

# Christianity and the Real Warfare

by Catherine Booth

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*To be a faithful soldier of Christ, one must be imbued with the spirit of the war, abandoned to the war, and believe in victory, with love to the King and concern for His interests as the master passion of their soul.*

**Scripture:** Luke 9:23, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Corinthians 15:57, 2 Corinthians 5:14, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 2:3, Revelation 2:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Discipleship"

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## Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the characteristics of Christ's soldiers in spiritual warfare. She emphasizes the importance of love for the King and His interests as the driving force behind all efforts, highlighting the need for the image and glory of Christ to be engraved on the heart of every faithful soldier. Soldiers of Christ are called to be fully committed to the war, abandoning personal desires and comforts for the advancement of the Kingdom. Understanding the tactics of war involves strategic planning and utilizing resources effectively for the battle against spiritual enemies. Faith in victory is crucial for successful warfare, with the assurance that ultimate triumph belongs to those who endure hardships and remain faithful to the cause.

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## Transcript

CHRIST'S soldiers must be imbued with the spirit of the war. Love to the King and concern for His interests must be the master passion of the soul. Without this, all outward effort, even that which springs from a sense of duty, will fail. The hardship and suffering involved in spiritual warfare are too great for any motive but that of love. It is said that one of the soldiers of Napoleon, when being operated upon for the extraction of a bullet, exclaimed, 'Cut a little deeper and you will find my general's name'--it was engraven on his heart. So must the image and glory of Christ be engraven on the heart of every faithful soldier of Christ. It must be the all-subduing passion of his life to bring the reign of Jesus Christ over the hearts and souls of men. A little child who has this spirit will subjugate others to his King, while the most talented and learned and active, without it, will accomplish comparatively little. If the hearts of the Christians of this generation were inspired with this spirit, and set on winning the world for God, we should soon see nations shaken to their centre, and millions of souls translated into the Kingdom.

Soldiers of Christ must be abandoned to the war. They must be thoroughly committed to God's side; there can be no neutrals in this warfare. When the soldier enlists and takes the queen's shilling, he ceases to be His own property, becoming the property of his country, going where he is sent, standing at any post to

which he is assigned, even if it be at the cannon's mouth. He gives up the ways and comforts of civilians, and goes forth with his life in his hand, in obedience to the will of his sovereign.

If I understand it, that is just what Jesus Christ demands of every one of his soldiers, and nothing less.

Someone may ask, 'But we cannot all be ministers, or missionaries, or officers in The Salvation Army; must we not attend to the avocations of this life, and work for the bread that perisheth for ourselves and our families?' Certainly, but the great end in all we do must be the promotion of the Kingdom. A man may work in order that he may eat, but he must eat to live, not to himself or for the promotion of his own purposes, but for his King, and for the advancement of His interest; and if his heart is really set on this, he will, when work is done, gladly lay aside his implements of husbandry or handicraft for the sword of the Spirit, and for the conflict with ignorance, vice and misery. Instead of spending his evenings in ease and self-indulgence, he will betake himself to the streets or other places of resort for the people, and will spend what would have been his leisure hours in pressing on them the claims of God and of His truth. There will be no running away, no forsaking the cross, no shrinking from the hard places of the field; but a determined pushing of the battle to the gate, even amid weariness, opposition, and sometimes in the face of dire defeat. I ask, Was it a devotion any less than this which actuated the martyrs and confessors of old? Have I depicted an abandonment greater than that which they understood to be their duty and privilege? If they might have drawn back, why did they persevere, many of them through long years of conflict and persecution, culminating in stripes, imprisonment and death? It is evident that they understood fidelity to Christ to involve the most perfect self-abandonment, in life and in death.

Christ's soldiers must understand the tactics of war. In order to do this, they must make a subject of earnest and prayerful study how to make the most of their time, talents money, or any other resources which God may have placed at their command for the advancement of the Kingdom. They must think and scheme how best to attack the enemy. Only think of the time, trouble, skill and money that are expended by great killing armies in planning for stratagem and manoeuvre in order to surprise and overcome their enemies. Some of you will remember reading, in the records of the German and French war, that the German officers were better acquainted with the geography of France than the French themselves; they knew every road, by-way and field likely to be available for their purposes. Think of the time and trouble that must have been expended in becoming thus familiar with a foreign country, and compare this with the haphazard, rule-of-thumb kind of way in which spiritual warfare is for the most part conducted. Think of the undigested schemes and abortive plans throwing away both labour and money, embarked in by professed Christian soldiers, who have never, in their lives, spent a day's anxious thought and prayer over them.

Is it not time that the professed children of light should learn, as the great Captain of our salvation exhorted them, wisdom by contrast with the children of darkness?

As I heard some friends talking about the rescue of Gordon, and listened to their calculations as to the probable cost being some millions of money, and perhaps thousands of lives, I could not help thinking, yes, and I suppose all England (the Christians included) will think, this quite a legitimate expenditure of both money and life to rescue this one man and the little band which is with him. Yet, if we were to ask for a few millions of money, and propose to sacrifice a few hundreds of lives in the rescue of millions of the human race from a bondage of misery and destruction ten thousand times more appalling than that which threatened General Gordon, they would call us mad enthusiasts and senseless fanatics. Alas! We may well ask, 'where is the zeal of the Christians of this generation for the Lord of hosts?' How much do they care about his reign over the hearts of their fellow-men? What is their appreciation of the present and

eternal benefits embraced in his salvation; or what is their estimate of the 'crown of life' which He promises to give to every one of His conquering soldiers?

Soldiers of Christ must believe in victory. Faith in victory is an indispensable condition to successful warfare of any kind. It is universally recognized by generals of killing armies that, if the enthusiasm of expected conquest be destroyed, and their troops imbued with fear and doubt as to the ultimate result, defeat is all but certain. This is equally true with respect to spiritual warfare, hence the repeated and comprehensive assurance and promises of victory from the great Captain of our salvation.

The true soldier of Christ, who has the spirit of the war and who is abandoned to its interests, has in his soul an earnest of coming victory. He knows it is only a question of time, and time is nothing to love. As he is lying in the trenches, or taking long marches, or suffering the want of common necessities, or enduring the thrust of sharpest bayonets or the heaviest fire of the enemy, or lying wounded, overcome by fatigue, pressed by discouragement, realizing the greatness of the conflict in contrast with his own weakness-in the very darkest hours and severest straits, he has the herald of coming victory sounding in his ears. The faithful soldier knows that he shall win, and that his King will ultimately reign, not only over a few, but over all the kingdoms of this earth, and that He must reign till He has put all enemies under his feet. This faith inspires him to endure hardship and to suffer loss, to hold on. He never thinks of turning his back to the foe, or shirking his cross, of turning stones into bread, or trying to shorten the march. He never thinks of withdrawing from the thick of the fight, he goes on through perils by land, by sea, by his own countrymen, by the heathen, by false brethren at home and abroad. He looks onward through the dark clouds to the proud moment when the King will say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' He listens, and above the din of earthly conflict he hears the words, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

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