

**WARFARE AND
VICTORY. A RECORD
OF BIBLE-CLASS WORK**

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Warfare and Victory. A Record of Bible-Class Work by M. I. F.

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WARFARE AND VICTORY.

A Record of Bible-class Work.

BY

M. I. F.

WITH A PREFACE

BY THE

REV. GEORGE TOWNSHEND FOX, M.A.,

VICAR OF ST. NICHOLAS, DURHAM.

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PREFACE.

To write a preface to the following pages from the pen of one so near and dear to me, is a delicate and somewhat difficult office to fulfil, which I should not willingly have undertaken, but for two reasons : First, because I am thoroughly cognizant of the reality of the work therein described ; and, Secondly, because I think the record eminently calculated to be of service to two most important classes of society, viz., the Sunday-school teacher, and the scholar.

1. The former may get some valuable hints as to the importance of that close dealing with souls, so eminently blessed, not only in the two cases adduced, but in many others also, the result of kind, affectionate intercourse winning the hearts of the scholars, as well as of lucid distinctive instruction in the grand dogmatic peculiarities of the Christian scheme, which must be laid deep in the soul, if you

would elevate religion above the low level of transient sentiment or degrading superstition.

That the instruction referred to in the following pages was conducted under the domestic roof, and not in a Sunday-school, doubtless afforded some advantages, being more private and more quiet; but Sunday-school teachers who take a real interest in their class, and visit their scholars, may generally find the means of obviating the drawbacks caused by the publicity and noise of a school; especially those who have the advantage of a class-room. Another advantage enjoyed was, that the scholars were mostly of a more advanced age than Sunday-school children generally are. Whether young or old, however, the grand aim of a Sunday-school teacher should be the conversion of the children entrusted to his or her charge. In order to this, something more is required than the discharge of perfunctory routine duties—something more than the imparting a knowledge of historical facts. According to the age and ability of the children or young persons, it should be the teacher's aim to lay a solid foundation of sound doctrine, and to overthrow those erroneous ideas of common-place ignorance which are so frequently found, not only in ill-instructed children, but also in ill-instructed

adults ; which generally foster self-righteousness, and make people fancy that if they do the best they can, God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss, and that Christ will make up the balance—a wretched creed, which never saved a soul yet, nor established any one in Christ ; being founded on a great falsehood, and having no power to draw forth the affections.

It will be seen in the following pages that some scholars came to the class with their minds imbued with this commonplace notion of self-righteousness, which nestles in every unregenerate heart ; and that the motive power by which it was expelled was instruction in the nature and offices of Christ, the simple exhibition of the Gospel plan of salvation, that peculiar way by which God purposes to save sinners, the enunciation of those two great principles which distinguish Christianity from all other creeds and religions, viz., regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost, and justification by faith in the blood of Christ ; in other words, the present salvation of a sinner by free grace, by his gratefully accepting the salvation so lovingly offered and graciously conferred upon the believing soul, as a finished work and a gratuitous gift.

When the eyes of the understanding have been enlightened by the Holy Ghost's thus taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to the soul, enabling it to apprehend Him spiritually, and to appropriate the benefit of His blood and righteousness, the affections of the heart are stirred from their innermost foundations and drawn out towards that loving Saviour with vital energy and power ; as St. Paul describes it, ' The love of Christ constraineth us, ' because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.' It is much to be wished that this higher standard were more aimed at by Sunday-school teachers—first facts, then doctrines based upon those facts, and lastly, their application to the heart and conscience of the scholar. The historical facts of Scripture form an essential basis or foundation ; in these, from the earliest age, children ought to be sedulously instructed—but if at an after-period the pupil leaves the school without having received anything beyond this, he will be little the better, and his heart will assuredly remain, what it was before, carnal and unregenerate, for want of applying the doctrine

of the Gospel; the only lever which, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, can move the heart of a sinner and lead to his conversion and establishment in Christ: For instance, what spiritual fruit can be looked for, if the teacher contents himself with teaching the historical facts of the crucifixion, whilst the atoning efficacy and power of that precious blood is wholly overlooked, and if it never be applied to the heart and conscience of the pupil, so as to call forth the affections, and become a motive power within the soul?

Youth is that period of life when the feelings and affections of the heart are warmest and strongest, and this forms the great vantage ground which the Sunday-school teacher possesses, and of which he ought to avail himself to the utmost.

The catalogue of difficulties and obstacles is sufficiently numerous and discouraging—the heedlessness and inattention of children, the distaste of the youth's unrenewed heart to religion, the snares and temptations of the street and the workshop, from irreligious ungodly companions, and too frequently from a parental home, where everything conspires to extinguish or discourage religious convictions, where the Lord's-day is habitually dishonoured, where family worship is never heard, where op-