

# 50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

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## THOROUGH

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There is not, perhaps, a single objection to thoroughness in connection with anything but religion. Thorough proficiency in every sort of attainment, and thorough efficiency in every performance, and thorough prime quality in every class of goods, everybody applauds. But a thorough knowledge of God is declared by Christians to be "quite beyond us," with a very marked sigh of relief which says plainly enough, "we know inevitably too much of Him for our comfort." A thorough-going execution of the will of God is scouted as fanaticism, and the possession and exhibition of a thoroughly pure heart and life are pronounced quite out of the question.

Stay—there is one exception to the otherwise universal refusal of anything thorough in connection with religion. Everybody looks for a thorough performance of God's promises as to heaven. There must be a thorough deliverance the moment the breath is out of our body from sorrow and fear and care and temptation. There must be the most thorough enjoyment of the most thoroughly delightful place, position, society, rewards and what not. God must perform thoroughly all that He has promised with regard to the world to come; but we really must not be expected even to understand, much less to carry out thoroughly, His instructions.

Surely nobody could for a moment defend such a condition of thought or practice. To say nothing of its villainy, it is so horribly ungrateful, contemptibly mean towards a perfect Father and Savior, that we must hurry away from it as far as ever we can get.

LET US THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND GOD.

But then is that possible? In so far as it concerns our satisfaction as to His purposes, most certainly it is. Says he, "I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for *all things* that



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I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." What could such words mean if not that each one of us is intended to understand the Father's will concerning us as perfectly as Jesus did Himself. And it was especially in connection with this very knowledge of the things of God that the Holy Ghost was promised to teach "*all things*," to bring "*all things*" to remembrance, and to lead into "all truth."

The question as to our ability thoroughly to understand God's will concerning us every moment, is simply a question of the possibility of real spiritual life, spiritual union with the Father and the Son. The telegraphic instrument which can only convey a shock now and then, and has not the requisite fittings for the transmission of words, is said to be "not a speaking instrument." Frequent irregularities in the conveyance of words would be looked upon as rendering the whole arrangement practically worthless. The latest and grandest triumph in the art of telegraphy is the invention by which the very tones of a speaker can be reproduced at the other end of the wire. But God is far beyond men in ability, instantly to transmit His thoughts to His "friends." We can—oh yes, we can thoroughly understand Him, every moment if we like. But, alas! the immense majority of the Lord's people prefer to keep too far away from Him to see His signals.

LET US DO HIS WILL THOROUGHLY.

This demands in the first place a thorough separation to Him. He still cries, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and wants men and women to "leave all and follow Him." Who, who indeed is on the Lord's side? Who has left every object whatsoever to follow the Lord wholly? Who is really determined never to turn aside, no not for a moment, from following after Him to attend to some other business?

The horrid hiss of the serpent: "All this will I give thee if ——" comes upon us ever and anon from the most unexpected quarters. Alas! how few have so utterly lost their relish for all that the deceiver can pretend to offer that he utterly fails to induce them to stoop or turn aside from the plain path of God!

Only men who has counted the cost and made up their minds to follow God to all lengths can really be expected to go to work thoroughly for Him. The very idea of following God carries with it the impression of something far beyond the



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human. How could such a life ever meet with men's approval, or escape their continual slander and scorn and opposition?

To serve God *thoroughly* requires the most unbounded liberty, the liberty which His Spirit only can give, that perfect freedom from all human restraint, from all human influence, and from all human inclinations, which leaves soul and mind and heart and strength occupied solely with the things of God. The question has sometimes been put to the soldier in a quiet hour: "But how could you kill your fellow-men in the battle? How could you ride heedlessly over the dying and dead, and spend all your strength in adding to the number?" We doubt whether any one has ever been able properly to explain this sudden conversion of thoughtful, intelligent men into beasts of prey. But we are assured that the heat of human battle is a mere nothing to that of the great conflict in which we engage. "This shall be with burning and fuel of fire." Only the Spirit of God can transform men into the warriors of the cross, utterly lost to every former influence and instinct, who can and do thoroughly serve God.

We have had our streets placarded with the figures of two pedestrians who have far surpassed any former achievement in their "profession," covering more than 500 miles each in a week. But, of course, every one understands that these two men have given themselves wholly to it. Their sole aim for a long time has been to be the foremost walkers in creation. And to reach this great result they walked almost night and day, with only such rest and refreshment as was absolutely necessary, pushing on till they could scarcely stagger round the ring any longer.

Where does the world see men of God running the race set before them in such a style?

Wanted! men and women whose hearts are thoroughly lightened of every sinful weight, whose natural tendency is upwards and not downwards, who are only kept down like balloons by earthly infirmities and ties, not kept up like sinking ships by hard pumping. Men and women who have got past "taking up their cross" by following Jesus and being crucified with Him, so that they can enjoy divers temptations, cruel mockings, and scourging and afflictions. Men and women who have got quite "outside the gate," severed from all their friends and from all "decent society" by dint of unhesitating, unqualified devotion to



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Christ; in whom all men are offended, although they strive to give no offense to any. Men and women who have lost all interest in this present world, and who have no object whatsoever to seek but the glory of God. Men and women who are not afraid of living or unwilling to live, still less afraid or unwilling to die, and utterly indifferent by what means or under what circumstances death shall come. Men and women who *will* be, and do, and bear all that God intends they should in spite of earth and hell. Thorough people! Where are you? March forth and conquer!