

VICTORY IN
CHRIST

Charles G. Trumbull



Victory In Christ

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Foreword

Years ago I read this book by Charles Trumbull and my life and ministry were deeply and positively affected. He clearly affirmed so much that was being shaped in my life. The centrality of the person of Jesus Christ in every Christian's life was settled for me then and to this very day.

Returning to this classic book *Victory in Christ* has been for me a "fresh wind from heaven." No one has so simply stated the constant and tragic clash between works and faith in the Christian life. Too many Christians feel compelled toward working to help God do what Scripture indicates only God can do.

Trumbull has wonderfully set before us the two essentials for the victorious Christian life: 1) full surrender of self and self-effort to God and to His working alone by grace as totally sufficient; and 2) total faith and trust in God to do all He has promised.

One of the most helpful contributions he has

made is to state the common “counterfeits” to victory by God alone. Scripture is always the basis of his presentation of true victory in Christ for the Christian’s total life.

Trumbull pursues relentlessly Paul’s affirmation of the Lord’s promise that “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9). He effectively encourages every believer to realize God’s victory over sin—not only victory over the consequences of sin, but also victory over sin’s power in all of life. In so doing, he affirms the finished and completed work of God in Christ by constantly pointing to the present tense in all God’s work. All that God has provided is now fully available to be experienced by every believer who fully trusts God’s Word.

This I have earnestly sought to live out in my own life for years. I’ve found that what God has declared as “done” is true, and I’ve walked in the victory as Charles Trumbull has expressed it here. I, too, have earnestly called God’s people all over the world to receive into their life and daily experience what is present and available to them from God. Many have seen these truths for the first time, have surrendered self and self-effort to God, and have received His promises by faith. They now bear witness to an entirely new level of victory in Christ for their lives and ministry.

I continue to speak to this issue across the people of God globally. Many are responding in surrender

and faith to God, and God once again is doing wondrous works through them, drawing many to Himself.

Yet wherever I go, it seems to me that so many of God's people continue to be content to live without the manifest presence and power of God. Our world therefore isn't seeing what God can do through people yielded to Him and relying totally on Him. God's people are using their own abilities and the method of the world to serve God. This was never God's intention. He has provided ALL WE NEED—"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). We try on our own to be successful "for God"—while God wants to reveal Himself to a watching and needy world.

Trumbull's exciting book addresses this desperate need. My earnest prayer is that it will have an extensive distribution globally, especially to Christian leaders.

Henry T. Blackaby
Atlanta, Georgia
October 2004

What Is Your Kind of Christianity?

At a student missionary convention which I had the privilege of attending, some of us were congratulating ourselves on being on a step above the ordinary church member. We took pride in our willingness to spend our time, energy, and money to attend a missionary convention and share in our Lord's program for the evangelization of the world. But our attitude changed as one speaker after another confronted us with a rather uncomfortable question: "Is your kind of Christianity worth sending to the non-Christian world?"

Not "Is Christianity worth sending?" There is no question as to that. But what about *your kind*?—the kind that you showed by your life

this morning, yesterday, last week, last year. Is *that* what the non-Christian world is waiting for? Is *that* what is needed to revolutionize lives there?

Now there *is* a kind of Christianity worth sending to the non-Christian world. It is the kind that Jesus Christ lives, the kind that He has always lived. And the Christianity that Christ Himself lives is the only kind worth sending.

The kind of *salvation* that Jesus offers is the only salvation worth offering to anyone. So the kind of Christianity that Jesus lives, moment by moment, is the only kind of Christianity worth living.

We are sometimes helped by sheer coincidences between our own experience and some Scripture passage. We read about a certain man who had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity, and of whom Jesus asked the question, "Do you want to be made well?" And then to whom, a moment later, Jesus said, "Arise . . . and walk. And immediately the man was made well . . . and walked."

That passage means a great deal to me. I know another man who for thirty-eight years was in infirmity—spiritual paralysis through his bondage to sin—and who longed to be made whole;

and to whom our Lord one day said, “Arise, and walk.” I was a boy of about thirteen when I first made public confession of Jesus Christ as my Savior; but it was not until twenty-five years later that I even knew that Christ offered to anyone in this life the power that He does offer for *victory over sin*. And I am convinced that many Christians—sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, regenerated and born again— nevertheless are in bondage and paralysis because, like myself, they have not known of our Lord’s wonderful offer.

We make the mistake of thinking that we must share in doing what only God can do.

They are paralyzed, as I was, by the mistake of thinking that we ourselves must share in doing that which only God can do.

Jesus, you know, makes two offers to everyone. He offers to set us free from the *penalty* of our sin. And He offers to set us free from the *power* of our sin. Both these offers are made on exactly the same terms: we can accept them only

by letting Him do it all.

Every Christian has accepted the first offer. Many Christians have not accepted the second offer. They mistakenly think, as I did, that they must have some part in overcoming the power of their sin; that their efforts, their will, their determination, strengthened and helped by the power of Christ, is the way to victory. And as long as they mistakenly believe this they are as doomed to defeat as they would be doomed to eternal death if their salvation depended upon their working with Christ to pay the penalty of their sin.

It has been well said that while all true Christians know that they can have their justification only by faith, most of us have been brought up to believe that "for sanctification, we must paddle our own canoe." And that is why so many justified Christians are so pathetically, miserably disappointed when they try to attain a satisfying, personal experience of sanctification, or walking "in newness of life."

Dr. Scofield in conversation was speaking of the up-and-down experience that so many Christians have, winning one day and failing the next, confessing their sins and trying again,

and so going on in discouragement and defeat as a common experience. “That,” said he, “is not Christian experience, but it is the experience of the Christian.” And he went on to say that “Christian experience is wholly the result of the Producer of Christian experience: the Holy Spirit.” So when Christians attempt to share in the work of producing their Christian experience, instead of letting the Holy Spirit do it all, they have the discouraging experience of many Christians—which is not Christian experience.

Freedom from the power of sin, just as from the penalty of sin, is received as an outright gift. By faith you let Him do it all.

How did you accept Christ’s offer of freedom from the penalty of your sins? You took it as an outright gift. By faith you let Him do it all. Will you not accept His offer of immediate and complete freedom from the power of your known sins, on the same terms, and *do it now*? This is just as much a miracle as the miracle of regeneration. And it is just as exclusively the Lord’s work.

A veteran missionary friend of mine told me

a few years ago that he and some other missionaries in the foreign field, not a great while before that, had said to each other that their own daily lives were not of the sort described in the New Testament as characteristic of the early Christians. They did not know what the matter was; they only knew that they longed for something they did not have. And they agreed with each other to go apart by themselves for a few days if necessary, lay the whole matter before God and ask Him to give them what they did not have. They did this; God took them at their word; and my friend, consecrated Christian missionary and veteran in the service that he had already been, came back a new man in Christ, with a new life and with a new Christ.

He told another missionary, a high-spirited, high-tempered young woman, about the whole matter. She saw the truth, and was enabled of God to claim Christ in His fullness as her Victory, by faith, in the same way.

A few months later my friend, then at a distance from his younger missionary friend, received a letter from her in which she said that she must now tell him about the wonderful things that were going on in her life. "I wanted

to write you at first," she said, "but I scarcely dared to, for I was afraid it would not last. But it *has* lasted, and oh, it is so wonderful! Why," she went on, "just as an illustration of what I mean, do you know that not only for three months have I not once slammed the door in the face of one of these stupid Indian servants that used to get on my nerves so, but I haven't even *wanted* to once in the three months!"

And that was a miracle. Not keeping from slamming the door—that is no miracle. Any ordinary, unsaved person who is halfway decent can keep from slamming the door: by setting his teeth, using his will, putting his hands behind his back, and determinedly not doing what he feels like doing. No, there is no miracle in *that*. But to go for three months without once *wanting* to: without once feeling within yourself that angry surge of irritation, of temper, that makes you want to show your feelings in some outward, uncontrolled way; does not your heart tell you that that indeed would be a miracle in your own life?

But that is Christ's offer to us now and here—freedom immediately and completely from all the power of known sin. That is what

Paul meant as he came forever out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth; when he said in the second verse of the eighth, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me *free* from the law of sin and death.” Are *you* rejoicing in Christ as your Victory in this miraculous way?

*The two conditions of the victorious life are
surrender and faith—let go and let
God do it all..*

Do not misunderstand me; I am not speaking of any mistaken idea of sinless perfection. It is not possible for anyone to have such a transaction with Christ as to enable him to say, either, “I am without sin,” or, “I can never sin again.” This miracle is sustained and continued in our life only by our continuing, moment-by-moment faith in our Savior for his moment-by-moment victory over the power of our sin. But He Himself will give us that faith, and will continue that faith in us moment by moment. We can and must, as Frances Ridley Havergal has so truly said, “entrust to Him our trust.”

What are the conditions of this Victorious Life? Only two, and they are very simple: sur-

render and faith. "Let go, and let God."

Some Christians have not surrendered unconditionally to the mastery of Jesus Christ. They have, as Mr. McConkey puts it, surrendered their sins to Christ, but not their wills. If there is anything in your life this moment that you know you have been withholding from the Lord, won't you give it to Him now? Won't you just tell Him you now turn over to Him, for time and eternity, all that you have and all that you are, for His complete mastery and use and disposal? Every habit of your life, every ambition, every hope, every loved one, every possession, and yourself—all these He must have if He is to make Himself not only your Savior but your Life.

That is the first step, the first of the two conditions. But that is not the whole. Perhaps you made this surrender long ago, and have been wondering why you did not have the victory that you longed for. The reason is that the Surrendered Life is not necessarily the Victorious Life. There is no victory without surrender, but there may be surrender without victory. Some of us know this to our sorrow. We may have "let go," but if we have not yet "let God" we are sure to

be defeated! We may not have realized that the work of victory is wholly and exclusively God's.

For after you have put yourself unreservedly and completely under the mastery of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you must know and remember that it at once becomes His responsibility, His—I say it reverently—duty, to keep you from the power of sin. He pledges Himself to do so. “Sin shall not have dominion over you,” He says in Romans 6:14, “for you are not under law” (where your works have something to do with it) “but under grace” (where I do it all). And elsewhere He adds, “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9). So it is that our Lord has just been waiting for you—not to *pray* for victory, but to *praise* Him for victory! Many surrendered Christians postpone and prevent victory in their lives by praying for it when Jesus has been waiting for them to praise Him for it. As one has said, we are not to ask Him to *make* His grace sufficient for us. He tells us that it already *is* so; and our part is simply to take Him at His word and say, “I thank You, Lord.”

Let us therefore claim the whole blessed miracle of the Victorious Life now, by saying this simple sentence together, prayerfully, thought-

fully, realizing the tremendous meaning of the words, and in our hearts praising God that it is true:

“I *know* that Jesus *is* meeting *all* my needs *now*, because His grace *is* sufficient for me.”