

PERILS
OF THE
VICTORIOUS LIFE

by

Charles G. Trumbull

from

Victory in Christ

©1959

**America's Keswick, Whiting, NJ
Published by CLC Publications
Ft. Washington, PA 19034**

Used by permission

In the truly Victorious Life the Christian believer, having put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11), moves forward under the protection of the shield of faith, wherewith he is able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the Evil One (v. 16). God's Word is absolute on the completeness of the victory that is the experience of every child of God who trusts that victory wholly to Christ. It is not a once-for-all victory; it is a moment-by-moment victory, had each moment only in the present, but had completely in that present as the believer "looks away" from all else "unto Jesus," the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

But what a perilous life it is! Satan hates it; for it is an incarnate advertisement of the sufficiency of his Conqueror, Jesus Christ. Therefore to trust Christ for complete victory is to be moved up into the front line trench of the Christian warfare; and front line trenches are perilous when the attack is on. There is no life in the world so perilous as the Victorious Life. And there is no life so safe. Where the onslaughts of the Adversary are the most terrific, the grace of the Captain of our salvation is the most effectively demonstrated.

Some of the perils are so subtle, so unexpected, that they may not be recognized unless we frankly face them in advance as terribly real possibilities—nay, not possibilities, but certainties. We need a supernaturally sensitized consciousness of these perils if we would be safeguarded.

For, as has been iterated and reiterated by all who know anything of real victory in Christ, the Victorious Life is not the unttempted life, but it is the most tempted life that anyone can live. Our Lord was tempted, and the "servant is not greater than his Lord" (John 13:16). Indeed, it may fairly be said that one never knows the full meaning of temptation until he has dared to trust Christ for full victory. Then come the temptations as never before: desperate, diabolical, hellish, subtle, refined, gross, spiritual, fleshly—the whole gamut of all the deception and the downpull that the world, the flesh, and the Devil can bring to the soul of a child of God. But Christ sees them all, and He is standing on sentry-guard in our lives against them; the Word of God had disclosed them all to us, and this "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17) is our sure weapon today as it was our Lord's in those victorious words, thrice repeated, "It is written" (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).

The secret of complete victory is faith: simply believing that *Jesus has done and is doing it all*. Victory is entered upon by a single act of faith, as is salvation. Victory is maintained by the attitude of faith. But suppose the believer, having experienced the miracle of victory over sin through trusting his Lord's sufficiency, comes, somehow, to doubt that sufficiency? At once his victory is broken, and he fails. This is possible at any moment. And at once, if there should be failure through unbelief, comes a real peril. The lie of Satan is whispered in the ear, "You have sinned; and that proves that you never had the blessing you thought you had; you never had the Victorious Life." This is a lie, of course, as are most of Satan's attacks. They say at Keswick, "If you *should*

fail, shout Victory!” Not with any idea of denying the reality of the failure, but in recognition of the fact that Jesus has not failed, and that there may be instantaneous and complete restoration through faith in His unimpaired sufficiency.

The peril just here is, either that we shall think we never had the blessing we thought we had; or that we shall imagine it will now take us some time to get back into the blessing. Satan may tell us that we cannot have complete victory again until we have gone apart alone with the Lord for a day, or an hour, or five minutes. But our Lord wants us to believe Him for instantaneous cleansing and restoration. The way back is as “it is written”: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). The confession can be unspoken, in the instant turning of the heart to God and claiming of cleansing. Every moment of delay in believing Him for this is further sin, grieving and wounding His loving heart.

Another peril is twofold: our supposing, on the one hand, that the longer we continue in victory the safer we are; and, on the other hand, that if by sin we have broken our victory we are thereby weaker, and less certain of continued victory. Both ideas are perilous and fallacious.

This is quickly seen when we recognize that Christ, and Christ alone, is our Victory. Suppose we should live for ten years in unbroken victory; that ten years’ record of unbroken victory does not add a particle to the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ; it does not increase the sufficiency of His grace, for that sufficiency is infinite. The assurance of our continuance in victory is not our good record in victory, but the grace of our Lord. Our Lord and His grace are the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). We have *all* His infinite grace at work for us and in us any moment and every moment. Therefore our continued record in victory adds nothing to our assurance of victory, for it adds nothing to Christ, and He alone is our assurance of victory. Of ourselves we are just as weak and helpless, just as sinful, just as impotent for victory after ten years’ unbroken victory as we were the first moment after being born again into the family of God. Even the veteran warrior in the Victorious Life is always capable of unbelief and of disastrous defeat in sin. He needs the moment-by-moment looking away unto Jesus as His only Saviour just as much as the young Christian who has just entered upon that life.

And so of failure: my unbelief and resulting sin do not weaken my Lord at all. Having confessed that sin and having been cleansed and restored by Him, He is just as strong, just as omnipotent, as though I had never failed. And my victory now, after failure, depends wholly upon His sufficient and omnipotent grace, which is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We shall be safeguarded from these two perils, of overconfidence through continued victory, and of weakening fear through failure, if we remember God's Word concerning the absoluteness of the victory that is ours in Christ. That victory is not a relative thing, not a comparative thing, not a matter of degree at all: it is the freedom with which the Son sets men free (John 8:36). Not that we are given "sinless perfection." We always have our sinful nature, which can sin and will sin any moment that we fail to trust Christ for His victory in us. But as we trust Him, His victory in us is absolute.

The very joy of the yielded life, when God's will is wholly accepted, brings with it another peril. It has been said that when Satan finds he cannot prevent one from doing the whole will of God, he then tries to drive that one beyond the will of God. And it is a perilous thing to go beyond the will of God, even in matters that of themselves are right.

It often happens, for example, that the Victorious Life Christian is driven beyond the will of God into imaginary duties. Satan comes as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), suggesting that the believer do this or that thing, good in itself but not the will of God for that one. The believer has found great blessing in listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and in instant obedience to His leadings; and when Satan speaks, giving leadings in directions that of themselves are entirely right, the unsuspecting believer follows those leadings, no blessing results, and then follow anxiety, confusion, perhaps doubt and fog.

God prompts us, for example, to speak to this or that one about Jesus as Saviour. We do so, and we have the joy of leading a soul into salvation.

Now comes Satan with the insistent suggestion that we speak to one and another, under all sorts of circumstances and at all times, about salvation or victory. We follow the impulse, which is not of God, and no blessing follows. A soul-winning Christian had a "leading" to go to a certain street and number in the city where he lived and to talk with the persons there about Christ as their Saviour. The house was one of which he knew nothing, but he went. He rang the bell, and after some time of waiting he found that it was an unoccupied house. That leading was evidently not from God. The resulting confusion and doubt in that young man's mind are easy to see.

It is possible to fall into confusion again, as to confession of sin. Perhaps we have confessed to a fellow Christian some personal sin or failure of our own, and real blessing has resulted, both to that one and to ourselves. Then the suggestion comes to us that, inasmuch as that confession was so blessed, we must now confess to some fellow Christian every sin that we recognize, perhaps some sins that were long ago put away, forgiven, and cleansed by our Lord, or every present failure or mistake of any sort. And the obsession of confession takes hold of us, and into the fog we go. God does not want this. God will guide us as to when He may wish a confession made to another; and He will guide us

as to when to let it be a matter wholly between Himself and ourselves. One general principle here is that it is to be kept to God and ourselves unless someone else will be injured by our withholding confession. If a confession to another or to others will accomplish nothing except giving them a knowledge of our sin, it is to be questioned whether God would have such confession made.

Or again, having surrendered the whole life to the mastery of the Lord, having given up the pride of the flesh, all luxuries and self-gratification, there is the peril of asceticism. Perhaps fine clothes, or jewelry, or overindulgence in food were among the things that had to go when we surrendered wholly to the Lord. As we find our new joy in Him, not in these things, we may be driven beyond the will of God into an asceticism that dishonors Him. More than one wholly surrendered Christian has mistakenly become indifferent and careless about personal attire or appearance, and has actually become repellant to others because of this mistake. Or, having been delivered from the sin of luxury in jewelry, we may be driven beyond the will of God into supposing that every bit of gold or silver we have should now be given away or sold and the proceeds given directly to the Lord's service. Christian women have actually sold their wedding rings under this form of sadly mistaken asceticism. The spirit is commendable, but neither the guidance nor the results are necessarily of God.

We are to maintain a golden mean between the extremes of asceticism and luxury. We are to take care of our personal appearance, our cleanliness, our clothing, so as to be attractive to our fellow men; it is a positive duty to be attractive Christians, both in dress and in appearance, that others may be won to us in order that we may win them to our Lord. We are to do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

This includes our pleasures as well as all else. We are not to believe the lie of Satan that everything that is pleasurable or attractive is sinful. We are to enjoy our meals, for example, not reduce them to the minimum of mere physical sustenance. And so of other temporal details of our life.

We may get the mistaken idea that when we have a choice between something that is hard and something that is easy, the hard thing is always God's will. His will may be just the opposite. There is not necessarily any virtue in difficulty, and there is not necessarily any sin in ease. The only question is, What is God's will for us in each matter that comes before us?

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). And we are never to abandon our God-given common sense in the Victorious Life.

Here is one way of distinguishing between God's leadings and Satan's "angel of light" leadings. To the really surrendered Christian, who is trusting Christ for victory, God's leadings and promptings never nag, or worry, or har-

ass. Satan's do just this. If one has a seeming "leading" do to something that in itself is good, yet with the impulse there is a sense of nagging disquiet, almost as though a mosquito or a gnat were buzzing about to try to drive us in a certain direction, that is Satan's earmark, his calling card; and his false "leading" is to be instantly recognized and rejected. The Holy Spirit's leadings to the surrendered and trusting Christian come with a sense of peace and quiet, even if they point in a really difficult direction which only the grace of God can enable one to follow.

Do Not Depend on Experiences

The Victorious Life is a supernatural life: it is a living miracle, a thrilling adventure, for it is God's work and God's working. Our early experiences in the life of victory are likely to be so different from anything we have known before, so out of the ordinary in supernatural demonstration of God's grace and power, that at once we are plunged into a peril.

That peril is that we mistakenly suppose we must continually be having thrilling, unexpected, supernatural evidences of God's power. And if these supernatural phenomena do not occur, we are tempted to think that something is wrong.

Now God wants us to trust, not in supernatural experiences, but in Himself. It is for *Him* to decide when the unusual shall come into our life, and when our life shall be commonplace and humdrum so far as things of sight and sense are concerned. It would seem to be a safe statement that it is God's purpose that the "supernatural," so far as circumstances and experiences are concerned, should be the unusual rather than the usual in the life of His wholly trusting children. (Of course we remember that victory over sin is itself supernatural, and that God expects us to live in continual victory over sin, which means that our life in that respect is to be continually supernatural, always the "life that is Christ." This is apart from the question of the supernatural experiences or phenomena that are often granted to us in our ministry in His name.) And so He would deliver us from the peril of testing Him, or testing our victory, by circumstances or manifestations, and rather He asks us to trust "just Himself."

It has been well said that everyone needs two conversions: first, from the natural to the supernatural; and second, from the supernatural to the natural.

Let us be delivered, also, from the peril of unconsciously assuming an infallible knowledge of God's will. God's leadings may be so blessed and so unmistakable that, as we testify to others about them, we speak of how "God said this to me," or "God led me to do that." And then, if we are not on our guard, we thoughtlessly slip into habitual expressions about God's leading us. Some true and yielded Christians almost never speak of any action or decision of

theirs without prefacing it with the words that God told them to do this or that. And quite often in the experience of such a one later circumstances show plainly that God did not tell them to do this or that, but that they had misunderstood His leading, as is possible at any time for any believer, even while wholly yielded.

There is an unconscious assumption of infallibility in that expression which can become really unconscious cant. Is it not better, instead of saying, "God told me to do this," to say, "I believe God would have me do this"? Let us recognize that we *may* be mistaken. Even if we are quite certain in our own hearts and minds of what God's leading is, it is not well to claim infallible knowledge, without qualification, in our conversation with others.

The blessings that Christ gives us in the Victorious Life—in the ninefold "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23), for example—are so wonderful that we are in danger of thinking more about the blessings than of the Blessor. Joy becomes such a wonderful experience—the supernatural joy which nothing can defeat, which is independent of all circumstances and environment—that we may, without realizing it, come to think more of this "joy of our Lord" than we do of our Lord Himself. He wants us to worship, not the fruit of the Spirit, but the Spirit. There is a needed reminder in the saying that is attributed to Spurgeon: "I looked at Jesus, and the dove of peace flew into my heart. I looked at the dove of peace, and she flew away."

The Christian who is wholly trusting the Lord for victory soon realizes that many Christians about him have not seen the truth of victory, and are not thus trusting Christ. He may be in close contact with Christians who are older, much farther along in many ways, yet not living in the victory-secret that is so precious to him. And then comes the peril of pride. Almost without realizing it the Christian who knows Christ as victory can let slip some word criticizing a fellow Christian who is not in on the secret, or a condescending comment on such a one's mistake or failure. "Holier than thou" is one of the perils of the Victorious Life. Of course the instant one speaks thus of another, or thinks in his inmost heart thus of another, his victory is gone; he has sinned. And we must recognize this peril if we would be kept from it. The Christian who is living in victory is in himself no whit better than the carnal Christian who is plainly sinning. The self-nature of the two is identical: hopelessly sinful. The only good thing about the victorious Christian is Christ; and we deserve no credit for Christ: the glory and honor and victory are all His. True victory, therefore, must keep us humble: and it will.

Yet it is a sad fact that more than one young person, or older person, has gone away from a Victorious Life conference where the Lord was received in His fullness and victory was entered into, and has returned to the home church to speak disparagingly or critically of other Christians, even perhaps of the minister himself, who may not have seen and accepted the truth of victory by faith in

Christ. This has brought the very preciousness of the message of victory into disrepute, has wounded the Lord in the house of His friends, and of course has made it well-nigh impossible to pass on the truth of victory to those who have not known it. The truly victorious Christian speaks of others always in humility, in keen consciousness of his own natural sinfulness and helplessness, and in that perfect love that is kind, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, taketh not account of evil, never faileth (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Then there is the peril of being unteachable.

Here is one who has entered into victory through faith in Christ. At once there comes from the Holy Spirit a new illumination on God's Word, a new knowledge of things never before known, a new wisdom, unmistakable and directly from God. There is a flood of light on duties that were heretofore confused. He is able to counsel others as never before. All this is not imaginary; it is genuine and vital. And he praises God with gratitude unspeakable.

Then perhaps a fellow Christian criticizes him for something he has done or said, and says that it was not as it ought to be. This fellow Christian may not know Christ as victory at all, and the one who is criticized is keenly conscious of the fact that his critic has not the illumination and the victory that are his own. Now comes the peril: that this victorious Christian will say to himself about the other: "He cannot tell me anything about this. He does not know the secret of victory. The Bible has not been opened to him by the Holy Spirit as it has to me. He has not the light that I have." And so the heart is closed to the criticism, and the man has fallen into the peril of being unteachable. And all the time the criticism that has come to him from perhaps an unenlightened Christian is sound and true, and God sent it to him for his own guidance and blessing.

May God deliver us, in victory, from this subtle danger of unwillingness to learn from those who may indeed not be as far along in the Christian life as we are. Why, a completely victorious Christian can learn from the criticisms of unsaved, unregenerate people! And often he ought to. The Victorious Life is no guarantee of omniscience, or infallibility in knowledge. Humility of mind, eagerness to know any and every criticism that anyone may have concerning us, and then grateful acceptance of whatever truth there may be in that criticism (and there is pretty sure to be some truth in it), is our safeguarding against this peril of unconscious unwillingness to learn.

Beware of Presumption and Complacency

After one has recognized the peril of being driven beyond God's will, there comes the peril of sagging below God's will.

We see that victory is all of grace; that no works of our own are needed to accomplish it. We rejoice that we have learned that we may “let God do it all,” and He abundantly vindicates His pledge that He will as we trust Him.

And now comes the peril of presuming on God’s grace: substituting presumption for faith, license for liberty.

We used to think that the more we studied the Bible the more victorious we should be. We used to think that the more time we spent in prayer the more victory we could have. We see now that even these good works cannot accomplish our victory, but that simple faith in the sufficiency of God’s grace is the secret.

Very well, then, we are tempted to think, we need not be so careful now to take the same amount of time for our Bible study, or for our prayer life, because “Christ is doing it all.” And down into defeat we go the moment we have been deceived by that lie of Satan. True, victory is by faith; but faith must be fed; and faith cannot be fed apart from daily nourishment from the Word of God, and daily time alone with God in prayer. The new experience of freedom from the power of sin through the sufficiency of Christ should result in *more* time with His Word, *more* time with Him in prayer, not less. We cannot know continuance in victory if we presume on God’s grace and neglect our opportunities of fellowship with Him.

Never, never, NEVER during this life dare any Christian neglect the written Word of God. A young Christian who had seen Christ as Victory and was rejoicing in the new blessings of freedom and power was talking with a veteran Christian minister about it all. And this was the sound word the older man spoke: “Now keep close to the Word of God.” And he went on to tell the younger man how, time after time in the history of the so-called “higher life” experience among Christians through the Christian centuries, one after another either of individuals or of groups of Christians had gone onto the rocks and down into wreck through supposing that they had, by Christ and the Holy Spirit within them, all that they needed, and could therefore safely pay little attention to the Bible.

We must not sag below God’s will, moreover, in the ordinary duties of life in our relationships with our fellows. Those who have found the joy and blessing of the deep things of God are often careless in keeping appointments with their fellow men, careless about answering letters, careless about money matters—not involving honesty, but just exactness and thoughtfulness. The Christian who is trusting Christ for full victory dishonors Christ if he does not establish and maintain a reputation for being *utterly dependable*, in his contact with other human beings, *in every relationship*. Failure to keep an appointment on the minute, to be scrupulously exact in the fulfillment of every small as well as large obligation, cannot be excused on the ground that God’s larger interests

overrule the lesser matters. There are no “lesser matters” with God. The Holy Spirit is a Person of orderliness, and punctuality, and efficiency; if our lives are not conspicuous for this it is because He is not really allowed to control. God keeps sun and moon, earth and stars, moving in dependable and orderly ways; should we not let Him do as much for us who are members of the Body of Christ?

In every blessing there is a corresponding peril. In our knowledge of the marvelous blessing, for example, that our Lord will instantly forgive our sins and cleanse and restore us upon confession to Him and faith in Him, there is the peril that we may take sin too lightly: tolerate a break in our victory as though it were rather unimportant after all. Complacency in defeat is a peril of the Victorious Life. We would not say, doubtless, that we are willing to “sin that grace may abound” (Rom. 6:1); nevertheless we may unconsciously fall into that perilous attitude. More than one Christian who has known Christ as complete Victory will testify that, learning by experience the possibility of instant and complete restoration after failure, he began to tolerate breaks and failures in his life until they became the expected rather than the unexpected, the usual instead of the unusual; yes, even the habitual. Oh, there is tragedy then, indeed! And God may have to go deep with one who has thus played with God’s grace before He can bring that one back again into habitual victory. Spiritual surgery may be necessary, of a kind that will cause an agony of suffering, before the cancer of “sinning that grace may abound” has been cut out. But, praise God, the Master Physician is ready and able for this, and after it has been done we shall praise Him that it was done, even though we may have thought He had cast us off while the operating and the hospital treatment were in progress. But why should we make it necessary for Him to do this? We need never lose our horror of sin, if in Christ we will see sin as He sees it, and hate it as the loathsome, hellish thing that it is.

While there will come to the victorious Christian temptations to subtle sin, refined sin, sin on a seemingly very high plane, the mystery of our sinful nature and of the wiles of the Adversary is such that even gross sin is one of the perils of the Victorious Life. We need not try to explain this; but history, both in New Testament times and ever since, abundantly declares it. There is something about the life of spiritual power and victory that, when broken into in the slightest way by unbelief, seems to expose one most terribly to sins of gross immorality and degradation. Those who have gone highest with the Lord can go lowest. Let us recognize this peril; let us confess this possibility of our utterly sinful nature; and then let us yield ourselves afresh to the mastery of our holy Lord, and trust Him afresh for His sufficiency to safeguard us from this awful denial of His name and betrayal of our stewardship.

The lesson from this particular peril is that, after we have known the best Christ offers us, to accept anything less than that best for a single instant of time is to be in deadly peril. If we *should* slip in any slightest way, if we

should find that sin has entered through unbelief in our Lord's sufficiency, let us instantly stop anything we are doing and take the time necessary to confess to Him, claim His forgiveness and entire cleansing, and trust Him at once for His complete restoration and victory. Satan would like us to think that because of what we may be doing just then for the Lord we must leave until later the matter of getting wholly back. If a failure has come toward the close of the day, perhaps after a hard day's work, when we are about ready to retire, the temptation will come that we are physically or mentally too weary now to think or pray this thing through, and we will get a good night's sleep and then let the Lord clear it all up in the morning. Deadly perilous is that. May God keep us from ever daring to go to sleep with unconfessed sin in our hearts, and in conscious loss of the victory that is ours in Christ. More than one Christian who has thus presumed on the grace of God has failed to let the Lord clear up everything in the morning, and has gone on into another day of defeat. "Now is the acceptable time" (2 Cor. 6:2), not only for salvation from the penalty of sin, but for salvation from its power, and restoration into that salvation if we have faithlessly denied our Lord. "Make me to walk on mine high places" (Hab. 3:19) is the only safe prayer and plane for the Christian who has ever known victory.

Some Final Perils of the Victorious Life

It is perilous to look back at our best blessings of victory in Christ as though those best blessings were necessarily in the past. This is an almost inevitable temptation, because the new blessings of victory when one first trusts Christ for it are so new, so unexpected, so overwhelming and more than satisfying. And we may look longingly back at those first hours or days or months, and unconsciously suppose that we can never again have just the rich blessing we had then. This is to deny the sufficiency of God's grace, it is to deny that our Lord is "the same yesterday, today, and forever."

And it is equally perilous to look to the future as the time when God's best blessings of victory for us are to be realized. God wants us to have His best *now*. To put that best either into the past or into the future is a peril that Satan will do his best to bring us into and keep us in. But the sufficiency of our Lord's grace, while it was true in the past and will be true in the future, is described by the Holy Spirit in the infallible Word of God as being in the present. "My grace is sufficient for thee," is His word (2 Cor. 12:9). And the very name of our Jehovah-Jesus is "*I am*."

May just a word be spoken here as to another peril, that we may have a sensible recognition of this and be safeguarded accordingly? It is as to the relationship of men and women in the spiritual life. In general, it is evident from the Word of God as to the marriage relation, and from experience and observation and common sense, that the deeper spiritual relationships between fellow Christians should observe the same lines that the ordinary conventionalities of life insist upon: that is, that the deeper spiritual relationships should be be-

tween men and men, and between women and women, rather than between two persons of opposite sex—unless indeed God is bringing together two such persons that their lives may be united in marriage.

Not that there should be any unnaturalness in this, or any unhealthy self-consciousness when men and women, older or younger, properly talk together or pray together about their Lord and their possessions in their Lord. But Satan as an angel of light may lead on through their spiritual fellowship two such persons into a spiritual intimacy and a spiritual dependence upon each other which is not of God, and which can lead to unhappiness in more than one life, or real disaster.

Finally, let us recognize the peril of being unhuman—not inhuman, but unhuman—because of the depth and intensity of our spiritual life. Not to be “human” is not of the Lord. We are living not only a spiritual life, but a bodily life as well; and we are living among those who also are in human bodies, in a world of rightful temporal interests as well as eternal interests. Let us not make the mistake of so living that persons shall say of us, as they have some, that we have a deep interest in others’ souls, but none at all in their bodies. Let us be human. Let us be kind. Let us deliberately make it our business to cultivate certain secular, human interests, that we may have points of contact with the many round about us who know nothing of the spiritual interests that are so precious to us.

Some of the greatest spiritual leaders, some of the most blessedly used ambassadors of Christ, have had hobbies, such as nature-study, music, or something else of that sort, which God has blessed to them and to others. Such a hobby keeps one in touch with the present-day wonderful world which God made. It gives one “bait” which he can use to catch the interest of another, and through that “bait” bring that other to Christ and to victory.

We are not to be afraid of healthy amusements of the right sort. If we go with a friend to see or play a tennis match or a baseball game, if we are watching or playing a game of checkers, let us not take it in such a way that everyone shall see that it has no real interest to us, and we are just making a concession to the earthly interests of our unenlightened friends, and patiently waiting until we can give our time to the really worthwhile things. This is not victory. It may sound harsh to call it asceticism and even priggishness; but that is the way it will seem to others, perhaps rightly so.

God wants to deliver us all the time from the peril of narrowness in the Victorious Life. If we have any musical ability, let us praise God for it and let us ask Him prayerfully to enable us to cultivate that ability that He may use our music to his glory. And this does not mean that we shall play or sing only hymns, either. There is plenty of other music that is not of the Devil, and that God would use to keep us close to our fellows in a joyous, healthy way.

Let us be very careful, too, about social courtesies. Christian people whose life-interests are wrapped up in the deeply spiritual are often criticized for carelessness about the little courtesies and attentions of their social relationships with others. This must not be; it dishonors our Lord. The Christian who is trusting Christ for victory should not be one whit less careful than is the man of the world or the society woman about those little niceties of life that betoken good breeding, good manners, true gentleness, and unselfish thoughtfulness for others. "The King's business" never requires discourtesy or lack of proper attentiveness to our fellows.

Moreover, let us not be deceived by letting the great needs of the outside world or of the church of Christ make such demands upon our time and energies that we are taken too much away from the loved ones in the home circle whom God has entrusted to us as our own supremely precious stewardship. Husbands and wives who have found Christ as their victory are often so eager to share this blessing with the greatest possible number that they unconsciously neglect the home—the children or the married partner—upon whom God would have them lavish their love and testimony and care beyond all others. Christians rejoicing in Christ as Victory sometimes need to "learn first to show piety towards their own family," remembering that "if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:4, 8).

The Victorious Life is the only all-around life on earth. It is lived by body, mind, and spirit: in all three victoriously; and it touches our fellow beings at proper points of contact with their bodies, minds, and spirits.

We shall need to be ever and always on our guard, sensitively awake to the approach of the enemy in all the thousand-and-one ways by which he will seek to find a cleft in our armor. But—and here is another peril to be avoided—we are not to think more of Satan than of Christ. We are to recognize the terrible reality of Satan; we are to study the Word of God about our Adversary, that we may know all that God wants us to know about him; and then we are to look away from Satan unto Jesus; for "amid all these things we are more than conquerors through him who has loved us," and "to God be the thanks who in Christ ever heads our triumphal procession, and by our hands waves in every place that sweet incense, the knowledge of him" (Weymouth, Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14).