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(The following is an excerpt from chapter 8 of Andrew Murray's book, PRAYER. It is as he wrote it. I have taken the liberty to change the layout slightly to make it more preacher friendly.)

THE VICTORIOUS LIFE

In the chapter on 'The More Abundant Life', we viewed the matter chiefly from the side of our Lord Jesus. We saw that there is to be found in him - the crucified, and the risen, and the glorified one who baptises with the Holy Spirit - all that is needful for a life of abundant grace. In speaking of the victorious life, we shall now look at the matter from another standpoint. We want to see how a Christian can live really as a victor. We have already often said that the prayer life is not something which can be improved by itself. It is so intimately bound up with the entire spiritual life that it is only when that whole life (previously marked by lack of prayer) becomes renewed and sanctified that prayer can have its rightful place of power. We must not be satisfied with less than the victorious life to which God calls his children.

You remember how our Lord, in the seven epistles in the Revelation of John, concludes with a promise to those who overcome. Take the trouble of going over that seven-times repeated 'him that overcometh'; and notice what unspeakably glorious promises are there given. And they were given even to churches like Ephesus, that had lost its first love; and Sardis, to whom it was said, 'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead' (Rev. 3.1); and Laodicea, with her lukewarmness and self-satisfaction - as proof that, if only they would repent, they might win the crown of victory. The call comes to every Christian to strive for the crown. It is impossible to be a healthy Christian, still more impossible to be a preacher in the power of God, if everything is not sacrificed to gain the victory.

The answer to the question, of how we attain to it, is simple. All is in Christ. 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ' (2 Cor. 2.14). 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37). All depends on our right relationship to Christ, our entire surrender, perfect faith, and unbroken fellowship with him. But you wish to know how to attain to all this.

Listen once more to the simple directions as to the way by which the full enjoyment of what is prepared for you in Christ may be yours. These are - a new discovery of sin; a new surrender to Christ; a new faith in the power which will make it possible for you to persevere.

1. A new discovery of sin

In Romans 3, you find described the knowledge of sin which is necessary, in repentance, for forgiveness 'That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God' (verse 19). There you took your stand, you recognised your sin more or less consciously, and confessed it, and you obtained mercy. But if you would lead the victorious life, something more is needful. This comes with the experience that in you, that is, in your flesh, there 'dwelleth no good thing' (Rom. 7.18). You have a delight in the law of God after the inner man, but you see another law in your members bringing you into captivity to the law of sin and compelling you to cry out: 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (verse 24). It is not, as it was at conversion, when you thought over your few or many sins. This work goes much deeper. You find that, as a Christian, you have no power to do the good that you wish to do. You must be brought to a new and deeper insight into the sin of your nature and into your utter weakness, even though you are a Christian, to live as you ought. And you will learn to cry out: 'Who shall deliver me; I, wretched man, a prisoner bound under the law of sin?'

The answer to this question is: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. 7.25). Then follows the revelation of what there is in Christ. It is not just as given in Romans 3. It is more: I am in Christ Jesus, and 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death', (Rom. 8.2) under which I was bound. It is the experience that the law or power of the life of the Spirit in Christ has made me free and now calls on me, in a new sense and by a new surrender, to acknowledge Christ as the bestower of the victory.

2. A new surrender to Christ

You may have used these words 'surrender' and 'consecration' many times, but without rightly understanding what they mean. As you have been brought by the teaching of Romans 7 to a complete sense of the hopelessness of leading a true Christian life, or a true prayer life, by your own efforts, so you feel that the Lord Jesus must take you up, by his own power, in an entirely new way; and must take possession of you, by his Spirit, in an entirely new measure. This alone can preserve you from constantly sinning afresh. This only can make you really victorious. This leads you to look away from yourself, really to get free from yourself, and to expect everything from the Lord Jesus.

If we begin to understand this, we are prepared to admit that in our nature there is nothing good, that it is under a curse, and is nailed with Christ to his cross. We come to see what Paul means when he says that we are dead to sin by the death of Christ. Thus do we obtain a share of the glorious resurrection life there is in him. By such an insight we are encouraged to believe that Christ, through his life in us, through his continual indwelling, can keep us. Just as, at our conversion, we had no rest till we knew he had received us so now we feel the need of coming to him, to receive from him the assurance that he has really undertaken to keep us by the power of his resurrection life. And we feel then that there must be an act as definite as his reception of us at conversion, by which he gives us the assurance of victory. And although it appears to us to be too great and too much, yet the man who casts himself, without plea, into the arms of Christ will experience that he does indeed receive us into such a fellowship as will make us, from the beginning onwards, 'more than conquerors'.

3. A new faith in the power which will make it possible for you to persevere in your surrender

You have heard of Keswick, and the truth for which it stands. It is that Christ is prepared to take upon himself the care and preservation of our lives every day, and all the day long, if we trust him to do it. In the testimony given by many, this thought is emphasised. They have told us that they felt themselves called to a new surrender, to an entire consecration of life to Christ, reaching to the smallest things, but they were hindered by the fear of failure. The thirst after holiness, after an unbroken fellowship with Jesus, after a life of persevering childlike obedience, drew them one way. But the question arose: 'Shall I continue faithful?' And to this question there came no answer, till they believed that the surrender must be made, not in their own strength, but in a power which was bestowed by a glorified Lord. He would not only keep them for the future, but he must first make possible for them the surrender of faith which expects that future grace. It was in the power of Christ himself that they were able to present themselves to him.

O Christian, only believe that there is a victorious life! Christ, the victor, is your Lord, who will undertake for you in everything and will enable you to do all that the Father expects from you. Be of good courage. Will you not trust him to do this great work for you who has given his life for you and has forgiven your sins? Only dare, in his power, to surrender yourself to the life of those who are kept from sin by the power of God. Along with the deepest conviction that there is no good in you, confess that you see in the Lord Jesus all the goodness of which you have need, for the life of a child of God; and begin literally to live 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Gal. 2.20).

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