

50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

ABOUT QUICKNESS

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We believe in God. We believe in religion. We believe in spiritual life, and we always define the difference between the righteous and the wicked as between those who are dead in trespasses and sins and those who have been raised to life by the Son of Man. If true religion be life from the dead, then just in proportion to the amount of religion a man has must be the amount of life he possessed. A man may be alive and yet appear as though he were dead. It is God's will that we should not only be alive, but "look alive." Perhaps the old Saxon word "quick," used in Scripture to express "living," may assist us in trying to find out the characteristics of such life as God desires us to manifest.

I.—QUICKNESS IS THE REVERSE OF SLOTHFULNESS.

Who cares to employ a "sleepy-head"? Does not modern life demand more and more of activity and rapidity every day? Quick boys, quick men, quick processes, quick work, quick trains, quick passages, are in demand everywhere. And is our religion really "behind the times"? Certainly not! We have a quick word that darts into men's inmost souls with all the rapidity of lightning, and strengthens the feeble with all the speed of magnetism. We have a God ready to pardon and near at hand. We ought not to be sleepy if we believe in Him. As children of the light and of the day it behoves us to be all alive all the year round.

II.—QUICKNESS IMPLIES CONSCIOUSNESS.

A man might as well be asleep as be unconscious while awake. The great difference between the useful and the useless in all positions and employments is, that the latter do not notice matters demanding their attention, while the former are ever on the look out. The servant who has to be called again and again, whenever required, is not the one that anyone would recommend.



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God has a great deal of trouble with His servants in this way. Instead of being on the alert to do their duty, they are only half conscious of their obligations, and have to be forced to attend to His voice before they give any heed to it. The sleepy condition of many results from their having grown weary in well-doing. Once they were quick enough—they “ran well,” but now they can scarcely be got to move at all,

III.—THE WEARY CANNOT BE QUICK.

The moment a horse or a man begins to go slowly, the first suggestion any one makes is, “He is getting tired,” and the thought is founded upon a very patent fact. Weariness, where there is an inclination still to go on, generally slackens the speed first. In order to keep up the fullest activity, there must therefore be a refreshment of the frame continually, proportioned to the exhaustion caused by the exertions put forth.

No wonder that Christians should become sluggish in their movements if the joy of first love is not supplemented by greater joys from time to time. To fight the world, the flesh, and the devil, is very tiring, and only the strength of God, constantly obtained by faith in Him, can enable His servants to renew their youth, to “run and not be weary,” to “walk and not be faint.” Quickness, vitality, can only be maintained and increased in this desert world by perpetual draughts of the water of life. God help us ever to draw a fresh supply! But, alas! many get weary and rest in their weariness, content with the fact that they have been converted, and indifferent to the equally certain fact that they have lost their first love, and are not now serving God with their might.

IV.—QUICKNESS AND HARDNESS CANNOT EXIST TOGETHER.

There is a great difference between quick flesh and hard skin. There is an equal difference between a quick, tender conscience and a seared one. The exposed nerves feel the slightest touch, and cause the sufferer to quiver with pain, while the spear and sword are broken helplessly upon the side of leviathan. There is always tenderness of feeling where there is association with God, for His presence makes the very mountains quake. Just in proportion as people are unconscious of the influence of Divine things might it be concluded that they are far from God.

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Therefore, to be truly alive, to be quick, is to be living near to God. To be hard, to pass day after day, week after week, month after month, without one Divine sensation, is to be as nearly as possible dead. And yet is not this precisely the condition of many, very many of the Lord's people? They pray, but they ask for nothing and get nothing; they worship, but they do not see the King; they listen to and read His word, but they have no more light when they finish than before they began. They go on in the round of duty but they make no progress. They are spiritual machines. Once set in order they went on; but they have long since ceased to be propelled by spiritual steam, and they are motionless and cold. Oh, for the quickening of the Holy Ghost! Oh, that they would yield again to the influence that seeks to bring them back to God! Then all would speedily be changed. They would feel the presence of God, and would quiver with the emotions of His joy, His sorrow, His wrath, and His love.

V.—THE HALTING CANNOT BE QUICK.

The old fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise only conveys the fact so manifest to everyone, that those who tarry by the way must be less rapid in their progress than even the slowest. Those who stop are left behind by the slowest of those who still go on. How much more, therefore, does quickness demand that there shall be no hesitation or stoppage whatever!

Why do people linger by the way? Is it not generally because they are not sufficiently confident to push on? Either they are not quite certain about the right way, or they fancy that a lion is there, by which they may be overcome. Christians often are not quite sure of their duty, and that very generally because *they do not want to be quite sure*. To say "they did not know," seems the easiest of all excuses, and they prefer to remain in a sufficient undecided state upon the disputed point so as to retain the choice excuse.

There is no need for us to be in uncertainty, for God has explained our duty, and has promised the Holy Spirit to those who ask it, so that we may have the fullest and clearest guidance in all things. And we have no time to lose, so that to linger or halt is criminal. God is with us. We have nothing to fear. Therefore let us push onward, and hurry with unwavering decision after Him who has called us to

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glory and virtue. "Oh!" says some one, "I would gladly hasten if it were not for"
—Ah!

VI.—THE BURDENED CANNOT BE QUICK.

No matter how powerful the engines in front, the luggage train stands no chance in a race with the mail. And very many Christians belong to the luggage-train class. While following Christ at a distance, they bear such a load of care and grief that their "soul" cleaveth to the "dust." They have so much to do to sustain this present life that they can hardly spare time or thought for the affairs of eternity. Before they can begin to live, it is necessary for them to cast all their care upon Him who careth for them. To trust in Jesus and to walk by faith is to live and to go fast.

Jesus came to give us life and immortality; life such as the immortals have; life full of freshness and power; life without decay; the life of God. This life is in His Son. It is there for us. Let us have it. Let us enjoy it. Let us manifest it henceforth, now and for ever.