old habits and pleasures and indulgences, how much money, how many inward and outward struggles may cost you to obey any one of God's commands.

Contractors, when about to tender, take care to be on the safe side, and make allowances for what cannot be foreseen. You may do the same. Christians do not often give up because some strange thing has happened to them, but on account of something they had every reason to expect, if they had only kept a good lookout.

Jesus has given you a fair and full specification to tender from. Reckon up what it means: Tribulation, hatred, persecution, war, self-denial, cross-bearing, prayer, and labor. You can say, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" You can find out all your duties, and know what the doing of them requires of you. Learn it well, and ask –

3. IS THE DOING OF THIS THING WORTH WHAT IT WILL COST?

Children don't mind spending hours in houses of card or of sand, which the first wind or the first tide will destroy. But you and I have something more serious on hand than they. We should never begin anything that is not worthy of being



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carried on till the world begins to blaze, - that we do not think worth working at till our latest breath. We have not a minute too many to do our Master's work in, so do not let us begin a practice or a meeting that we are not sure is worthy of keeping up.

Oh! but, if the Lord wills I should do this, that is enough.

Yes; but the Lord wants His servants to be His friends; to see and feel why this should be done and that left undone. He has taken special care to explain the worth of a soul, so that you might feel the importance of saving one, and might be prepared to spend a life in this great work. God does not want from you a reckless, thoughtless service; He wants thorough devotion, and He wishes you to feel the reasonableness of every act of service you perform. Do you?

4. TRY TO MAKE ALL YOU DO PAY.

Very few of the great, long undertakings of our times could be carried out without payments on account, as the work goes on.

Lots of Christians give up the performance of some duty because they get nothing for it at the time, and they grow weary of always sowing. You can't always have harvest-time, and you may not live till the harvest; but you can see yard-after-yard, and field after field, and day after day of sowing done. Be thankful.

You have been praying for some person, or people, or thing, day after day, and you are about tired of it. Why? Because you have only said the words of prayer. Tell Jesus every day that you are doing it because He is praying every day for you. Catch a smile from Him every day, and that will keep you going.

You have gone to your post of duty regularly for a while, and you seem to accomplish nothing. But trust in the Lord. Nothing pays like believing. Against every token of failure, believe, and you will enjoy failure.

But if, after all, it seems as if you were doomed to suffer loss, -

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5. YOU MUST BE WILLING TO LOSE.

And that never so much as when you seem just about to win. God requires this duty. If its performance brings no return, that is God's affair, not yours. The soldier who has obeyed every order comes back from defeat, as from victory – with honor. If the drunkard you have rescued with such care and labor, goes reeling home tonight; if the convert you led to Jesus, and whom you have watched over so lovingly, is not true to Christ, or goes back into the world, it must not take you by surprise, and confound you. The greater the work you do, the more failures, slips, and blunders you are sure to make. The meeting, the effort, you have toiled so long to establish and keep going, drags and halts and seems ready to perish; but never mind. Once satisfied about your duty, be thankful to God for giving you something worthy of a person to do, and work away! The grandest lift a person can live is a life spent in fighting unsuccessfully, and fighting on to the last. Not he that succeeds to the end, but he that endureth to the end, shall be saved. Let all your efforts, your self-denials, your sacrifices, your life itself, be lost to all appearance; God has said you shall reap in due season. Be satisfied.

6. KEEP TO YOUR DUTY; GET THE HABIT OF KEEPING AT IT.

How often does a stranger wonder, as they see some class of work being done for the first time – from the knitting of a stocking to the building of an ironclad – at the steady persistence of all sorts of work-people in doing the same thing over and over again! How ever can they manage to them to keep on, hour after hour, day after day, year after year, doing the same thing without variation? And yet to them it is no strange thing, and, generally, no drudgery. They have made up their minds to do it, and got used to it; and it would cost them more effort to vary their action than it does to continue it.

And, as surely as you keep doing your duty faithfully and incessantly, so surely will it become natural to you, whatever your disposition may be.

Depend upon it, there are “practiced hands” at praying, preaching, teaching, tract-distributing, Bible-reading, giving, and every other form of devotion and service; and the practiced hands do the most work, and the best. Surely it is worth your while to persevere, when -



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7. YOU ARE CERTAIN TO SUCCEED IN THE LONG RUN.

When your bones lie moldering in the grave, the ark of God will go marching on and on till the hour of victory comes. There's a brighter day, a better day, a crowning day coming on. But you can only share it by keeping on till it comes. Payday only comes to people who work, and then it's a poor affair for those who are always having Saint Mondays and losing half and quarter days.

If you want a good payday, "never stand still till the Master appears," and make as much overtime as you can. You may have a hard job to make ends meet till the pay comes, and you may seem to have nothing to show for all your labor; but there will be plenty to show for it then. So go on your way rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.

Oh, yes! It is all very true; but I am so weak and unsteady; I'm afraid I am incapable of regularity and perseverance.

Do you feel that? Thanks be to God, then! There is hope for you. In this, as in everything else, all your springs are in Him. But, oh! plead with Him, hang upon His promises, hang upon your Almighty Savior, Jesus, till His strength is made perfect in your weakness. May the Lord help you! He will!

"He will give you strength to conquer, He will keep you to the end, Hallelujah!"