

VICTORIOUS FAITH NO. 2757

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:
and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.
Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
1 John 5:4-5*

WHAT is this “world” that we have to overcome? Did not God make the world and did He not see “everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good”? Yes, He did. But after sin entered this world, men came under its power and now, by “the world” is meant all mankind who remain under the power of sin and are enemies to God. “The world” means the whole corrupt mass of human society out of which God has taken a people whom He has chosen for Himself, whom He quickens by His divine Spirit and whose business it is to overcome the world. They will find that the world—the power of evil—will war against them and they also must war against it, and the issue of the battle must not long be doubtful. There remains for us only one of two courses—either the world must overcome us and we must yield to it—or else, we must overcome the world and cause it to submit to us.

The apostle helps us to understand what he means by “the world” by what he says in the third verse, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” Now, anything which makes us think that God’s will is grievous is of the spirit of the world, against which we have to fight.

If, for instance, we are tempted to think that the restrictions of God’s law—His commandments and precepts—are too stringent, it is the spirit of the world which tempts us so to think, for “his commandments are not grievous” to those who truly love Him. It is only to the rebellious world that the restrictions of God appear to be too stringent or that the commands of Christ become burdensome. If we are suffering pain or poverty, or whatever form of trial we may be called to endure, if we are tempted to say, “God is dealing harshly with us, He is unkind to us,” that also is manifesting the spirit of the world against which we are to contend until we conquer it.

For God’s will is always right and if we really love Him, we shall own that it is right, and though, for a while, we may have to fight against the spirit of rebellion, yet if we are indeed God’s children, we must get the mastery over that spirit of evil, and so, the will of God, even when it involves pain, weakness, shame, or death itself, shall still be perfectly agreeable to us because it is the will of God. We have not completely conquered the spirit of the world until we can truthfully say that the commandments of God, so far from being grievous to us, are acceptable simply because they come from Him.

Now I propose, as God shall help me, first, to speak of *the conquest itself*. Then, of *the conquering nature*. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” And thirdly, of *the conquering weapon*, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

I. First, then, concerning THE CONQUEST ITSELF. What is it to overcome the world?

Certainly it is not to go about the world blustering and bullying everybody until they all lie prostrate at our feet. Because if we could accomplish such a feat as that, the world would, in such a case, have overcome us and we should not have conquered it. We should have displayed a spirit and temper betokening the pride of power—the desire to rule over others—and this love would have mastered us.

Alexander the Great, when he was master of the whole world, was the greatest slave within it, for he was discontented even with his victories. The pride of conquest held him in captivity by its iron chain. No, he who aims at the highest greatness in this world may only be more greatly selfish than the rest of

mankind, and what is that but to be really little? He is truly great who is the most unselfish, and he is the least of all who lives for himself alone.

Neither is it overcoming the world if you try to get out of it and to live by yourself so as never to be tempted to sin. I have seen a man on his knees by the hour together, reading some pious Latin book, living in a monastery where he never spoke—he had evidently conquered his tongue, because he gave no answer to anybody who ever spoke to him. He was reckoned, by his brother monks, to have overcome the world—but had he really done so?

Ask any soldier whether a man who slinks away in the day of battle and hides among the baggage—and does not fight at all—is a conqueror. That would be a very easy way of winning a victory—just to escape from the fight—to be of no service in the battle between good and evil, but just to hide away in your own little snuggerly over there, in the monastery, or the convent, or the hermitage. It might be an easy way of believing that you had conquered because you had ceased to fight, but that delusion would not make the victory yours.

No, brethren, you and I have to roll up our shirtsleeves and go into the world and work like other people. We have to mingle with our fellow men, and as the Lord God said to Adam—in the sweat of our face have we to eat our bread.

It may be our occupation to have to add up those long columns of figures, or to measure up those bales of goods, or to talk to our fellow men on various matters, but whatever our employment may be, we have to be in the world and we have to conquer it. To be *in* the world, yet not *of* it—as much separated from the rest of mankind as if we belonged to an alien race—conquerors of it wherever we go, not by getting out of it, but by mingling with the men and women in it—doing all that is lawful and right, and all that is expected that a man should do to his fellow men, yet, all the while being conquerors over the evil spirit of the world.

Now, having shown you what this conquest of the world is not, let us turn to the positive side of the question and see what it is. The first thing that is necessary with many who are seeking to overcome the world is *to cut themselves loose from the world's customs*. They were born into the world—one man has his own little world and another man has another little world—but every man, sooner or later, finds himself in a world of sin. There are ungodly companions with whom he is linked—evil associations to which he is bound. There are some men who, in their unconverted state, give themselves up entirely to the pleasures of the world, the amusements and frivolities of what is called “Society.” Now, if such men ever expect to overcome the world, the very first thing they must do is to cut their old connections altogether, to sever all the bonds which unite them to those who lead them into sin.

Such a thing has often happened as for a man, who has been the best of company and the choicest of good fellows among worldlings, to sit down in quietness for half an hour, and God the Holy Spirit has wrought so mightily upon his heart that he has said to himself, “What have I been doing but playing the fool to make other fools laugh? How am I spending my time? I must honestly say that I am doing no real good with it. What am I making of my manhood? Here it is—well-near six feet of it and it will soon lie in six feet of earth—what am I doing that is really worth the doing? Am I not really wasting my time? This style of living will not do.”

Ah! the blessed Spirit has begun working in the man and he has wept before his God as he has thought over his wasted life. Further, he has, by faith, looked to Jesus on the cross, and he has said, “Thou, blessed Savior, hast redeemed me, so, henceforth, I will be Yours. As I live by You, I will live for You and for my fellow men.”

After arriving, by God's grace, at that decision, he has become a different man from what he used to be. His old companions could not get him back to his former haunts, however much they might try to do so. Even if he should go there, they would not long want him with them, for he would not be any longer of their way of thinking or their way of acting, for he would be a changed man altogether.

There are many of you who would like to come to that decision, but you never appear willing to actually decide to serve the Lord. You are always going to do it, yet you never do it. You hesitating people are the most unhappy folk in the whole world, for you neither get comfort out of your present condition, nor out of that better condition after which you sometimes aspire, but which you have not the courage to resolutely seek after until you find it.

Some men have just enough conscience to make them miserable, but they have not enough force in it to make them determine that things shall be altered. Their religion is very much like the experience of certain boys who, professedly, go out to bathe in the early morning. They put their toes into the water and shiver all over with the cold. But the brave swimmer takes a header, plunges right in, is soon in a fine glow and comes out praising the delightful bath he has had.

I would urge every man who is just now upon the point of deciding—and I pray God the Holy Spirit, with His almighty energy, to back up my urging—that he may now say,

*“Tis done—the great transaction’s done,
I am my Lord’s and He is mine.”*

I pray that he may henceforth be a changed man, that he may forsake his former evil ways and live wholly unto God. That is the first part of overcoming the world—breaking loose from its bonds, so that one can say, “I am not tied down by it any longer. By God’s grace, I am a free man in Christ Jesus.”

But that emancipation is merely a beginning. Overcoming the world consists further in *maintaining that freedom*. Oh, what a work is this! It is no child’s play for a man to say, “No, I will never again be the slave that I used to be. By God’s eternal grace, I have broken off this fetter and that, and never again shall those chains be fastened upon me. Great God, by Your almighty love, You have loosed my bonds. I am Your free man. I am free indeed and I will fight for my freedom, and under no possible circumstances will I go back to my old slavery.”

Yes, but that fight is the difficulty—and I shall have to show you that nobody can be victorious in that fight unless he is one of a peculiar race—those who are born of God, born from above. This is a stern battle—when the world surrounds us everywhere—when pleasure tempts us—when gain tries to corrupt us—when poverty assails us—when evil company seeks to sway us—it is hard for us to come right straight out of all our former associations and then to keep out—remaining conquerors over the world throughout the whole of the rest of our life, and being conquerors even in death, having vanquished the world even on our dying bed.

Part of the overcoming of the world consists in our being *raised above circumstances*. Remember how the apostle Paul had conquered the world? He sat in prison shivering with cold, but he said, “I know how to be abased.” He went, by-and-by, into the houses of some of his friends where they gave him all that he could desire and he said, “I know how to abound.” It is not an easy thing to be such a master of the world that the utmost poverty cannot make you miserable, yet God can give you grace to say, “I can be poor, but I will be upright. I can lose every stick that I have, but I will stand fast by Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. And while I have Him, I cannot be cast down.”

I say that the fight against poverty is a very stern one, but the battle against the seductions of wealth is a far sterner one. Perhaps some of you think that you would like to fight that battle. I daresay you would, but you do not know what you are wishing. I see many men who are very gracious under all sorts of want—and I see many other men who, in proportion as they grow rich in worldly things, grow poor as to spiritual things.

Very often, just in proportion as men get high in earthly position, in that proportion they cease to do anything that is of any particular service to anybody. I do not know what would become of any of us if we were made peers of the realm. It is, I have no doubt, a great trial to anybody to be so exalted, but there is scarcely a person here who could wear a coronet and yet faithfully serve the Lord.

And probably there is not a man or a woman among us who could endure the trial of being made a king or a queen. It needs more than a world of grace to overcome the world when the world makes much of you. When God does give us piety in high places, as, blessed be His holy name, He sometimes does, we ought to be most grateful for it, for it is a plant that does not grow well in such a situation as that. The old couplet is still true—

*“Gold and the Gospel seldom do agree,
Religion always sides with poverty.”*

It has been so from the first and I suppose it will be so to the last. But the true conquest of the world is to be indifferent about all such things—to be grateful for abounding mercies and to be grateful even for straitened circumstances. They used to say, “Philosophers can be merry without music,” and certainly, Christians can be happy without having their cup perpetually full. “I have learned,” said the apostle Paul, “in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Happy are all they who have learned the same lesson, for this is overcoming the world.

Once more, dear friends, to overcome the world is *to be above its threats and above its bribes*. You working-men who are Christians often have a hard time of it, but when your work-mates mock and jeer at you, and call you evil names, never mind them. Overcome the world by patiently enduring all the persecution that falls to your lot. Do not get angry and do not become downhearted. Jests break no bones and if you had any bone broken for Christ’s sake, it would be the most honored one in your whole body.

Still, you need not wish to have the friendship of this world and you must not expect to have it, for the world does not love God’s people. Look how it served them in ages gone by—hanging was thought to be too good for them, so it roasted them alive. The world would have exterminated the saints if it could have done so, and today, what does the world say of Christians? “Oh! they are either fools or fanatics, or else they are a set of canting hypocrites.” If a man preaches the Gospel, and many are drawn to hear him, cavilers cry, “Oh, he is an imposter.” If any Christian man is very precise and particular, they say, “Ugh, he is one of the sniveling Puritans.”

They never know anything bad enough to say of genuine Christians. They do not like us. It were a pity if they should, for they did not like our Master, and they do not like our Father. If we will consent to hide our doctrines, or to daub them over with the philosophical luminous paint of the present period, they will put up with us. But if we bring out pure Gospel truth, straightway they will be down upon us.

Yet there are some of God’s people that the world does love, when they do the world a good turn. If their love to man leads them to a high philanthropy, and if the world can get anything out of them, it does not mind loving them. It has a cupboard love even to saints—and if there is any profit to be made out of them, the world will love them, though not their saintship.

They like Mr. So-and-So as a politician, but when it comes to his religion, they say, “That is his weak point.” They do not care to interfere with that. They admire another man because of his care for the poor—the widow and the fatherless—but they hate the doctrine of the cross which he delights to preach and which is to him the very joy of his heart.

On the other hand, when the world cannot frighten us by frowns, it often tries to woo us by smiles. “Oh!” it cries to us, “you really are righteous overmuch, you are too good. You need not be so precise—come just a little way with us—yield only an inch, that is all we ask.” No, brethren, yield no inches for all the smiles on this Jezebel’s painted face. But stand out just as boldly against her blandishments as against her thunderbolts. Care nothing for her opinion or her action either way, for, if you do, you will not have overcome the world. God help us, by His gracious Spirit, to be conquerors in that sense!

To overcome the world, further, means *to be above the influence of the world’s example*. As I said before, we have, each one of us, our own little world and we all are, to a certain degree, subject to the influences of those who surround us. The young man, in business, who begins as a Christian is too often influenced by the pernicious maxims and customs of the trade with which he is connected. Men mingle in society and each one, to some extent, affects the others. How often is a pious child grievously affected by an ungodly parent! How frequently a gracious servant is ill-affected by an ungodly master or mistress!

But if you really overcome the world, you will live above its influence. You will be like one who is obliged to go where the air is foul and disease is rife, but who has such a healthy constitution that he does not catch the disease and is not polluted by the impurity. There is no seed-plot within him for the disease to grow upon. Blessed is that man who is himself an example to his fellows—who does not so much come under the influence of others as cast his own influence over others. God make all of you, beloved, such true leaders of mankind in the right direction because you have yourselves overcome the world!

If you want to see the portrait of a man who overcame the world, look at Abraham. He was at home with his father in Haran and God said to him, “Come forth”—and away he went, with Sarah, and Lot,

and their flocks and herds. The well-watered plain of Jordan lay before him and he might have settled in it, as Lot did, but it did not tempt him—he dwelt alone with his flocks and his herds, where God had bidden him go.

The king of Sodom and Abraham's nephew, Lot, were carried away captive, and for the sake of Lot, Abraham went with a band of men, smote the allied kings, and delivered the prisoners. The king of Sodom said to him, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." Now, according to the rules of war, the spoil was all Abraham's, but oh, how grandly did he behave! He was not going to be conquered by the world, so he said to the king of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich"—which was as much as saying, "I have a right to it if I like to take it, but I waive my rights. I act from higher motives than the ordinary rules of men can supply—the Lord JEHOVAH is my Helper and Provider and I live upon what He gives me. He can make me rich without the help of the king of Sodom, so take your goods and go."

See also how nobly he overcame the world on that memorable day when God said, "I will now see whether Abraham does really love Me best of all. He has one boy—the child of his old age—and I will tell him to offer him up in sacrifice." And grandly did the Patriarch, in that fiery trial, overcome the world, for Isaac was, practically, all the world to him on that day when he unsheathed the knife and proved that his love to God was superior to everything else. And this is the kind of conquest to which you, beloved, are also called. May God grant that you may be well equipped for it and be truly victorious in it!

II. Now, secondly, I think you will be prepared, after my giving this explanation of what it is to overcome the world, to hear about THE CONQUERING NATURE. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"

Do you all know what it is to be born of God? I do not think I can tell you, in so many words, exactly what it is, though I know for myself. It is not simply to be improved and reformed. It is a grand thing when a man who has been degraded, lives in a better fashion. But a cobbler might take an old shoe and mend it, yet that would not make it a new one.

Being born of God is also more than being made anew. It includes that, but that is not all that it includes. For God, who makes all things, can new-make them when He pleases, yet that does not make them to be born of Him. We all know what it is for one person to be born of another—you were all born of your father and of your mother—and so you became partakers of your parents' nature. In like manner, only in a far higher sense, regeneration is more than creation, for there is in it a kinship with God. So, being born-again makes us something more than God's creatures—we are God's children.

You know that blessed truth of adoption, by which God takes men and adopts them into His family, but regeneration is a great deal more than adoption. A man may have an adopted child, but yet it is really no child of his. There is nothing of himself in it and he cannot put his nature into it. But we are not only God's adopted children, if we are indeed born from above, we are God's newborn children. The divine nature is actually put into us when we are born of God—is not that a wonderful thing? And that miracle of mercy must be wrought in all of us who are ever to overcome the world.

For notice this, *no nature but the divine nature will ever try to overcome the world.* By nature, we are of the world, and that which is of the world will not fight against the world, it will not even think of doing so. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." And flesh will not fight against flesh. Our Lord Jesus said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil"—and the devil will not fight against the world, or try to overcome it, for his course is the course of this world, he is the prince of it.

But where the divine nature comes, it comes to fight against the world. The holy nature of God never enters into a man but what that man cries, "Now will I be wholly free from sin. Now will I shake off every fetter of it." "Now," says he, under the power of this divine inner life, "I do scorn the thought that I, who am born of God, should be a slave to sin—that I, who bear within me something of the Deity—I, who am a twice-born man, begotten again by God the everlasting Father, of whom I have become a child—I loathe the very idea of yielding to sin." That is the kind of man to overcome the world because of the divine nature within him.

For, see, the regenerated man is sure to overcome the world, when he goes to fight against it, because, first, *he has the Spirit of the Father in him.* Now, God the Father is the world's Creator, so the

world can never be a match for its Creator. He made it and He can destroy it whenever He pleases to do so. It is not possible that sin should overcome God, for, as the apostle James tells us, “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” He is by nature perfectly holy and when this divine nature is put into a man, it is still holy, and it cannot sin, because it is born of God.

This new nature is also *akin to the nature of Christ*. And you know how the second Person of the blessed Trinity—the Christ of God—dwelt here among men and the world could never overcome Him. Men could kill Him, and they did, but they could not make Him sin. They could drive Him from place to place, but they could not make Him angry. They could not provoke Him to speak any word that He might afterwards regret. They could never get anything from Him which was worthy of reproach or of rebuke. They called all the witnesses they could to testify against Him, but even the false witnesses could not agree, for He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.”

And even on the cross of Calvary, when they hung Him up to die, His dying pangs could extort from Him nothing but a prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And thus He conquered the world, for the human nature in Him, blended with the divine, could not be conquered by the world—it was not possible.

Further, we *become akin to the divine Spirit* by being born of God, and the Holy Spirit cannot be conquered by the world. It is He that does convince the world of sin. It is He that shall yet win this world for Christ. He is omnipotent, so, when the Spirit of God dwells within us, as He does when we receive the divine nature, it is not possible that He should be conquered, or that we should be conquered by the world.

Now, men and brethren, hearken to these words. Do you not see that you must overcome the world or else you will perish? But you cannot overcome the world as you are. You must, therefore, be born-again. Your only hope lies in your being born of God. And this, if it is to take place, must be God’s work. It is God alone who can do it, so you are like ships on their beam-ends—you cannot “right” yourselves.

Cry, therefore, with your whole heart unto God and ask Him to work this miracle in you. “Salvation is of the Lord.” He can save you. He can take away the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. He can breathe upon the dry bones and make them live. Ay, He, the mysterious Father of our spirits, can create in us a new spirit that shall be begotten of Himself and be like unto Himself—and this we must have—or we can never overcome the world.

III. Now, thirdly, and lastly, I have to speak of THE CONQUERING WEAPON WHICH IS USED BY THIS NEW NATURE. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

It never entered into my head that the most of professing Christians would ever overcome the world. I do not think they ever will, for the world has, to a large extent, overcome them. You may hear some of them asking, “How far may we go in worldly amusements?” You really want to go, do you not? Then go, for it does not matter much where such people as you are do go.

“Oh, but we should like to go as far into the world as we might!” Would you? Then my Lord’s message to you is, “Ye must be born-again.” It is quite evident that you have not the nature of God in you, for the divine nature in the soul makes it start back, and say, “How far can I get away from anything that looks like wrong? I hate the very appearance of evil.”

The Christian does not deny himself this or that, merely because he feels under an obligation to do so, or because he dreads the lash of God’s whip. No, if he could indulge his new nature to the full, he would continually swim in the sea of perfection. If he could be what he wishes to be, he would never think a wrong thought, much less speak an evil word.

Now, the divine nature that is in him fights against sin—it cannot help doing so—and it clings to that which is good and craves after that which is right. Just as the ox longs to drink water and stands in a pool of it on a hot day, and drinks and drinks again, so does the Christian seek to drink in the life and purity of God—not because he is told to do so, or because some outside force operates upon him, but because the new nature is within him, and he longs, therefore, to indulge it to the full. And that new nature, being the nature of God, longs after that which is pure, and lovely, and of good report.

The instrument with which this new nature fights against the world is faith. And faith conquers, first, by *regarding the unseen reward which awaits us*. The world comes and offers pleasure as the reward of

sin, but faith says, "There are greater pleasures to be had by abstaining from sin." The world says, "Take this gain today," but faith says, "No, I will put what I have out at interest—there is something infinitely better to be had hereafter."

In its beginning, faith generally works in that way—it despises all the treasures of Egypt and values far more the eternal rewards that Christ has laid up for it in heaven. But do you not see that there is a measure of selfishness there in both cases? The sinner sins in order to be happy, as he thinks—and the newborn man abstains from sin in order to be happy. Well, that is a good thing to do, though the motive be not the most commendable, and there is a measure of faith about it, for faith is looking for the future rewards, and believes in the heaven which God has prepared for them that love Him.

But as faith grows, it attains to something better than that, for *it recognizes the unseen Presence which is with us*. The world says, "Come with us and go our way. We will pat you on the back and say that you are a good fellow—and you will have a fine time if you come with us." But faith says, "I do not trouble about how I appear in your eyes, for there is another eye which I can see, but which you cannot see, for God is looking at me and I am most of all concerned to be right in His sight."

Faith realizes that the newborn nature is in the divine presence and thus makes God's presence to be just as real and just as vivid as the presence of men. And that presence of God altogether outweighs the presence of men—and the believing soul says to the world, "To please you, I dare not do that which is wrong in the sight of God, for who are you, compared with the Most High God? I will not do wrong in order to escape your frown, for, by so doing, I should receive the frown of God, and I must maintain my integrity before Him."

That, you see, is a higher position than the one I first mentioned, for faith not only regards the unseen reward which awaits the believer, but faith recognizes the unseen presence of God and is moved by an all-constraining desire to please Him.

That was a very striking incident in the life of our dear brother Oncken, of Germany, when the burgomaster of Hamburg said to him, "I hear, sir, that you have been baptizing at night." "I have, sir," he replied, "because the law will not permit me to do it by day." "How dare you immerse these persons?" asked the burgomaster. "I dare to do it," answered Mr. Oncken, "because it is the law of God." "And you have done it in defiance of the law of the land! Now, sir, do you see this little finger of mine?" "Yes," replied Mr. Oncken, "I see it." "Well, sir, as long as that little finger lives, I will keep you down, for I am determined to put an end to this movement." "But Mr. Burgomaster," said Mr. Oncken, "not only can I see your little finger, but I can also see a great arm which you do not see. That is the arm of the eternal God, and as long as that arm can move, you will not be able to put me down, for I am only doing the will of JEHOVAH."

Years after that stormy scene, I went to preach in Hamburg in connection with the opening of my brother Oncken's chapel, and among the notable gentlemen who helped to honor that occasion by their presence was that very burgomaster. He still had his little finger, but he was not there to put Mr. Oncken down. He came to contribute to Mr. Oncken's work and to show that the great arm of God had beaten the little finger of the burgomaster.

That kind of experience has been many times repeated in the world. The men of the world resolve to put us down, but it cannot be done. If we were simply of men, we might be put down—but we are of God and the divine nature in us must conquer in the long run.

When faith rises still further, it feels that the soul so loves God and so wishes to delight in Him, and becomes so closely united to God, that *it takes pleasure in all that in which God takes pleasure*. It is true faith that believes that God takes pleasure in the humble actions of poor creatures such as we are, but our faith has that confidence. It believes God to be a kind and tender Father, delighting in what His children do and therefore, faith says, "I cannot grieve Him, so, be gone from me, sinful world! Away with your gold, and your silver, and your smiles, and your frowns. I dare not be influenced by any of these things and so grieve my God." And daily, as faith grows stronger and stronger, it tramples the world more and more under its feet and altogether abhors it.

To the genuine Christian, Christ is life's one aim. He sets that mark before him and shoots at it. I once saw a colonel shooting at a target. There were two targets near each other and he made a center at

one of them. The attendant called out, “Which target was that gentleman shooting at?” “The one on the left,” was the answer. “I thought so,” said the man, “for he hit the one on the right.”

There are some people who are always shooting at the world and it seems to be their great aim to hit it, but the Christian is always aiming at Christ—and if he has not made the center yet, he will shoot again and again until he does, for his great desire is that he may live for Christ alone, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness “which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,”

So, I hope you see that if faith is the conquering weapon and we intend to be conquerors, we must become believers in the invisible God. And in order to exercise faith in the invisible God in Christ Jesus, we must be born-again, for, until that new nature comes into us, we never do believe in Christ. We may believe a great deal in ourselves, we may believe in worldly society, in its threats, or in its bribes, but we do not believe in Christ.

But how blessed is that man who, at the last, will be able to say, “I have faithfully served my God. I have turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. I have not considered myself. I have courted no man’s praise, I have not sought self or gain. What I had to spare, I gave to God’s cause and to the poor. What I could gather, I distributed according to the necessities of my fellow men. I have lived for God, and for Christ. and for the truth—I have not lived for myself.” The man who can truthfully say that is a saved man.

Whether you know it or not, my friend, that is salvation—to be saved from sin and from self—and there is no getting salvation from the groveling meanness of selfishness except by being born-again. For self clings to every man until he is born-again—and it is not always gone even then. Satan spoke the truth when he said to the Lord, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” He will not be ready to part with life itself until he gets a higher life, and a better one, imparted to him by the Spirit of God.

Again I say that this truth throws us on our beam-ends. If we are to be saved, we must look to God. We must seek salvation at His hands. We must ask Him for faith and what a mercy it is that He waits to give it! You are nothing and God will be everything to you. Get to the end of yourself and that will be a proof that God has already begun with you. Cease to believe in your own merits or your own virtues. Put away all trust in yourself, and come and trust in God as He is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ, and you have received that salvation which will keep on progressing until all sin shall be driven out of you and you shall dwell forever where Jesus is—as unselfish as Jesus is—as pure, as blessed, as glorious as He is. God grant this to us all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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