

VICTORY IN CHRIST

Messages on the Victorious Life

by CHARLES G. TRUMBULL

Copyright @ 1923

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES COMPANY PHILADELPHIA

CHAPTER THREE -

REAL AND COUNTERFEIT VICTORY

VICTORY is a great word in the New Testament, and yet I am sure there are many Christians who have received JESUS as SAVIOUR, who have been born again and have passed from death unto life, who nevertheless are deceived day-by-day by a counterfeit victory when GOD wants them to know what real victory is. I can speak with deep feeling as to this, because I lived to be nearly forty years old (after having lived for more than twenty-five years as a sincere Christian) never knowing what real victory was, and having all those years taken the counterfeit victory - active Christian worker though I was - as a substitute for the real.

Our LORD once said to some Jews, who were sure that they were all right, "**Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed**" (John 8:34-36).

Then again, the same HOLY SPIRIT who indwelt the LORD JESUS said to Paul, "**Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace,**" and the LORD Himself adds later, "**My grace is sufficient for thee.**" "**Ye are not under the law**" which says DO, "**but under grace**" which says DONE, and that is the reason why "**sin shall not have dominion over you.**"

So it is that Paul could cry out to the Galatians, as he was making that passionate protest against relapsing from grace into law, as most of us Christians have done at one time or another, "**I am crucified with CHRIST, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.**" And again in Philippians, "**To me to live is Christ.**" And to the Corinthians, "**Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" If there is one word that we do not always realize should be printed in capital letters in that triumphant thanksgiving, it is the word "GIVETH." "**Thanks be to God, which GIVETH us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

That is grace. That is the test of the real or the counterfeit victory. Just remember this: any victory over the power of any sin whatsoever in your life that you have to get by working for it is counterfeit. Any victory that you have to get by trying for it is counterfeit. If you have to work for your victory, it is not the real thing; it is not the thing that GOD offers you.

On the train this afternoon I was reading a letter from a woman who is at this Convention, and she said, "I am trying to live the victorious life," and so I did so and so under certain circumstances that Christian friend may be in this audience tonight; but if she is, I cannot refrain from saying that as long as she keeps on trying to live the victorious life, she won't live it. If any of you are making the mistake of trying to live the victorious life, you are cheating yourself out of it, for the victory you get by trying for it is a counterfeit victory. You must substitute another word; not try, but trust, and you cannot try and trust at the same time. Trying is what we do, and trusting is what we let the LORD do.

Let us think for a few minutes of concrete examples of the counterfeit victory and the real victory, keeping in mind as we do so the offer of the LORD JESUS to set us free so that we shall be free indeed. Because the pity of it, the tragedy of it, is that the Christian people of our land have not been taught the truth in this matter. Our ministers, many of them, are not able to teach the truth in this matter. They themselves have not been taught the truth. Our seminaries are not teaching it. So laymen and ministers are substituting counterfeit victory for the real.

I read not long ago some extracts from a sermon by a well-known preacher, and they were something like this: *"We all of us need to do weeding, rooting up the bad weeds in the garden of our own life. The thing to do is to give your attention to some weed, some sin that has taken root in your life, and with prayer and effort dig it up. It may take you a long time, but keep at it day after day, week after week, month after month if necessary, till you have weeded that sin out. After you have gotten rid of that sin, take another, and keep at that till you have weeded it out. And then another and another of the sins of your life, till you have made your garden what it ought to be."*

Dear friends, you do not find anything of this sort in GOD's Word. A victory gained in that way, by a gradual conquest over evil, getting one sin after another out of our life, is counterfeit victory. No, the LORD JESUS does not offer to give us any such gradual victory over the sins of our life.

There is an old story, which I am very sure is not a true one, - but a very good one to remember because it illustrates so clearly the mistake of supposing that victory over our own sins can 'at best be' only gradual. A man who was down and out wandered into a rescue mission one night, and there found JESUS CHRIST as his SAVIOUR. He had been a thief, but now he was saved. As he went out from the mission, he talked with himself something like this:

"I have been a thief, a pickpocket. When business was good, I have picked on an average a dozen pockets a day. But now I am a Christian, and I must give up that method of earning my livelihood. For the rest of this week I will reduce that number of pockets to about eight a day, for I am a Christian now. The week after that I will cut it down to about six a day. During the third week I shall not be picking more than three or four pockets a day, and in a month from now I shall have given it up entirely, for I am a Christian now."

I don't believe that is a true story, do you? I don't believe that a man who had found CHRIST as his SAVIOUR would be so foolish as to reason with himself that way about the sin of thieving. But, dear friends, I have an idea that I am looking into the faces of some Christian people who have been just foolish enough to reason that way about the known sins of their life; that next year, and the year after, and the year after that, they would have reduced some of the known sins

of their life until sometime in the vague future they would have given them up entirely. And I perfectly sure that you are looking into the face of a man who was foolish enough to reason that way about the sins of his life for many years.

No! the victorious life, the life of freedom from the power of sin, is not a gradual gift. There is no such thing as a gradual gift. And victory is a gift. It is not a growth. - **"Thanks be to God, which GIVETH us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** How long does it take you to grow into your birthday presents? On your birthday, when you come downstairs, and find them there on the table with your name on them, how long does it take you to grow into those gifts? One minute a gift is not yours, though it is labeled with your name. The next minute it is yours. Why? Because in that minute you have taken it. You did not grow into it; in an instant you took it. Victory is a gift which we take in exactly the same way.

Please do not misunderstand me as saying that in the victorious life there is no growth. That would be absolutely false; wholly untrue to the Word of GOD. But we only begin to grow normally, grow as GOD wants us to grow, after we have entered into victory. Then we have the chance to grow for the first time as we ought to grow. And then we can **"grow in grace"** in a thousand and one ways; grow as long as we live, learning more of the LORD all the time, and of His Word, and growing as He wants us to grow; but not growing in freedom from the power of sin. For we can have that victory today as completely as we can ever have it in this world. If JESUS is not able to do it for us today, then He will never be able to do it for us. But, praise GOD, He is! And He is **"the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."**

Victory is not fighting down your wrong desires.

That is counterfeit victory. It is not concealing your wrong feelings. That is the counterfeit. Yet, how many of us have supposed that victory is simply keeping our wrong feelings from expressing themselves. Do you remember the story of the old Quaker lady, told over and over again, to illustrate victory? This dear old Quaker lady, who apparently never lost her temper, always keeping unruffled under the most trying circumstances, was approached one day by a young girl friend, who said: "I want you to tell me how under the sun you do it. How do you always keep sweet the way you do? Why, if some of the things happened to me that I have seen happen to you, I would just boil over; but you never do."

And the old Quaker lady answered quietly, "Perhaps I don't boil over, my dear, but thee doesn't know what boiling is going on inside."

That story has been told as an example of wonderful Christian victory. It is no such thing. It is a counterfeit; it is a fake; it denies the offer of the Word of GOD. If the only victory we can have is to be boiling inside and not let people know how sinful we feel, that is a poor kind of victory. The LORD JESUS CHRIST never offered it to anyone. For it does not take any supernatural grace to keep from boiling over if you are boiling inside.

Anybody can do that if there is inducement enough. Any businessman who wants to sell goods, or to get another man to sign a business contract so that he can make money - if the man he is talking to says something that makes him "boil inside," he is not going to boil over. It is not good business. He smiles, and for purely selfish reasons he does not let the other know how he feels.

But there is no grace, no miracle, no victory in that. Anybody can keep from boiling over, I say. Women do it all the time for social reasons - and there is no Christianity no grace in that.

But I heard of a woman who did not "boil over" for a very different reason. She was out in India as a missionary. She had gone out there to serve CHRIST; doubtless she was a surrendered Christian. But she was not yet a victorious Christian. Perhaps we do not realize that surrender and victory are not always the same thing. It is possible to be a completely surrendered Christian and a defeated Christian, as some of you may know to your sorrow. An older missionary friend of the younger missionary told of her experience himself.

One day he with other missionary friends said, "We are not living the kind of life that the New Testament describes and that those early Christians apparently lived. Let us go away by ourselves and ask GOD to show us what is the matter and to give us what we have not got." They dropped their work and went off for a few days, asking for they knew not what, but hungry for what they did not have. And GOD met them, and gave them what they asked for. They came back changed men, with CHRIST in His fullness reigning in their hearts, and with the victory. Then this older missionary told the younger woman about it. He told her of the revolution wrought in his life, veteran missionary though he was. She saw the truth and took it all by faith.

Some months later, he - then at a distance - had a letter from her saying that she must now tell him of the wonderful things that were happening in her life, so wonderful, she said, that she could scarce believe they were true.

"I wanted to write you at first," she said, "but I was afraid it would not last. But it has lasted. - For example, do you know that for three months now I have not only not once slammed the door in the face of one of these Indian servants that used to get on my nerves so, but I haven't even wanted to, once in the three months?"

That was a miracle. That was victory. It is not a miracle to go without slamming the door for three months. We can put our hands behind our back, set our teeth, and not slam the door. But would it be a miracle for you to go three months without ever once feeling within your heart that angry surge of irritation, impatience, unlove, that would make it a relief to "slam the door" or give expression in some way to your feelings? Would that be a miracle?

Yes, our hearts tell us that it would. We know that no effort of our own can possibly bring such a miracle to pass; the taking away from our hearts of even the "want to" of sinful desire. That young woman now had real victory, the miracle, the gift of victory, which can never be wrought by our will power or resolution, or by our efforts of any sort.

Dear friends, that is the real thing. That is real victory. In the counterfeit victory we have to conceal how we feel. The counterfeit victory means a struggle; whatever we do, we do by our efforts. Oh, yes, we ask Him to help us; and then we feel that we must do a lot to help Him - as if He needed to be helped! In real victory, He does it all. We do not dare to help. We realize that the battle is His. And remembering that CHRIST is our life, we do not need to conceal CHRIST. The things we have to conceal in our lives are the things that are from Satan, not from CHRIST; from our sinful nature, not from our "born again" nature.

When the LORD JESUS CHRIST by the HOLY SPIRIT works in our life to give us this victory,

it is a miracle every time. If it is not a miracle, it is not victory. Yet that is the man who had said a few days before, "If you say that is true of you, I believe you; but it never could be true of me."

Yes, it can be true of anyone whom GOD has created. The Redeemer CHRIST can be our victory. It is not a matter of temperament or environment; it is a matter of JESUS CHRIST, and it is His grace that is sufficient.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
