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The Victorious Life and How To Obtain It

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing,' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action."—*Early Writings*, p 71.

"The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden,— perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives, there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will, and thus frustrate His grace."—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 116, edition of 1900.

What Is Victory?

Much confusion results from a variety of notions as to what the victorious life is. Victory over sin does not mean freedom from temptation. While we are in this world we shall always be tempted, but God has made ample provision that we shall always be victorious.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13.

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." 2 Cor. 2: 14.

Victory over sin is not achieved by resolutions, or by struggles, or by any human effort. It cannot be attained by a gradual growth. The "victorious life" is only another expression for "righteousness by faith." When we speak of a man's having righteousness by faith, we do not think of him as having attained sinless perfection. We do not think of the man at all. We think of the Saviour whose righteousness the man has received. We do not recognize the man's resolutions or struggles or obedience to law as the ground of his righteousness. It came to him through grace as a gift, wholly in response to the exercise of faith. The law says, "Do, and live;" but grace says, "Believe, and live." Those who are seeking righteousness, or victory over sin, by doing, are under the law, and what they attain will be their own righteousness, or filthy rags. "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2:21.

Victory by faith does not mean a life of ease and inactivity. The consciousness of Christ within, bringing freedom and peace, arouses and intensifies the highest energies of mind and body, and inspires to the most earnest and self-sacrificing service for God.

To have the victorious life does not mean that we can never fall into sin again. Victory is in Christ. There can be no victory apart from the Victor. Christ dwells in the heart by faith. So long as the presence of Christ within is a reality, there is victory. But he who looks away from Christ looks away from victory, and invites defeat.

Many fail because they depend for salvation, upon what they believe—the facts of faith—rather than upon Jesus, the

Saviour from sin. The victorious life is inseparably associated with the only One who ever has or ever can overcome sin in human flesh. Only when a child of God loses the sense of Christ's presence can he voluntarily yield to sin.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 419, 420.

There is a parable about an ugly brier that grew in the ditch. One day the gardener came and dug it up. The brier said, "What can the gardener possibly want of me? Surely he does not know that I am only a worthless brier." The gardener took the brier and set it among the beautiful roses in his garden. Then the brier said, "What a great mistake he has made. It can only end in disappointment." But the gardener came and grafted some buds into the brier, and in a few months it was bearing as beautiful roses as any in the garden. Then the gardener said, "It was not something you had in yourself which produced these lovely flowers, but what I put into you."

When a man, with full realization that he is utterly sinful, utterly helpless and lost, turns his back upon all his own efforts to get right with God, and accepts Christ's righteousness as his own, he has taken the first step in the victorious life. He maintains that life by resolutely turning from all efforts of his own to be good, and accepts Christ moment by moment as his indwelling goodness.

Victory Is Possible

The Scriptures and Testimonies emphatically teach that a life of victory over sin is the privilege and duty of every child of God. God has provided, not only for future salvation from the penalty of sin, but for present salvation from the power and dominion of sin.

His people are saved now: "Thou shall call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.

They are cleansed now: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9.

They are made free from sin now: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." John 8: 34,36; Rom. 6:14,18.

They are kept from sin now: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling." "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless." Jude 24:1 Thess. 5:23.

These inspired statements concerning the deliverance and preservation of God's people from the dominion of sin are so positive that they admit of no other interpretation.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:9.

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him; neither known Him." 1 John 3:6.

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” 1 John 5:18.

This matter of our relation to sin may be stated in another way. We are sinful by nature, and it is impossible for the sinful nature to successfully resist and overcome sin. But if we are willing, God proposes to work a miracle within us whereby we become partakers of the divine nature, and it is impossible for the divine nature to be overcome by sin. This experience comes in response to our faith; that is, we meet the condition and then believe it is done, and God makes it so.

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:11.

Sin is not dead, but we are dead to sin so long as we are alive unto God through Jesus Christ. We must remember that victory has already been won for us, and it only remains for us to let Christ win the victory in us.

“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp 312.

"When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ." —*Ibid.*, page 314

How to Obtain Victory

All true Christians know what it is to accept God's offer of pardon and cleansing from all sin when confession is made. They simply believe that God has kept His word, and that their sins are forgiven. The instant they believe it, God makes it so. They are justified by faith. They are freed from the condemnation and penalty of sin.

In exactly the same manner may they obtain freedom from the power and dominion of sin. As surely as Christ has paid the penalty for our sins and made pardon possible, so surely has He overcome sin and made freedom possible.

Were you ever conscious of your sinful and lost condition? Did you go to God and confess your sins, praying for pardon through the merits and in the name of Christ? Did you then believe that God had forgiven you, and did you rejoice in the sense of His pardoning love? In the same manner and on the same terms you may obtain immediate and complete freedom from the bondage of all your sins. Every gift of God comes to us, not through Christ, but "in Christ." It is of vast importance to remember this great truth.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things *in Christ*." Eph. 1:3, margin.

Through sin we lost life, purity, peace, power, fellowship with God, everything that is of value for eternity. In Christ all is restored to us again. A wonderful key passage is found in 1 John 5:11,12:

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

God has eternal life for every man, but we are the slaves of sin, and should God give us eternal life we would transgress and become immortal sinners. So God has placed eternal life for us in the person of Christ. When we let Christ come and abide in our hearts, He keeps us from sin, and then it is safe for us to have eternal life. The life does not pass into us and become ours, but it remains in Christ, and is ours only when Christ is in us. Neither life nor victory can come to us apart from Christ. We know that we do not possess eternal life by nature, and that no effort or struggle of ours can produce eternal life in us. It is absolutely all in Christ.

What we do not seem to see so clearly is that we do not possess any other attribute of God, nor any power to attain it. We do not have peace, nor joy, nor faith, nor wisdom, nor victory, any more than we have life. Nor can we produce or obtain them in any other way than we obtain life. All come as gifts, and all are embraced in the one great gift of Christ. It is possible, however, to accept Christ for pardon, and not realize in our experience His wisdom or His peace or faith. God has put all these in Christ for us, but we realize only what we see and claim by faith.

This is especially true of victory over sin. Jesus says, You cannot overcome sin, and since it is utterly impossible, it is only foolish and discouraging for you to try and struggle to overcome it. I come to do what is impossible for you. I have been tempted in all points like as you are, and have obtained complete and everlasting victory for you. Accept Me, surrender to Me, abide in Me, and victory is yours as truly and completely as life and pardon are yours. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." Victory is in Christ. We can never have victory without Christ, nor can we ever have defeat with Christ.

"It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 388.

"That for which Jacob had vainly wrestled in his own strength, was won through self-surrender and steadfast faith. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'"—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 207, edition of 1900.

#### How to Maintain Victory

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:6.

To the beloved disciple it was inconceivable that one should really know Jesus and go on sinning. He wrote: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." 1 John 2:1. Evidently he wrote this epistle, explaining the secrets of fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, for the very purpose of making plain how Christians can live without sinning. He adds: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

"'If any man sin' shows that even a saint may sin. But if the saint should sin —mark that—'we have an advocate with the Father.' There is a perfect propitiation provided. There is no allowance for sin, but a perfect provision in case we do sin,—no need to sin, no right to sin, no compromise with sin, no license, but a provision in case we do. On board ship the provision of life belts is not associated with any intention to have a shipwreck, but they are there in case of need."— "*Must Christians Sin?*"



279 Having sought and claimed victory by faith, it is to be  
280 maintained in the same way that it is received. The words  
281 used by the Holy Spirit to describe the relation of the believer  
282 to Christ, are submit, commit, yield, abide. "I am the vine, ye  
283 are the branches." "Abide in Me, and I in you." The branch  
284 did not connect itself to the vine, nor does it struggle to keep  
285 connected.

286  
287 "Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him.  
288 Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all  
289 doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the Apostle Paul, 'I live;  
290 yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live  
291 in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved  
292 me, and gave Himself for me.' Rest in God. He is able to keep  
293 that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave  
294 yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than  
295 conqueror through Him that has loved you."

296  
297 "When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound  
298 humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken  
299 by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will  
300 constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie,  
301 —to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where  
302 we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us  
303 to choose another master; for we are always free to do this.  
304 But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will  
305 preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can  
306 pluck us out of His hand."—*Steps to Christ*, pp 76, 77.

307  
308 Finally, let us remember that surrender, though ever so full  
309 and complete, is only half the secret of victory. Many have  
310 surrendered all and yet have not been victorious. It is as  
311 essential to claim victory in Christ, as it is to confess defeat  
312 without Him.

314 "By *faith* you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up  
315 in Him,—by giving *and* taking. You are to *give all*,— your  
316 heart, your will, your service,—give yourself to Him to obey  
317 all His requirements; and you must *take all*,—Christ, the  
318 fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your  
319 strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper,—to give  
320 you power to obey."—Ibid., p 74.

321  
322 We would do well to meditate upon those wonderful words—  
323 "*give all*," and "*take all*." Surely here is abundant provision  
324 for the victorious life, with no intimation of long years of  
325 agonizing struggle and painful uncertainty.

326  
327 What God has provided with divine fullness and generosity,  
328 let us accept with the simplicity of the child who was asked  
329 what difference it had made since she had become a Christian.  
330 She replied, "Since I let Jesus come into my heart to live,  
331 when Satan knocks at the door, I say, 'Jesus, you answer that  
332 knock, please,' and when He goes to the door, Satan says, 'O, I  
333 beg your pardon, I have come to the wrong house.'"

334  
335 There is abundance of power to run the streetcar so long as  
336 there is contact with the current through the trolley. So there is  
337 no lack of power for the victorious life so long as contact is  
338 maintained by unceasing prayer and daily feeding on the  
339 Word of God, coupled with continual surrender and faith.

340  
341 "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our  
342 Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57

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344 Meade MacGuire, *Australasian Record*, August 8, 1921.