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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND OF VICTORY

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK is to show the Biblical pathway of victory through union with Christ by way of the cross and the throne.

VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST

The dictionary meaning of the word victory is "the act of conquering, especially in battle; triumph." A victor is a "conqueror; a winner in any contest." Victory, then, implies the existence of an enemy or enemies who must be conquered in battle.

The Bible is a book of warfare. God has enemies with whom He is in conflict and over whom He wins the victory through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This victory is won in two stages; by the cross and by the throne. There is a crucifixion culminating in a crowning.

VICTORY THROUGH UNION WITH CHRIST

A Christian is one who is in an organic, living union with Christ. Christ's own definition of a Christian is given in John 14:20: "Ye in me and I in you." Through Paul He carried the revelation further. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). Therefore, by virtue of this union,

Christ's enemies are the Christian's enemies. By the same reasoning, Christ's victory is the Christian's victory.

The Christian is Christ's trophy. Once a bondsman of Satan and sin but now freed by Christ, he has become the joyous, willing captive of the Lord Jesus, who leads him on in the train of His triumph to celebrate His victory over all His enemies.

VICTORY THE PARAMOUNT NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN

No truly earnest Christian is devoid of the sense of defeat. There is the consciousness of conflict with forces of evil, both without and within, that are overwhelming and overpowering. The real Christian knows that he has enemies for whom he is no match, and with deep shame and humiliation he acknowledges that too often he goes down before them in shameless defeat, in tragic and repeated failure. Countless Christians down through the ages have uttered with Paul that poignant, anguished cry:

"O wretched man that I am!

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Has God no answer to such a piercing cry for deliverance from an intolerable bondage? He assuredly has:

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In fact, God declares throughout the Bible from beginning to end that victory is not only a possibility but a necessity; that it is not merely something humanly desired, but something divinely required. The Word reveals with crystal clearness that victory for the saint is as integral a part of God's eternal purpose as salvation is for the sinner. As salvation through the blood shed on Calvary runs like a scarlet cord through the Word, so victory through the sovereign Lord on the throne

runs as a golden cord. The Lamb of God who lays down His life on the cross is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, receiving the worship and adoration of thousands of thousands around the throne (Rev. 5:6, 11, 12).

But what answer does the Church give in its preaching and teaching to this anguished cry from those longing for deliverance? Very largely it remains silent. Even those who are faithful and fearless as messengers of deliverance from the penalty of sin have no message whatever on deliverance from the power of sin.

In fact, the Church is pathetically divided on this great truth. Some preachers and teachers deny, yes, even oppose it. Some are afraid of it both for themselves and for others, because of its demands and consequences. Some hunger to know the pathway to victory and would walk in it if they knew how. Some seek victory along unscriptural lines which lead into unbiblical teaching and experience. Some know the theory but do not know how it works out in practice. Some have a head knowledge of victory as a doctrine but little or no manifestation of it in daily life, so that their teaching and testimony are nullified by a nonvictorious life. Some know the truth of victory over Satan, sin, and self through the Spirit's revelation of it to them and in them, and the truth has made them gloriously free.

Dear reader, just where are you in relation to this precious truth, both as to the knowledge and to the experience of it? Do not go further until you have given an honest consideration to this question.

Now I wish to take you into my confidence and tell you the purpose and plan of this book and to ask your co-operation, both in making the truth yours as we go along together over its pages, and then as far as you possibly can to share it with others.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose is to give a Biblical, balanced message on the pathway of victory. The theme limits the message to one phase of God's revelation. Yet this segment of truth takes us to the very root of redemption in Christ and demands our searching into the origin of evil in God's universe, as well as in man; it compels us to face sin's terrifying trail over humanity; it reveals the only but all-sufficient way of victory, and it climaxes with the ultimate victory over all the enemies of Christ and His Church.

SIGNPOSTS ALONG THE PATHWAY OF VICTORY

Jesus gave two signposts on the pathway of victory in His conversation with the Pharisees in John 8:12-59.

First Signpost

John 8:32: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Second Signpost

John 8:36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

He had declared to them the truth regarding Himself, but they would not believe the truth nor receive Him as the One sent from God. Jesus boldly told them they were bondslaves to sin and to Satan.

John 8:34 (R. V.): Everyone that committeth sin is *the bondservant of sin*. John 8:44 (R.V.): Ye are of your father the devil, *and the lusts of your father it is your will to do*. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

Bondslaves to Satan, the murderer, they were themselves murderers seeking to kill Jesus at Satan's command. Bond-

slaves to Satan, the liar, they were themselves liars, not only rejecting the truth but also accusing Jesus of being a liar and having a devil. They were bondslaves to sin because they were bondslaves to Satan. But they would not acknowledge their bondage.

As sinners, all living persons are in this twofold bondage and need to be set free. Have you acknowledged your bondslavery to Satan and to sin? Do you long to be set free? Jesus points the way to perfect freedom.

The First Signpost

John 8:32: And ye shall know the truth, *and the truth shall make you free*. "Ye shall know the truth"—truth—principle—apprehension. "The truth shall make you free"—life—practice—application.

God purposes that every great truth shall be so inwrought into life that redemption really redeems. Truth makes free, but only when known. Speaking the truth in love, one may say that the majority of Christian leaders are guilty of criminal negligence in failing to make known to those under their spiritual care the pathway of victory. Many are very faithful in making known the initial step out of bondage to Satan and sin through regeneration and justification, who never make known to their flock the way into the glorious freedom and continuous victory made possible through scriptural sanctification. Yet Paul devotes the larger part of his letters to the churches to this great truth. If any Christian worker reading this page is recreant in this sacred trust, would you not right now pledge faithfulness to your sovereign Lord in making known the truth that our Lord said can make men experimentally free from bondage to Satan and to sin?

But it is tragically easy to know the truth regarding the way of victory and yet to be living in defeat. Truth ap-

prehended is not enough. It must be personally appropriated, applied, acted upon. "The hallmark of truth is that it is intensely practical." In other words, *it works*. Truth which is mere head knowledge and not heart experience is excess baggage. Only as truth becomes *me* does it become *mine*.

Paul told us this:

Colossians 3:16, 17: Let the word of Christ *dwell in you richly* in all wisdom; . . . *and whatsoever ye do in word or deed*, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

John told us this:

III John 3: For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified *of the truth that is in thee*, even as thou *walkest in the truth*.

Peter told us this:

I Peter 1:22: Seeing ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

When I was visiting a mission station in China for meetings in a girls' school, one missionary told me not to expect her to do any personal work. Furthermore, she said she was soon going on furlough and would not return to China because of her health. But she was honest enough to acknowledge that her real sickness was spiritual; she was living in absolute defeat. I quoted verses from Scripture on victory. She *knew* all of them and could quote them verbatim. She had received and read every book on victory she had heard of, and could teach others the Biblical way of victory; but she herself was living in such devastating defeat that it had wrecked her life, both spiritually and physically. She had become what Paul terms in I Corinthians 9:27 "a castaway," one disqualified and disapproved for service because she had failed to meet the requirements.

Even though the meetings were for girls in their teens, God had led me *to make known the truth* of freedom from bondage to sin through union with Christ in His death and resurrection. God purposed that message for that missionary. The truth she clearly apprehended was appropriated, applied, acted upon, and it made her gloriously free.

It did more than that. When once free herself, this one who had said she would do no personal work longed for others to be set free. In that school was a classical teacher who had heard the gospel daily for thirteen years, but had never accepted Christ as Saviour. She talked with him and he was saved. The "castaway" had qualified for the race and had received the pledge of the crown. She went on furlough, but returned to China restored to physical health and with a spiritual virility that enabled her to make known to many another the truth that sets free.

God purposed just that message for that classical teacher also. When asked why he had so long refused to accept Christ as Saviour, he said that for years he had believed Christ had come to be his Saviour and was able to save him from his sins, but he was a bondsman to unmentionable sin. Not until he heard that the Lord Jesus Christ was *able to deliver one from the dominion of sin* did he believe the Saviour was sufficient to meet his need. The saint and the sinner both need to know the truth that the Saviour is also Lord, and that He came not only to deliver from sin's penalty, but likewise from its power.

The present-day Church is replete with "castaways." Even on the mission field there are those who with scrupulous fidelity go the round of the routine of duties, but with little dynamic power. Why is this so? Largely because the truth that sets free is so little known or apprehended, so feebly acted upon.

Hudson Taylor gave this testimony: "I have seen it long enough in the Bible. Now I believe it to be a living reality. God has made me a new man." Oh! dear reader, have *you* seen this truth in God's Word? Has it become a reality to you? Has God made you a *new man*? The one purpose of this book is to make known this truth that it may set free those in defeat. "The Word of truth never leaves us where it finds us."

The Second Signpost

John 8:36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

If the *Son* . . . shall make you *free*.

Jesus had told them the truth regarding themselves as sinners, and of Himself as their Saviour. He had revealed fully their need for freedom and His ability and willingness to *set them free*.

THE PLAN

The plan of the book is fourfold:

First—The Background of Victory

Second—The Biblical Scope of Victory

Third—Victory the Essence of the Christ-life

Fourth—The Lord Jesus Christ the Victor

THE BACKGROUND OF VICTORY

By knowing the cause and the consequences of defeat we shall better understand the necessity and the nature of victory. To do this we will face the *fact of defeat*, personal and collective, in and through the first Adam. Then we will face the *fact of victory*, personal and collective, in and through the Last Adam. Such a study will disclose the unchanging and unchangeable principles underlying defeat and victory all down through the ages.

THE BIBLICAL SCOPE OF VICTORY

Because both the inworking and the outreach of victory in Christian experience have been so greatly limited, the teaching on this subject has failed to unveil its marvelous privileges and potentialities and so to incite desire for it. Such teaching has also failed to warn of the perils and losses of defeat, and so has robbed of incentive. The months spent on this study have given me a new revelation of the compass and comprehensiveness of this matchless truth, and a new conception of the primary place God has given to it in His plan of redemption.

Too frequently the scope of victory has been limited by relating it only to the past tense of redemption, that of deliverance from the sphere over which Satan is sovereign and in which sin rules. But victory has its past, present and future tense, even as salvation has (Titus 2:11-14). To truly apprehend this truth is one of the greatest incentives to live victoriously. May I state it scripturally—*we are redeemed to reign*. *Redeemed*—The past tense of victory—deliverance from the sphere of Satan's dominion and bondslavery into the sphere of Christ's dominion and bondslavery.

Colossians 1:13, 14 (A. R. V.): Who *delivered us out* of the power of darkness, and *translated us into* the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption.

Redeemed to Reign in Life—The present tense of victory—deliverance from the bondage to sin and self into the glorious liberty of the Son through the Spirit.

Romans 5:17 (R. V.): Much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness *reign in life* through the one, even Jesus Christ.

Weymouth translation—"reign as kings in life."

Redeemed to Reign on Earth—The future tense of victory, the

overcomer receiving his regal reward, reigning with the Overcomer.

Revelation 5:9, 10: For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*

Revelation 3:21: To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Oh! doesn't it thrill you? Here and now we are a people in whom there is regal blood; sons of God, heirs to the throne; now sharing with the Son the throne of His Father; one day to sit with Him on His own throne. Oh! what an incentive to live as the Victor lives!

Again, the scope of victory has been limited by thinking of it only in terms of *personal* victory, which one usually regards as optional, rather than grasping its tremendous *collective* significance—that the defeat or victory of one Christian spells to that degree the defeat or victory of the entire Church. To admit this as fact makes victory obligatory.

In reading through the Bible to trace the causes and consequences of defeat, I was terrified to see the relation between personal sin and collective defeat. Achan's sin of covetousness caused the humiliating defeat of all Israel, when the "wrath [of God] fell on all the congregation of Israel, and that man perished not alone in his iniquity" (Josh. 22:20). Miriam's sin of jealousy, with its consequent murmuring against her own brother Moses, held up the journeying of all Israel for a whole week. The sin of unbelief and rebellion of the ten spies caused the Israel of that generation to wander forty years in the wilderness and die there. It is written of one king after another following the reign of Jeroboam that they "walked in the way

of Jeroboam and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin" (I Kings 15:34). The greatest tragedy in human history was Adam's sin against humanity when by one sin of disobedience he took with him into sin and death the whole human race. Stop for one moment to look out over the present-day world strewn with human wreckage; then look back over the centuries, tracing that black trail of sin over human history to its origin in the garden of Eden, and contemplate the frightful, the ghastly harvest of one man's one disobedience. "No man liveth unto himself," and that is speaking of you and of me. Personal sin on the part of one Christian spells collective defeat for the whole Church.

A pastor was defending himself for being a movie fan on the ground that he went only to "good movies." When asked about his influence upon the young people in his church who had not such capacity for discrimination (?) and who went to "good" and bad alike, his reply was that he took no responsibility for his influence in such cases, for the mother was responsible for making such choices for her child. But God says that "*no man liveth unto himself*" and that at the judgment seat of Christ that pastor will be judged "according to that he *hath done*, whether it be *good or bad*" (II Cor. 5:10).

But I was thrilled beyond expression to see also the relation between personal and collective victory. Caleb "wholly followed the Lord." With what result? Marvelous personal victory! Out of Israel's hundreds of thousands, he was one of the two who survived the wilderness, entered Canaan and possessed his inheritance there. Was it his personal victory only? Oh, no! At eighty-five years of age he conquered the toughest crowd in Canaan—those giants, the sons of Anak, who terrified and overwhelmed the younger men forty years before. He

took their walled cities and gained a magnificent collective victory for all Israel. Is that all? No, he secured the possession of the land for his seed. His victory brought blessing to his children and his children's children. Joshua, the other of the two overcomers in the wilderness, also came into Canaan as a conqueror, to conquer thirty-five kings: to take the whole land and give it for an inheritance unto Israel. Of several kings who came after David it was said: "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the ways of David his father." Paul, imprisoned, beaten, bruised, and with his feet in the stocks, at midnight sang the songs of victory and of praise to the Lord. Personal victory of the most glorious caliber! What a trail of victories followed the salvation of the jailer and his household—the founding of the Church at Philippi! The greatest triumph of history was Christ's sacrifice for all humanity when by one act of obedience He purchased salvation for the whole human race and provided the way of deliverance from the bondslavery of Satan and sin.

Stop for a moment for one short look into your own soul, saved by His infinite grace. Then take a long look around the whole wide world and see the church spires in nearly every land; the Bible printed in more than a thousand tongues; the Christian institutions, the homes, the seminaries, the Bible schools and colleges making, training, and sending out Christian men and women into all walks of life, at home and to the ends of the earth. Then take an upward look to the innumerable company of the redeemed from every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and listen to their paeon of victory. All this and infinitely more—the fruitage of one Man's one obedience!

Oh, dear reader, victory is not merely a personal thing! The

victory in just one life is immeasurable in its extent. Victory in your life today will be felt in the life of Christians in the islands of the sea. It will reverberate throughout the entire Church of Christ.

A man who had been a Christian for twenty years was living in defeat. For seven years he had not been to his church. Over the radio he heard the announcement of a series of meetings to be held there. He was utterly miserable and under conviction, and the Spirit drew him to the meetings where he was brought into a marvelous personal victory. Was it his alone? No, indeed. Very shortly his wife and three children, his mother-in-law and aged father-in-law were saved. The Lord used him to bring one after another of his business associates to Christ and was laying upon him a great burden to carry the message of salvation and victory through Christ to the ends of the earth.

Are you convinced that personal defeat spells collective defeat, and that personal victory means collective victory? Then in which are you living: in defeat or in victory?

But we have not yet exhausted the scope of victory. God has not made this marvelous provision primarily for your sake or for the sake of others through you; but for the sake of His dear Son and for the glory of His name who, at such infinite cost, voluntarily covered the black trail of sin with the red trail of His own precious blood, blazing the path to victory by way of the cross. Your victory and mine is primarily for the Victor's sake. Through it God celebrates His victory over His enemies. Paul, who was one of the greatest enemies of Christ and the greatest opponent of His gospel, was now a captive by his own will, following in the train of His triumphal procession (II Cor. 2:14, R. V.). He was there as Christ's trophy,

celebrating Christ's victory over Satan, sin and self. Oh! What an incentive to live victoriously to know that every victory in one's life registers before a sinning, scoffing world the victory of the Christ of Calvary!

Thirdly, the plan is to present victory, not as *an experience* in the Christian life which might be regarded as optional, but as *the essence* of the Christ life, and so something obligatory. It is to present victory, not as the specialty of the more spiritually minded of the Body of Christ, but as the very warp and woof of Christianity itself, so that one can scarcely merit the name of Christian—that name which stands for the great Overcomer (Phil. 2:9, 10)—who is living in continuous defeat. It is to present victory, not as an unattainable ideal but as a life based on the divine principle of obedience to and dependence upon God.

Lastly, the plan is to present the Lord Jesus Christ as the Victor, whose victory we share through our union with Him. In Him is both our provision and our pattern. In John 8 Jesus gave a second signpost on the pathway to victory. Truth merely as truth cannot set us free. Victory is not a creed, nor is it a special teaching, nor a pet doctrine of a few extremists and fanatics, nor is it a set of rules merely to guide one's conduct.

Victory is a Person. If you are in the Victor and the Victor is in you, then you have victory, and in no other way. Our Lord rang the liberty bell when He said:

John 8:36: "If *the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*"