

## VICTORY IN CHRIST

Messages on the Victorious Life

by CHARLES G. TRUMBULL

Copyright @ 1923

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES COMPANY PHILADELPHIA

### CHAPTER FIVE -

### VICTORY WITHOUT TRYING

A QUESTION recently came to *The Sunday School Times* office:

**"What do you consider the most dangerous heresy of today?"**

I wonder what answer you would have made. Perhaps you think there are so many heresies that it is hard to say which is the most dangerous. Would you have said Christian Science, the Higher Criticism, New Theology, Millennial Dawnism? Anyone of those things is dangerous enough. But none of these, I believe, is the most dangerous heresy of today. **For the most dangerous is the emphasis that is being given, right in the professing Christian church itself, on what we do for GOD, instead of on what GOD does for us.**

Oh, I hope GOD will make that very plain to us! As you go out from this Institute into your ministry, whatever form it takes, you will realize the subtle, almost all-pervading presence of that thing: the emphasis in the church, and in Christian organizations, on what we do for GOD as the great thing, as the most important thing; instead of just the opposite - the emphasis as we ought to place it, on what GOD does for us.

You hear people saying, "Get busy for GOD, and the rest will take care of itself." Even in evangelistic services, even in revivals where the Blood of CHRIST is rightly being pointed to as the only way of salvation, you have heard that mistaken emphasis, the call to "Be a man" if you would get saved.

In a great evangelistic revival where souls were being saved, I have heard the evangelist cry out, as he called upon men to hit the trail and come up and acknowledge JESUS CHRIST as SAVIOUR, "Be a man! Don't be a milk-sop! Don't be a jelly-coddle! Be a man!"

But there is no such call in the Bible to the unsaved; GOD never tells one to "assert his manhood" by accepting CHRIST. The offense of the Cross is just the opposite. It is a degrading thing, a humiliating thing, to recognize why the Cross saves. I do not mean that the Cross degrades us, but that the cross exposes our degradation; it humiliates us into the dust. There is no Scripture appeal to the unsaved to "be a man and accept CHRIST"; but there is a clear declaration from GOD that, because you are less than a man, less than a woman, because there is no hope in you, because you are dead in trespasses and sins, you must let GOD save you through

the death of CHRIST as your slain substitute.

You can't do anything for yourself. No; salvation is not asserting our manhood; salvation is recognizing our utter lack of manhood and womanhood, our hopelessness, our worthlessness; recognizing that, if we are to be saved, it has got to be done for us by GOD.

May GOD make very plain to us all in this hour something about the grace of GOD. This mistaken emphasis of today looks in exactly the opposite direction from grace. It looks in the direction of works. Not that works have no place in the Christian's life. You know they have. But they follow the grace of GOD; they do not precede it: and, they are never the condition of GOD's grace.

I heard a Christian say, a few years ago, that he supposed very few Christians had any intelligent idea of the meaning of grace. And do you know, I was indignant at that! I said to myself:

"That's nonsense! It's not true, that very few Christians have any intelligent idea of grace. Every saved person knows perfectly well what grace is." But I have come to see my mistake. I did not know much about grace when I was so indignant at the suggestion that most Christians do not. But GOD, in His infinite grace and patience has been showing me more and more of the infinite, unsearchable riches of the meaning of that word GRACE. And now I realize that I still know very little of the meaning of grace; and that, so far as most Christians are concerned, the lack of knowledge is pitiable and tragic.

Will you let me remind you of three things that GOD's grace does for us?

In the first place, What is grace? We all know that it is GOD's beneficent work for us, wholly independent of what we are and what we do. It is not merely GOD's attitude toward us, but His activity in our behalf. Grace does not mean that GOD stands off and smilingly looks in our direction. Grace means His tremendous, omnipotent activity; the dynamite of Heaven accomplishing things in our behalf, wholly independent of what we are and of what we do.

And what is GOD's threefold work of grace for us?

I am going to take the third first, of three great things that GOD's grace does for us. In Romans 8:21 we read this: "**Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**" In I Corinthians 15:51, 52 we read: "**Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**" And in I Thessalonians 4:16, 17: "**For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**"

Those three passages tell us one thing that GOD's grace accomplishes for us; and here are three great facts about the same work of grace - creation shall be delivered; the dead shall be raised; and we that are alive shall be caught up. The resurrection of the body; the deliverance from the

general bondage of corruption in which all creation is at this time; and our blessed hope of being caught up to meet the LORD in the air.

Now did you notice that all three of those great verbs are in the passive voice, not the active?

It does not say that creation shall deliver itself from corruption. They shall be delivered. The verb is passive. Nor does it say, "The dead shall raise themselves." It has to be done for them. And it does not say, "We shall spring up in the air to meet the LORD," but, "**We... shall be caught up.**" It all has to be done for us; it is GOD's grace, not man's works.

When I was a young fellow in college I went in a little for the high jump. I was a proud youngster when I won a prize cup in the freshman games at Yale for the running high jump. But suppose any of us got the idea that, at the time of the rapture, when the trump shall sound and the LORD shall come into the air to meet His saints, we had somehow to use our power to raise ourselves up out of this earth to meet the Lord. Suppose the best high jumpers thought they had a better chance for getting into the proper place to meet the LORD in the air, because of their skill in high jumping. Absurd, you say. Of course. But it isn't one bit more absurd than the mistake, dear friends, which I made about another part of the work of GOD's grace for us.

During the first twenty-five years of my Christian life. I was a saved man for twenty-five years while I made the mistake of attempting to help GOD in a work which is exclusively the grace of God - a mistake, just as absurd as to suppose that any strength I used to have in the running high jump will be useful on the day when the LORD calls His Church to meet Him in the air.

There is another wonderful thing that GOD's grace does for us. It is the second of our three. We noted the last first; now let us take the first second. We find it in Ephesians 2:1: "**You hath he made quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; . . . God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together.**"

"**Hath.**" The first word of grace that we noted, GOD is going to do in the future. He will raise up the dead and change the living. But now Paul says, He "**hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast**" (Ephesians 2:6-9).

That seems to be grace according to GOD's idea. Thus the dead man is saved by the grace of GOD, by the work of GOD for him, not by anything he does; through simple faith in that finished and completed and unimprovably perfect work of GOD, he is born again.

How much of that work does GOD do? The most of it? Pretty nearly all of it? No! All! Grace does not share anything with man. Grace is not a joint effort. Grace is not co-operation. Grace is jealous - as GOD is a jealous GOD, grace is absolutely exclusive. Grace means "GOD does it all!" And it was done for us nineteen centuries before we were born.

Grace shuts out our works, so far as our having any share in the work which grace accomplishes.

Grace results in our works, in a most wonderful way, but our works do not help grace a bit.

I remember how startled I was when I first had called to my attention those words in Romans 4:5, "**To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**" To him that worketh not - just keeps absolutely still and simply believes on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

We had nothing to do with bearing the sins of the world, did we? And we had nothing to do with bearing our own sins. They have been borne for us, taken away. "**Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world.**" That's grace. That's why grace says "Done! finished!"

### **GOD'S GRACE IN THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT LIFE**

NOW for the third thing that grace does. This third in the order in which we are taking them is the second, or the middle part, coming between the first and third wonderful parts of the threefold work of grace which GOD does for us.

- We have seen the final thing - that is, when we are glorified at the coming of our LORD JESUS.
- We have seen the beginning of it in the passages just read - that is, when we were justified.

We are going to be glorified, by GOD's grace. We have been justified, by GOD's grace; and we didn't have anything to do with accomplishing it. It was finished. We just believed GOD. He did it all. But what about the meantime, between the first and the last, between the beginning and the end? What is the justified Christian going to do while he waits for his glorification? True, his glorification may be blessedly near. Praise GOD, the signs of the times look so!

But we may have an hour yet to live before the LORD comes. And what about that hour? The Christian isn't left untempted. The Christian is the shining mark for Satan: and is there no hope, has grace no message for us in the meantime, right now, between the wonderful beginning and the wonderful ending? Is there no hope for us in the matter of present sin through the grace, the unaided work, of GOD?

Yes, thank GOD, there is!

There is just as much hope for this middle time as for the ending and as for the beginning; and it is just as truly GOD's grace. In Romans 5:10 we read: "**For if, when we were enemies**" - we were enemies, too, dead in trespasses and sins - "**we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled**" - having been justified - "**we shall be saved by his life.**"

Or as Bishop Moule has commented, "We shall be kept safe in His life." A moment-by-moment experience. **We were saved by His death; now in the meantime, in this present time, if we but believe, we shall be kept safe (from the power of sin) in His life. And that means His resurrection life.**

That is the whole message of Romans 6, walking in newness of life, moment by moment, while

we are waiting for our resurrection bodies, having the joy of the resurrection life. As Paul says in Romans 5:17, "**For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness**" - not the "work of righteousness" but the "**gift of righteousness**"; it's an outright gift - "**shall reign in life**" now and here "**by one, Jesus Christ.**"

That is the middle part. Grace can keep us safe in His life. Grace puts us on the throne and keeps us reigning in victory over sin now and here. And then that wonderful verse in Romans 6:14! I don't know whether there is a more blessed verse anywhere! "**Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are . . . under grace.**" You are not under law, which says, "Do," but you are under grace, which says, "Done"; for grace excludes works from having anything to do with this freedom from the dominion of sin.

Yes, praise GOD, there is a message for the "meantime." It has been a pretty mean time, a dark "meantime," in the lives of some of us Christians; but it can be a blessed and glorious meantime - a golden mean between the beginning and the end. It will be a glorious time between our justification and our glorification, if we will but take it on the same terms that we take the beginning and the end.

Grace! Simple faith! Colossians 2:6 tells the whole secret: "**As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.**" That is very plain. While we are still in these bodies of corruption, while we are still assaulted by every fiery dart of the evil one - and he surely knows how to assault - we are to walk in CHRIST. But how? Just as we received Him. And how did we receive CHRIST? By setting our teeth and saying, "There, thank GOD, I am going to help Him get me born again"? No! We received Him by faith. We received Him as the gift of GOD. That's the way we are to walk. "**As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.**"

You didn't know I was going to give you theology, but I have been doing so. **Justification at the beginning, glorification at the end, and in the meantime sanctification.** Don't be afraid of the word sanctification! It's a Bible word. There are all sorts of perverted and unscriptural teachings about it, but, thank GOD, grace sanctifies us. Grace is going to glorify us. And grace, if we let it, sanctifies us experimentally, moment by moment, unaided by any efforts of ours. For grace is the exclusive work of GOD.

But let us forget all about theology - although theology has it's real place - and rather let us "remember JESUS CHRIST."

He is all the theology we need in this practical matter of the victorious life, of walking in the resurrection life. First Corinthians 1:30, 31 settles all that. "**Of him,**" not of yourself, not of your works, but of Him; and this is preceded by the statement that no flesh should glory in His presence: "**But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.**"

CHRIST is your sanctification and your redemption. There is a glory that is coming - "**That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him, glory in the Lord.**" Glory in the LORD, in what He has done for you, and is doing for you, and will do for you; not in what you do for

yourself nor in what you do for GOD.

As someone once said at the Keswick Convention, we Christians all know that we are justified by faith, but somehow we have gotten the idea that, for sanctification, we must paddle our own canoe. Praise GOD, we don't have to paddle our own canoe for anything that the grace of GOD offers. **"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

I believe that the word we most need to emphasize in I Corinthians 15:57 is the word **"giveth."** We talk about the grace of GOD, but forget that the victory is given to us. You don't have to work for a gift, neither do you have any share in buying a gift. The whole thing is given to you, exclusive of your efforts and work.

As I have already said, the first twenty-five years of my Christian life I lived in utter ignorance of this simple truth. I can never forget the 14th of August, 1910, when the scales dropped from my eyes, and I saw that CHRIST was my life. CHRIST was my victory. I wasn't bothering about the theological questions that have been discussed to the entanglement and defeating of so many Christians.

I had never even heard of the question of "eradication," for example; I didn't know there was such a question. And I don't care about it today. I have gotten to the place where I have lost my interest in the question of how GOD does things. That is His business, not mine. But I do know that GOD does this thing; and I know it not because of any experiences of victory GOD has given me - blessed though some of them have been, and beyond anything I dreamed possible; but I know it because GOD says so.

I don't know it by looking at my own victories, or at the victories of others. I don't know it because of any present experience or consciousness of CHRIST that I have. I know it because the Word of GOD says it. He says, **"Sin shall not have dominion over you,"** and, if that is not true, GOD is a liar; and if that is not true, I have no hope of salvation, I have no hope of anything.

But GOD is not a liar! He is the eternal truth; and because His Word is true, it means that GOD is responsible for my victory; and, until I doubt Him, I am going to have victory. The moment I begin to waver and doubt, down I go, into the sea of doubt, as Peter did when he got his eyes off CHRIST.

I shall never forget a fortnight that I had the privilege of spending in the Moody Bible Institute, several years ago. One day a student came to my room and said he was being defeated by sin. He told me what that sin was in his own life - a sin that gets into the lives of so many men.

"Of course you have surrendered every thing to the Lord?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he answered, "I think so."

"Is there anything you wouldn't do for Him?"

"No," he replied, "nothing - except; I think, I never could do open air evangelistic work in a

Roman Catholic community."

Well, I shouldn't have thought of suggesting that as a test question! He went on: "I was brought up in a Roman Catholic community and it would be very difficult for me to do work among them."

"Suppose the LORD JESUS should come right into this room," I suggested, "and tell you that was just what He wanted you to do. Would you do it?"

Honest fellow that he was, he answered, "I don't know whether I would or not."

"Then let's settle that first, before we talk about victory," I urged, and we went to our knees together. And on his knees that man surrendered that one detail of his life plans that he had been keeping from CHRIST.

He had come to the Moody Institute to study to be an evangelist; but he had been perhaps unconsciously saying of that one thing, "LORD, you won't ask me to do that." Of course he couldn't have victory. But now he turned over all his life plans to the Lord. He surrendered everything. And he got up from his knees victorious. We didn't have to spend any more time on the subject. His face was full of victory.

He hadn't done anything except Romans 12:1. He had yielded his very being a living sacrifice to GOD. And if any of you dear people here are making life plans for yourselves, you must stop it - if you want victory.

It isn't your job; GOD made your life plans before the foundation of the world. He just wants you to yield yourself to Him, and He'll take care of your life plans. Surrender completely and unconditionally, or you'll never have victory. That's the first point in victory.

For the second - well, I remember how, toward the close of the two weeks here, a young woman student came to me with a distressed face and a heavy heart. "I have been listening," she said, "to what has been said about victory and peace and power, and all the rest of it, and I am longing for it, but I can't get it."

Then she went on: "I am finishing my work here this summer; I am going out into the field of evangelism. But if I don't get what you are talking about, I shall feel that my entire course at Moody Institute will have been a failure, and I dare not go out into the work."

We talked together about the simple matter of surrender and faith, first giving yourself wholly to GOD, and then just believing that GOD is doing His part. Said she, "I know it is just a question of faith, but I haven't got that faith. That's the thing that's keeping me out. I can't seem to get the faith for victory."

"Are you saved?" I asked her.

"Oh, yes," she said.

"What makes you think you are saved?"

"Why," she said, "I know I am; John 3:16 settles that. GOD has told us that anyone who believes on JESUS as SAVIOUR is saved."

"You believe that, do you?" I asked.

"Why, certainly; I just take it on the Word of GOD."

"Well, then," I answered, "you have all the faith you need, and you are using it. For it's the faith that you are already using and have used for years for your salvation that is the only faith you need for victory."

"Do you mean that?" she exclaimed. "Is it just the same as salvation?"

"Exactly the same," I answered.

And her burden dropped then and there; and in the days that followed she praised GOD that the faith she already had, and had had all the time, was the only faith she needed.

After all, it was just a simple recognition of GOD's faithfulness. So let us forget all about our faith, and think only of GOD's faithfulness to us through CHRIST JESUS.

A year or so later, I had a letter from that woman, and she told me what a wonderful year of service she had had.

"Oh, Mr. Trumbull," she wrote, "as you have occasion to speak to people about the victorious life, won't you tell them that the faith they need for victory is the same faith that they have for salvation?" Praise GOD, if you believe in JESUS as your SAVIOUR, you've got all the faith you need, all the faith the Apostle Paul had!

You don't need more faith. You need simply to use the faith you have. There was, a rebuke our LORD once gave His disciples, when they asked Him to increase their faith. "Increase it!" He said, "Why, faith the size of a mustard seed will do."

If we have any faith at all - I mean, if we believe GOD is faithful - let us quietly cease from our works and stop trying to win the victory.

**As someone has said, we are not fighting to win a victory; we are celebrating the victory that has been won.**

Will you thank the LORD JESUS now for having won your Victory - and rest the whole case there, on His grace?

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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