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Is the Victorious Life Movement Scriptural?

By PAUL K. JEWETT

Westminster Theological Seminary, Class of 1945

I have learned that, as I trust Christ in surrender, there need be no fighting against sin, but complete freedom from the power and even the desire of sin. I have learned that this freedom, this more than conquering, is sustained in unbroken continuance as I simply recognize that Christ is my cleansing, reigning life (Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, *The Life That Wins*, page 16).

I know it is my duty to be perfect, but I am conscious I cannot be. I know that every time I commit sin, I am guilty, and yet I am quite certain that I must sin—that my nature is such that I cannot help it. I feel that I am unable to get rid of this body of sin and death, and yet I know I ought to get rid of it. . . . It is my agonizing death struggle with my corruption that proves me to be a living child of God. These two natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The old nature will never give up; it will never cry truce; it will never ask for a treaty to be made between the two. . . . What a fight is that. It were worth an angel's while to come from the remotest fields of ether to behold such a conflict (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Fainting Warrior," a sermon, Jan. 23, 1859).

IN MY early college days, I attended a Sunday school class taught by one well known for his knowledge of New Testament Greek. His learning, coupled with his pleasing manner of public discourse, which ever reflected his unfeigned Christian experience, impressed me greatly, and I came to anticipate with eagerness his weekly lesson.

Through some circumstance (I do not recall the occasion) he commenced a series of lessons on the theme, the Fullness of the Holy Spirit. I had never had any definite Christian instruction and, consequently, though I knew I had been saved by Christ, I was keenly

sensitive of my need of a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures and a closer walk with Him. Naturally, under such conditions, I was more than ready to embrace any course of action which would make me a "real spiritual Christian" and not just an "ordinary" one.

Our teacher constantly appealed to Scripture. He continually referred to that "victory through our Lord Jesus Christ", spoken of by Paul in I Corinthians 15:57. He told us that if we walked in the Spirit, we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). I began to read certain tracts that distinguished between the life of most Christians, which was one of defeat, and that "higher life" of "habitual victory" over all "known sin". I read the testimonies of those who had received a wholly new conception and consciousness of Christ, which was the secret of their overcoming life. They had always trusted Christ as their Saviour, but now they realized that Christ was not just an external Saviour from sin's penalty but that He literally dwelt within them, identifying Himself with them in body and in soul, and becoming their very life. Paul says, "It is no more I that live, but Christ liveth in me"; and again, "To me to live is Christ". All I had to do to realize this "life on the highest plane" was to surrender completely to Christ and in simple faith trust Him to keep me from the power of sin. This I did, after some difficulty, and immediate victory over all known sin was mine (so I believed). I was delivered

from the struggles of Romans 7 into the conquest and victory of Romans 8. I became so enthusiastic, as time went on, that I talked with others about my experience and sent tracts on the subject to friends and acquaintances. So I continued for some time, thanking God each day for that moment-by-moment victory which was mine. Jesus Christ was now not only my Saviour but also my Lord, my life.

I never had another such experience, but gradually through study of the Scripture, prayer, consultation with other Christians, and meditation in my own heart, I became convinced that the matter of deliverance from sin was not so simple as I had supposed.

The teachers of the "Victorious Life" movement are no doubt for the most part sincere Christians, and especially are they to be commended in that they sense the lack of holy living on the part of God's people and are trying to do something about it. It is the means they use to accomplish this end of holiness of life—an end in itself very good—that we question. It is our desire to set forth some considerations which may help any who are perplexed to make a proper evaluation of the "Victorious Life" movement.

First, let it be noted that the greatest of saints in the church of Christ have always opposed the teaching set forth by present-day proclaimers of the victorious life. Were these teachers of victory to make a pilgrimage through the past, they would walk the centuries alone. Should they visit Antioch and listen to the eloquent Chrysostom, even in this early time they would hear the beginnings of a denial of their "freedom from all known sin" in those weighty words of the Antiochian preacher, "He who thinks he hath obtained anything, hath nothing". Or were they to leave Antioch and come to Africa to sit at the feet of a greater than Chrysostom, St. Augustine, they would hear the most ominous pronouncements against the sin of the human heart. All victorious life Christians plainly confess that they are delivered from the struggle of Romans 7 and walk in the light of Romans 8, but Augustine, who towers in greatness of mind and heart

far above all ordinary mortals, confessed plainly that "the good which he would, he did not, but the evil which he would not, that he did", thus making Romans 7 his common experience as he wrestled with the forces of evil.

Even Luther, a millennium afterward, though leader of the reformers in the greatest revival of the Christian church, seems to have made no progress over St. Augustine in this matter, for he too is a complete stranger to that habitual triumph over all the power of known sin claimed by those who lead the life of victory. He declared, with reference to the struggle of Romans 7, that this conflict between the flesh and the spirit "continues in us so long as we live, in some more and in others less, according as the one or the other principle is the stronger".¹

Our travelers would not have progressed very far beyond Luther before they came to the immortal dreamer, John Bunyan, and heard his tale of the Pilgrim's Progress; but would they not be amazed that Christian struggled with his sinful self all the way from the wicket gate to the river Jordan? It is quite patent that Christian (or should we say Bunyan) never had such an experience as those who testify that they have learned "as they trust Christ in surrender, there need be no fighting against sin, but complete freedom from the power and even the desire of sin".

Had they paused to hear Bishop

¹ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on Romans*, 7:22.

Berkeley, how surprised would they have been to hear the great seventeenth-century clergyman lament, "I cannot pray but I sin, I cannot preach but I sin, I cannot administer or receive the holy sacrament but I sin. My every repentance needs to be repented of, and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ".²

How they would have wondered when such an eminent divine as Jonathan Edwards, a century later, solemnly testified, "When I look into my heart and take a view of its wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me that, were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far below the sight of everything but the eye of sovereign grace, that alone can pierce down to such a depth. And it is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit left in my heart".³

John Newton was the author of

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see."

But the victorious life advocates would have deemed him a miserably defeated Christian when he testified of himself, "I have lived hitherto a poor sinner, and I believe I shall die one. Have I then gained nothing? Yes, I have gained that which I once would rather have been without—such accumulated proof of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart as I hope by the Lord's blessing has, in some measure, taught me to know what I mean when I say, Behold I am vile. . . . I was ashamed of myself when I began to seek it, I am more ashamed now".⁴

The Higher Life movement of England, which was the forerunner of the one with which we are concerned, was in vogue in the days of Spurgeon,

² A. W. Pink, *The Christian in Romans* 7, p. 10.

³ *Idem*, p. 11.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 12.

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Christ the Alpha and the Omega

By the REV. LAWRENCE B. GILMORE, Th.D.

Stated Supply of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati

WE ARE accustomed to say of anything hard to understand, "That's Greek to me." The Lord Jesus Christ, our exalted Saviour, asserts in Revelation 22:13: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end". This is Greek indeed, for in the Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, the first letter is A, or Alpha, and the last is large O, or Omega. It appears we have struck something profound and mysterious. Yet we must not carelessly repeat, "That's Greek to me," and look for something easier. We must rather apply our minds to the passage and determine as completely as possible what it tells us of our Redeemer.

Our English expression "from A to Z" occurs to us at the start as a possible help in the understanding of our text. It suggests the ideas of completeness and fullness. For example, to know anything from A to Z means to know it entirely. We are thus reminded of the immeasurable fullness of Christ. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

J. A. Bengel, the saintly German commentator (1687-1752), points out that the first and last of anything, in Scripture phraseology, is the thing itself, or the very whole. Thus it is stated in Ecclesiastes 10:13 concerning the fool's conversation: "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness". In the same idiom it is said of King Josiah: "And his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the books of the kings of Israel and Judah" (II Chron. 35:27).

The later Jews, the ones who lived in the time of the formation of the Talmud, often denoted the whole extent of something by the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Aleph and Tau. So the sayings arose that Adam had transgressed the whole law from Aleph to Tau; that Abraham observed the whole law from Aleph to Tau; that, when God blesses Israel, He does it from Aleph to Tau; and,

since Aleph-Tau represents entirety, it could fitly express the Shekinah, that is, the Divine Presence.

The appellation "the Alpha and the Omega" occurs in Revelation 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13. In the two former passages, it most probably refers to God the Father, whereas in the latter passage, by reason of the reference in the context to the Second Advent, it certainly signifies God the Son.

The Old Testament background of these verses is found in certain majestic passages in Isaiah in which God speaks of His eternity and power: "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he" (41:4); "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first and I am the last; and besides me there is no God" (44:6); "Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last" (48:12).

Concerning Isaiah 44:6, A. B. Davidson writes: "It is not a mere statement that Jehovah was from the beginning and will be at the end. It is a name indicating His relation to history and the life of men. He initiates it, and He winds it up. And He is present in all its movements" (*The Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 165).

The sense of the Alpha-Omega is established for us by its connection with Beginning-End and First-Last. God is the author and consummator of all things. He is eternal. He is the Lord of all. To Him, past things and future things are equally certain. "For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36).

In order that no doubt be felt about referring the Alpha-Omega of Revelation 22:13 to Christ, we need only recall the awesomely glorious scene of 1:17, 18, in which John sees his ascended Lord: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for

evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades".

The theological implications of the Alpha-Omega title of our Saviour are tremendous. We describe a person by his nature and his activity, that is, by what he is and by what he does. In the same manner, the Alpha-Omega designation indicates the divine Person and the divine activity of the Lord Jesus.

Since there is no letter before Alpha, there is nothing preceding Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Since there is no letter after Omega, there is nothing to usurp our Lord's place in the eternal future. His eternal and unchangeable character proves that He is not a creature, but that He is of the same divine essence as the Father. With the Father and the Spirit, He precedes the history of the universe; by His providence He now sustains it; and by His power He will consummate it.

Between the first and last letters of the alphabet there are all the others which one may use to express all realms of thought. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega—and all the other letters too. His Person is all-embracing and all-powerful. He is the origin and the goal of the universe and all creatures therein. Because of His divine nature and His redemptive work every creature is required to serve and honor Him to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

The exalted meaning of the Alpha-Omega was not lost on the Patristic commentators. They commonly referred all three instances of the phrase to Christ the Son. They helped establish the testimony set forth in the later creeds that "the Word of God was equal with God".

Thus Clement of Alexandria (about 150 to 215 A.D.) expresses in his *Stromata*, iv, 25, Christ's eternity and infinitude: "For he [the Son] is the circle of all powers rolled up and united into one unity. Wherefore the Word [Logos] is called the Alpha and the Omega, of whom alone

the end becomes the beginning, and ends again at the original beginning without any break".

Tertullian, who lived about 160 to 220 A.D., similarly writes in his treatise on Monogamy, v: "So also two Greek letters, the first and last, did the Lord take upon Himself, symbols of the beginning and the end meeting in Him, so that just as Alpha rolls on to Omega and Omega returns to Alpha, He might show that in Him is both the course of the beginning to the end and the return of the end to the beginning".

Poetic expression is given to this thought by Aurelius Prudentius, the celebrated Roman Christian poet who lived about 348 to 405 A.D., in a passage thus translated by Neale:

Of the Father's love begotten

Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,

He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.

This high doctrine of Christ as Alpha-Omega was also the deeply rooted belief of the Christian congregations. We hear of no attempt to dispute it. The belief was indeed marred to some degree by superstition. The Gnostics also employed the phrase in their heresies for figure jugglery and mysterious doctrines of various kinds. Yet the symbol did not lose its power. Before the last terrible persecution carried on by the Roman emperor Diocletian, who reigned from 284 to 305 A.D., on many tombstones and other objects the two letters stood for Christ. The custom spread over the Christian world. This is true especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, whether in opposition to the Arian heresy which denied the deity of Christ, or in imitation of the use of the symbol on the coins of Christian emperors. As far as we know, the symbol Alpha-Omega was avoided by the Arians. Countless examples of its use, however, have been found on graves, monuments, mosaics, frescoes, bricks, dishes, vases, cups, lamps, rings, and coins. In most cases, the letters are united with other symbols and titles of the Saviour. These hundreds of inscriptions, often crudely scrawled by poor peasants, practically all refer to Christ and indicate the profound belief of the early Chris-

tians in His deity.

We must hasten on to bring out three emphases in regard to this great title of our Lord.

His Divine Person

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega in His divine Person. Of the ascription of this title to our Lord in Revelation 22:13, Swete well says: "It is the crowning instance in this book of the attribution of divine prerogatives to the incarnate Son" (*Commentary*, p. 303). In that truly glorious book, *The Lord of Glory*, B. B. Warfield wrote: "The Apocalypse does not apply to our Lord directly the simple designation 'God'. But everything short of that is done to emphasize the seer's estimate of Him as a divine Being clothed with all the divine attributes. This is generally allowed; and those who are set upon having the Apocalypse witness to a lower christology commonly content themselves with the remark that its language must not be taken at its face value. . . . In point of fact the divine predicates are there; and whether the seer means anything by them may be safely left to the reader to decide" (pp. 294, 295).

William James, in his famous book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902, pp. 445-447, has a passage in which he disparages the idea that God's metaphysical attributes have value for a man's religious and moral life. With a strange blindness, James fails to see that the metaphysical attributes help to make God precious to the believer, who confidently rests on God just because God is eternal, underived, and self-sufficient. Likewise, since God the Son as well as God the Father is Alpha-Omega, eternal and self-existent, the believer safely rests in a Saviour who is able to save just because of His metaphysical divine attributes. It would do no good for Him to love us had He no power to save us.

His Divine Providence

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega in His divine providence. He sustains and directs the world-process. He exhibits complete purpose and fulfillment in history. "As creation owed its beginning to the Word of God, so in His incarnate glory He will bring it to its consummation by the great award" (Swete, *Commentary*, p. 303).

This historical activity of our Re-

deemer is well brought out in a splendid sermon by that great Princeton exegete and preacher, Professor G. T. Purves. He points out that the Lord Jesus is the central figure in the entire Apocalypse, just as His Second Advent is its theme, and then goes on to say: "And finally He proclaims Himself the author of the Apostle's vision: 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star'. For as in the early twilight, when the light and darkness combat with each other, the morning star heralds the coming day, so amid these visions of the conflict between spiritual light and darkness is the figure of Christ. The sure herald of the splendor of the everlasting dawn, He stands forth supremely—the Christ glorifying Himself by glorifying His people—the Christ conquering, ruling, judging, and rewarding" (*Faith and Life*, 1902, p. 22).

His Saving Power

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega in His saving power. He is the eternal Saviour, the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). "He, because he abideth for ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:24, 25). The believer is to look to Jesus, "the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). The believer is to rejoice in the eternal purpose of God in the eternal Christ: "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:4, 5). Trusting in Christ for complete salvation, we can sing with a profounder meaning than Charles Wesley saw in his own words:

"Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty."

In view of all this, the thought of Alpha-Omega should mean a great deal to us. It tells us we should have all our interests and activities and

affections so bound up with Christ that we can say again with Charles Wesley: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find".

Regarding His deity and His lordship over the universe, we shall praise, adore, and serve Him as the King of glory, the only-begotten Son of the Father. And we shall resist to the death all Unitarian and modernist tendencies that impinge on the deity of our blessed Redeemer or disparage His divine nature as the Second Person of the Trinity.

Seeing His providential control of the world-process, we shall trust Him as the Yea and the Amen, in whom the Father's promises are announced and fulfilled (II Cor. 1:19, 20). And even the little history of our lives, the concerns of every day and every hour, we shall commit to the pierced hands of Christ. As day begins, we can sing with the unknown German hymn-writer: "May Jesus Christ be praised!" As night comes down, we can repeat with John Keble: "Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear". And remembering the eternal faithfulness of Christ, we shall seek through the years to be faithful unto death and so receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Finally, we must never forget that Christ is not only the Lord of the universe and the ruler of history, but also our constant Saviour from sin, the One we trust in life and in death for our soul's salvation.

To Paul as to John, the Lord Jesus was the first and the last, the beginning and the end. May our love for our Redeemer be like that expressed in the opening and closing stanzas of F. W. H. Myers' beautiful poem, St. Paul:

"Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed;
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ. . . .

"Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

The Methods of Spiritism

By the REV. T. C. VAN KOOTEN

Pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Volga, South Dakota

THE question often presses itself upon us, when we consider the many strange and seemingly supernatural phenomena connected with the practice of Spiritism, "How are all these things produced?" Can we explain these phenomena upon any other basis than that of the Spiritists themselves, who claim that all the signs are evidence that departed spirits communicate with the living? There are so many of such phenomena—automatic writing, messages by mysterious tappings and other sounds, direct messages to a medium in a trance, information from the past or for the future. The latter information is sometimes uncanny. How are these things done? We have seen that the Bible brands the entire movement as false. How then must we understand these signs?

Fraud

A large part of the phenomena at the séances can be dismissed as plain fraud. Speaking of the fraudulent practices among spirits, Van Baalen says, "Under the cover of darkness [spirits are said to be sensitive to light] and with the aid of electricity, phonographs and numerous other modern inventions, there is not a genuine spiritistic phenomenon that cannot be reproduced a hundredfold for commercial reasons. There is a host of well-organized crooks who gather information concerning prospective dupes in the most systematic manner, who carefully file such information for future reference, or sell it to other mediums. With the information obtained beforehand, the sitter is duly impressed with the knowledge of the medium, the voice of the 'spirit' is produced seemingly from the 'ether', and the dupe is gradually enslaved by the medium, until he is advised where to invest his capital. When the victim at last awakes to the fact that he has been misled, the medium goes scotfree; she has only plied her 'religion'". (*The Chaos of Cults*, pp. 18, 19). The fraudulent practices of Spiritism are also exposed in a recent article in *The American Mercury*, "Calling All Spirits", by Dorothy Walworth, con-

densed in *The Reader's Digest*, April, 1943. Many mediums openly admit their fraud when apprehended. This was true of both the Fox sisters, Margaret and Kate. They recanted in 1888, and admitted that they themselves had produced all the sounds. First they thought it a good joke, but finally found themselves so deeply entangled they could not extricate themselves. Such is the fraudulent origin of Spiritism in America.

The Psychical Research Bureau has long interested itself in the study of Spiritistic phenomena. It has discovered many frauds, and finds few mediums above reproach, few who do not practice fraud at some time. The magician Houdini came to the same conclusion. He observed Spiritistic phenomena for years, and asserted that, if given the right circumstances, he could produce all the signs from purely natural causes. Houdini himself really wanted to believe in Spiritism. Before his death he instructed his wife and friends that he would communicate with them if at all possible. Houdini has never appeared. Early this year Mrs. Houdini confessed that she did not believe her husband would appear. Purely natural causes and trickery explain much of Spiritism.

Other Natural Causes

"In Spiritism," says Van Baalen "we are dealing with physical phenomena (moving of heavy bodies without contact, alteration in weight, the appearance of hands and other limbs) and with psychical phenomena (knowledge in the medium in trance condition which cannot be traced to any known source). It is alleged that all men have physical, electric and psychic force; that the physical phenomena of Spiritism are due to exceptional physical force, or to unusual power of mind over matter; that the psychic features are the results of phenomenal psychic force. Under this head come telepathy (thought-transference from sitter or others to the medium); mind-reading (in some cases the subconscious mind of the medium is even asserted to read the subconscious mind of the sitter, and

to read long-forgotten data from his memory); clairvoyance and clairaudience (ability to see and to hear below or beyond the ordinary amount of ether thrillings seen and heard by human beings) and similar attributes of the soul that are only partially known quantities. The book of Dr. A. T. Schofield, an English physician and psychologist, contains much of interest in this connection. It remains noteworthy that so little of even that which is known of these forces is really understood that prominent Spiritists themselves have admitted that many so-called spirit-manifestations may be due to these mysterious qualities of the soul" (*idem*, p. 22).

Then there is also the auto-stimulation of the sitter himself. The fact that he is visiting a séance, and the mystery of the entire situation, not only makes him susceptible to external stimuli, but he may even stimulate his own imagination. This all works in favor of the medium and the success of his séance. If one believes in ghosts strongly enough, he is sure to "see a ghost".

Whose Mind?

However, purely natural causes do not explain all the phenomena of Spiritism. There are certain abnormal facts which can hardly be forced into such an explanation. One has only to recall the knowledge which a medium may display while in a trance, which knowledge the medium did not possess in normal life, and the pointedness with which the medium answers questions while in a trance. One begins to wonder whose mind is functioning in these cases. I think we can prove from the Scriptures that demons play a prominent role in Spiritism.

The Spiritists of course claim that the spirits of the dead give them all their information. Assuming that the medium does upon occasion come in contact with a spirit, how can the medium prove the identity of that spirit? How does he know that such is the spirit of a certain departed one? The fact is that the Scriptures definitely deny that the spirits of the dead roam around on the earth during the intermediate state. The Bible tells us plainly that at death the spirit departs and does not return. "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way, whence I shall not return" (Job 16:22). In II Samuel 12:23, David says at the death of his child,

"I shall go to him but he shall not return to me". In Luke 16:19-31, we find the account of the rich man and Lazarus. This passage states plainly that each goes to his own proper place after death. In verse 26, we are told that none may pass the gulf between heaven and hell. In fact, it was not possible to send a message to the earth. The rich man saw no way to warn his brethren. The Bible forbids all attempts to communicate with the dead and implies its impossibility.

Demons

If the dead do not return and if natural causes do not explain all the signs, how then are the remaining phenomena of Spiritism to be accounted for? The answer is that evil spirits impersonate the dead. As has been stated before, no Spiritist can prove the identity of the spirit with which he is supposed to be in touch. I think it can be proved that, when such true spirit manifestations are present, they are the expression of evil spirits.

What do the Scriptures teach us about demons? They are many (Mark 5:1ff.) and they roam the earth (Matt. 12:43-45, Luke 11:24-26). These roaming evil spirits can have some information about deceased persons, information that is not generally known. Satan had certain definite and correct information about Job. He knew all about Job's property and wealth, and had even well appraised his character (see Job 1:9, 10; 2:2). There are many other Scripture passages which prove conclusively that the demons have information which is not commonly known to all men. In Acts 19:15 we hear an evil spirit declare, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" See also Matthew 8:29, Mark 1:24, Acts 16:17 and James 2:19. Spiritists themselves admit that the spirits only give general and fragmentary information to prove their identity. Thus an evil spirit could easily establish himself as a deceased soul.

A further argument for the work of demons in Spiritism is the fact that the practice of mediumship is akin to demon-possession. As in demon-possession so in mediumship, the will of the person involved is held in abeyance. When Christ spoke to the demoniac, the demon responded, not the man (Mark 5:9). And when the medium is in a trance, the spirit

speaks through the medium. Mediums themselves contend that mediumship requires the cultivation of passivity. Even the Spiritists themselves admit that they are sometimes bothered by evil spirits who impersonate some deceased and speak vile things. Some mediums have discontinued practice because of the recurring visits of an evil spirit, while others similarly troubled visit a spirit doctor. A list of authorities can be quoted who contend that modern mediumship can lead to demon-possession as terrible and as complete as in Bible times (see *The Medium and the Witch* by D. M. Panton, p. 39).

There is also another group of considerations which point to the work of demons in Spiritism. The immoral character of many of the messages received point to a Satanic origin. It is a proved and admitted fact that the moral character of the communications from the spirits often undergoes a change. First the messages will be in a lofty vein. When the confidence of the communicating agency has been fully established, then the moral tone of the messages begins to change. There may even be a diabolic change come over the medium (see *Spiritistic Phenomena and Their Interpretation* by J. G. Baupert, pp. 44-47). The degrading effect, both physical and spiritual, upon the medium who sits regularly is also proof of its evil origin and purpose. The spirits of the dead could hardly be expected to have these effects.

The Satanic origin of Spiritistic communications is also abundantly proved by the false doctrines they teach. If these are communications from good spirits, why do they always contradict the Bible? Another strange fact is that the various messages from the spirit world contradict each other. There is no oneness in their teaching. Their contentions vary from one country to the other, and even within the boundaries of one nation. This contradiction has often made for much confusion in the minds of seekers. They were finally moved to conclude there was no objective truth. In that case, the purpose of the devil had been as well attained as if the searching soul had embraced Spiritism. The communications agree only on one thing. They never teach any of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, neither on God, sin, nor grace. What a contrast between the teachings of

these spirits, and the truth as taught by the Spirit whom Christ promised and sent! John 16:13, 14 tells us, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you". Why do men

not rather listen to the Holy Spirit of God than to the vile utterances of evil spirits? Why do men persist in following the lie and also lead others in that way of destruction? They are blind leaders of the blind and together they shall fall in the pit. They hate the light, for in the light their deeds become manifest, that they are evil.

(To Be Concluded)

The Epistle to the Ephesians

By the REV. FLOYD E. HAMILTON

CHRISt has united Jews and Gentiles in one body in Christ (2:15).

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace" (v. 15). By translating this verse as above, the revisers have chosen one of two possible interpretations of the Greek text, but by so doing have hopelessly obscured the meaning of the passage. There seems to be little justification for placing the word "law" in apposition with "enmity", and making them the object of the word "abolished", for the enmity was not the law, but the alienation itself, i.e., "the middle wall of partition" that existed between the Jews and the Gentiles. "Enmity", therefore, is in apposition with "the middle wall of partition" of the preceding verse, and the translation is somewhat as follows: "For he is our peace who made both one, and broke down the middle wall of partition, that is, the enmity between them, and who in his flesh abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances in order to create in himself of the two one new man, thus making peace". By this translation the meaning becomes clear, and the order of words in the Greek text is more closely followed.

The first thought of the verse, then, is that Christ broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles, and in so doing made peace between them by abolishing the law as a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Christ fulfilled the law, both the moral law and the ceremonial law, by keeping it perfectly while He was on earth, and in so

doing not only secured our justification by doing all that in our place but, at the same time, by putting an end to the ceremonial law, He broke

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(NOTE: Due to widespread difficulties in the book publishing business, we cannot guarantee that all of these books will remain available indefinitely nor that prices will not be increased.)

down the enmity between Jews and Gentiles caused by the requirements of the ceremonial law. Before that time the only way a Gentile could be saved was by becoming a Jew. The Jews despised the Gentiles, and the Gentiles despised the Jews. The very existence of the requirements of the ceremonial law fostered that enmity between them. From the time when Christ fulfilled that law, the way to God was open to both Jews and Gentiles alike through faith in Christ, and both were to be combined into one body, the Christian Church.

The claim of those who believe that the Jews, without becoming Christians, will at some future time be the special object of God's blessings is seen, by this verse and the following ones of this chapter, to be contrary to the great doctrine of the oneness of believers in Christ. As Paul over and over again in his epistles points out (cf. Rom. 4:14-16; 4:11; 9:7, 8; Gal. 3:7, 16, 29; Eph. 3:16; etc.), the religious separation between Jews and Gentiles based on the requirements of the ceremonial law has been abolished. If any Israelites are ever again to obtain any standing with God except condemnation, it can only be by their becoming Christians (Rom. 11:21-23). The abolition of the religious barrier in the ceremonial law places the Jews on exactly the same level as the Gentiles. Both alike are under condemnation apart from belief in Christ as Saviour, and both alike have only one avenue of salvation or future blessing: trust in the atoning work of Christ alone. The idea that the ceremonial law will at some future time be reestablished dishonors Christ and belittles the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

But in what sense is it true that Christ "abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, in his flesh"? Until Christ fulfilled the moral law by His perfect life in place of those for whom He died, the moral law was an effective barrier between both Jews and Gentiles and God. Absolute holiness and absolute perfection were demanded by God's law. Neither Jew nor Gentile could meet the demands of that moral law, for both were dead in sin and both alike rested under the condemnation of God. However, for the Jew, God provided another way of approach to Him in the ceremonial law. By show-

ing his faith in God's promises and obedience to Him by taking part in the ordinances of the ceremonial law, the Jew was justified by the grace of God in Christ Jesus; but for the Gentile there was no way of approach to God except by becoming a Jew. When Christ fulfilled perfectly both the moral law and the ceremonial law, He did so in place of all God's people, whether Jews or Gentiles, so it was no longer necessary for either Jews or Gentiles to take part in the rites of the ceremonial law. As a means of being made righteous before God, then, Christ abolished the law in His flesh, that is, by fulfilling it for us. Of course, man could never, even in Old Testament times, be made righteous before God by law-keeping, because he was dead in sin. The law was there, however, with its injunction, "This do and thou shalt live!" No one was saved by it, however, because all alike rested under the curse of sin. The fact of sin, however, did not nullify the validity of the covenant of salvation by works, so that anyone could have been saved by keeping the law had he actually kept it perfectly. All that sin did (both that imputed to all men on account of Adam's sin, and man's actual, committed sins) was to place an effective barrier on the road of good works. The road was there, but it was closed "for repairs". A detour was provided in the rites and ceremonies centering around the sacrificial system, but that detour was only for Jews, not Gentiles. Only those of the "faith of Abraham" could travel that detour safely, and then only by the grace of God, and because God could regard the atonement of Christ as a promissory note equivalent to the cash in hand.

When Christ came, however, a new super-highway to salvation was revealed, and the old detour of the ceremonial law, having served its purpose, was abolished. Both Jews and Gentiles could travel on the super-highway of faith in the atoning work of Christ, if they presented their passes (faith in Christ). Neither Jew nor Gentile, however, could travel either the blocked highway of "good works" or the closed detour of the ceremonial law. Those old roads were completely abolished as far as the possibility of travel on them was concerned. Only one effectual way remained, trust in the atoning work of

Christ. Both Jew and Gentile can alike and in the same company travel that road, if they are God's own people, and all barriers between them have been broken down.

"The design of Christ in thus abolishing the law was two-fold. First, the union of the Jews and Gentiles in one holy, Catholic [that is, universal] church. And secondly, the reconciliation of both to God" (Hodge). The latter point is discussed in the following verse. "In order to create in himself of the two one new man, thus making peace". Both Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. God does not contemplate a Jewish church and a Gentile church. Both are in the one church, the invisible church of God of all ages. They are created as one, through the new creation in Christ Jesus, that is, through regeneration or the new birth resulting in faith in Christ. That is the only way they are to have peace with God—through being one in Christ. There are not two ways of salvation, one for Jews and another for Gentiles. There is only one way—the "living way", Christ Himself—to secure peace with God.

When we say that Christ abolished the law, we do not mean that Christians are under no obligation to keep the moral law of God. It has become, though, our rule of life, not our rule of salvation. The Jews of the time of Christ never understood that, even then, the law was not a means of salvation but rather a way by which saved people manifested their obedience to God. Those who were saved were saved by grace through faith in the promises of God. Today we do not keep the ten commandments to earn salvation but to show forth the salvation God has wrought in us. Is He manifesting Himself in us?

Seneca Hills Bible Conference

By the REV. CHARLES G. SCHAUFFELE

THE young people of Faith Church, Harrisville, and New Hope Church, Branchton, this year held one of the newest summer Bible conferences in Orthodox Presbyterian circles. Twenty-six delegates and five counselors took over beautiful privately-owned and operated Seneca Hills for the week of August 23rd to 28th.

The Old Homestead, headquarters and dining room, comprised the main building. Girls cabins on the west hill in the old orchard and boys cabins on the east hill in the woods, with the rustic chapel in the valley between them, completed the camp layout. The cabins were provided with individual doubledecker canvas bunks, and conveniences such as electric light and springs of pure mountain water were part of camp equipment.

Seneca Hills Conference is on Big Sandy Creek near Franklin, Pennsylvania. Its proximity to Harrisville enables delegates to come by car, although bus service in the vicinity is available for those from a distance. Most delegates were of grade school age, with only seven high school students in the group. Many of them earned their own tuition fees before camp. One little girl sold Christmas cards, while one of the boys escorted a candidate for political office to the homes of voters in the community—for a cash consideration!

The camp program paralleled most Bible conference programs, with a supervised Quiet Hour before breakfast, three morning classes and the afternoon given to recreation. After an early supper, the "Seneca Sing" was the occasion for camp songs and yells, and Bible contests which evoked much rivalry between the three tribes of the camp: Mohawks, Sioux and Redjackets. A campfire devotional service followed, each of the speakers taking one evening. Thursday evening was given over to "Stunt Night". Cabin prayers closed the full day at nine each evening.

The Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton taught a course on "The Reformed Faith in the Modern World". This dovetailed into the next period led by the Rev. John P. Clelland on "The Plan of Salvation". The third period was a Missions Hour conducted by the Rev. Charles G. Schaufele. The "Say-So" campfire on the last night, as well as a camp questionnaire, revealed that all of the delegates had spiritually benefited from Seneca Hills Bible Conference.

A Price Increase

THE Child's Story Bible by Catherine Vos is now priced at \$3.50 instead of \$3. Readers are asked to bear this in mind when ordering.

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITORIAL

War and the Smaller Sects

FROM time to time, THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has published analyses of the doctrinal fallacies of many of the most popular sects that flourish in America. Mormonism, Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism and that exceedingly offensive group known as "Jehovah's Witnesses" have been liberally discussed and their cardinal evils delineated.

Currently there is appearing a detailed study of that most ancient of all errors—Spiritism. There is ample evidence to show that today as never before the crystal ball and the sepulchral gloom of Spiritism are ensnaring the emotions and the imaginations of America. Each war brings with it a vast and consuming desire for some whisper from beyond the grave. Heartbroken mothers, desolate widows and fatherless children have in their grief clutched for some straw blown earthward by the winds of eternity. Spiritism seems a clear and beautifully easy escape from the necessity of facing that grimmest of all grim realities—the death of a loved one. The fact that deluded thousands are asking the mediums for bread and contentedly receiving stones is just another of the hidden tragedies of war—a tragedy greater than the desolation of an army, for it traffics in the damnation of eternal souls.

The major heresies of America, however, are not the only ones to grow fat as they feed like parasites upon the soul of a nation racked by war. Every warped and distorted sect from the Cutlerite Mormons to the so-called "Holiness" groups has felt an upsurge of popularity in direct proportion to the stimulation of the national war-consciousness. In the South, the Holiness sects continue to split in two like so many amœbae to form double the number of former churches. The underprivileged and

emotionally unstable are increasingly seeking release from wartime stresses, and the unrestrained "Happy-am-I" jive religions seem to have provided the sort of hopped-up emotionalism for which they crave. To some extent, the Holiness groups are reported to be winning members from older denominations, and a new sect, the "Pentecostal Baptists", stems from the direct influence of the Holiness movement.

In California, that Mecca of every psychopathic heresy, there are still more sects than in any other state in the union. There are the shouting sects, whose appeal is largely to the poor, and the mystic, incense-burning sects which draw their overstuffed clientele from the carriage trade. At one end of the scale is the Rev. James R. Adams' Holiness Church and at the other is E. E. Garlich's Aquarian Church of Chirothesia, a health cult. In between lie a score of the most absurd distortions of truth imaginable, including the widely advertised and pseudo-Oriental deep-breathing exercises of the Institute of Mental-physics.

Despite the fact that this would appear to be the hey-day of the sects, life for them is not without its problems. Whole congregations of the Holiness denominations are being disrupted in the rural South as their members move to production centers for war jobs. For the first time in their lives, many of these people have an adequate income and can afford things which their denominations have frowned upon as worldly and sinful—including decent clothes, amusements, and medical attention. Collections in the churches have not been good, and a recent issue of the *Church of God Evangel* complained bitterly that "no tithes are going back home to support the lonely, struggling pastor. . . . My heart has been disappointed something terrible".

Perhaps an even more striking effect of the war has been the failure of many of the small sects to uphold the traditional pacifism written into many of their creeds. There have been notable exceptions, of course. Mennonites and Brethren have not yielded on their traditional policy of non-resistance, and that most militant of all sects, Jehovah's Witnesses, has seen one member after another go to jail for failing to register for the draft or report for induction.

The Assemblies of God, on the

other hand, are characteristic of most other small pacifist sects. They officially oppose war, but not more than twenty of their young men are now confined in camps for conscientious objectors. The Rev. J. D. Bright, state overseer of one of the four Tennessee denominations operating under the bitterly-contested name of the "Church of God", has reported that not one member or minister of his church is in any conscientious objector camp. Many members of small sects, including Holiness and Adventist communicants, have been assigned to non-combatant duties upon being inducted, but many others are seeing active service. At the same time they seem to be demonstrating a high degree of denominational loyalty. Some, aided by their denominations, are zealous proselytizers in the camps. The Assemblies of God is publishing a breezy, two-color paper for soldiers, entitled "Reveille", and it is being given mass distribution in the camps by men who have been inducted from that denomination. Special appeals, through literature and preaching, are also being made to soldiers by the Last Days Church of God, the Church of God (Reformation Movement), the Plymouth Brethren, the Firebrands for Jesus sect, the Pillar of Fire denomination, and a number of others.

What is the significance of all this for Bible-believing Christians? To our mind it presents a double-barreled challenge to each of us as individuals and to every truly Christian denomination. First there is the challenge that we bestir ourselves to combat error with truth. Those who seem to be content with the husks of heresy must be reached with the pure and soul-satisfying manna of the gospel of sovereign grace. We have received a divine commission to carry to all men everywhere the good news of a Saviour able to save to the uttermost. And that commission seems doubly urgent when the hosts of Satan are most busy in spreading that which kills not only the body but also the soul.

Secondly, there is the challenge that we, who by God's grace are in possession of the revelation of divine truth, should be infinitely more zealous in the work of the kingdom of God than are those who have seen at best only a microscopic portion of that truth, at worst none at all. Specifically, can we of The Orthodox

Presbyterian Church be less earnest, less self-denying, less urgent in our propagation of the gospel than are the devotees of a religion of half-truths or whole heresies? Let us, while it is day, spend and be spent. Let us give of our time, our energies, our substance, our selves. And let us do

so, not for vainglory or for boasting, not for the sake of adding numbers to our church, not for any gain that we might thus achieve for our denomination, but for the eternal glory of our sovereign God, whose we are and whom we serve.

—T. R. B.

The "Spook House"

A Story for the Children's Hour

By HARRIET Z. TEAL

(In a letter accompanying the manuscript of this story, Miss Teal wrote, "The title may seem rather odd, but there is a reason. The house around which the story is built is a real old log-house, much as I have described it. I used to pass it with the Duff's [the Rev. and Mrs. Clarence W. Duff] last year on the way from Oak Creek to Haybro, and this year I passed it each day for two weeks as I went to Bible School at Haybro. I've been told that it was built long before there was any town near-by, and that it was on a cattle ranch. It is a mile or more each way, I think, from any other dwelling. The thing which impressed me last year when I saw it was that, though someone was apparently living in the lower floors of the house, the windows upstairs had no glass. It gave the impression of being a sort of 'haunted' house. This summer, however, it looks different—very cheerful and prosperous, glass panes in the windows and curtains all over the house. But I did learn from some of the children who rode over to Haybro that they had nicknamed it the 'Spook House', which carried out my own impression.")

THE tall, old log-house, in the hollow below the road, stood out dark and forbidding against the snow-covered fields and the slope of the mountain beyond. The glassless windows of the second story seemed to stare like empty eye-sockets into the gathering gloom of the early winter twilight. The highway, sweeping in a long U-shaped curve around the shoulder of the mountain, almost completely encircled the hollow where the old house stood, so that one might view its front, side and back,

successively, in passing by on the road above.

As our story begins, a car was coming around the curve, and in the car were Dr. Wilson, his little daughter Faith, and her friend and playmate Flora Mae.

"Oh, there's the old spook-house," whispered Flora Mae in an awed voice.

"I think it's silly to call it that," Faith replied, "it's just a poor, old empty house."

"Oh Fay, you don't know all that people say about it . . ." Here Flora Mae broke off with a little shriek, "Look, a light in that window upstairs! Ooooo, a ghost!"

Sure enough, as Faith looked at the empty upper window, a faint light like the flame of a candle appeared, moving within the room, to be, the next instant, blown out, apparently by a gust of wind. At the same time the headlights of the car shone full into the window, giving a momentary glimpse of a small figure and a white, frightened little face upturned toward them.

The car swept past along the curving road, Flora Mae clutching her friend's arm as she cowered whimpering and trembling beside her. "Ooooo," she moaned, "we've seen a real ghost—maybe we're going to die."

Faith shook her off impatiently. "I think it was a real little girl, and the poor little thing looked so scared."

Dr. Wilson had seen nothing, for he was paying attention to his driving. He wondered whether the children had not seen some object in the window which they had imagined to be a person.

The next day at school there was much whispered excitement, as Flora

Mae gathered a group about her and told of having seen a real ghost in the window of the "spook-house". Others contributed to the creepy thrill by telling of having seen faint lights moving through the rooms at night. The country children, who had to pass the old house on their way to the school in the village of Willow Creek, said they were scared to go by, and that they ran as fast as they could on the other side of the road until they were around the bend and out of sight of the empty windows.

Faith thought all this talk very silly, yet she could not forget the frightened little face at the window.

Some of the grown-ups among the country folk began to take up the stories and to add some of their own. They told of strange, wild doings in the old house in the long ago. They said that the Speers homestead was the oldest and largest log-house in that part of the country. It had been the center of a large cattle ranch which stretched up and down the narrow valley. Aaron Speers had also discovered and operated a coal mine in the mountains above his ranch and had become quite wealthy. He was a good man, but he failed to discipline his seven sons and to bring them up in the way they should go. They became wild and wayward and, after their father's death, they gathered about them other young men as wild and reckless as themselves, and wasted their substance in riotous living. But long ago the Speers boys had, one by one, either died (some by violent deaths) or moved away, and the old house had stood deserted and empty ever since.

Aaron Speers was a Christian, although he certainly was not as faithful as he should have been in teaching and training his children. Of all his sons the only one who showed any signs of Christian faith was the youngest, Aaron Speers the Second. He had left the country many years before and had never returned.

* * * *

The scene now changes to the home of Dr. Wilson. The time is evening, several days later. The family is gathered around the table after an early supper. The doctor sits with his Bible open before him, while his wife and their three children, our little friend Faith, and her younger brother and sister, Paul and Grace, sit listening to the reading of the Scripture.

Let us listen with them.

"A certain lawyer . . . said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man . . . fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. . . . There came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite . . . came and looked on him and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan . . . came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went and bound up his wounds . . . and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. . . . Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

After the Bible reading, they had prayer in which each of the children took part. When it came her turn, Faith prayed; "Dear Lord, please help that poor little girl I saw at the window, and make it so she won't be lonely and frightened any more."

"And now," said Dr. Wilson, after their little worship service was over, "I have a call to make over in Deer Creek Canyon. Want to ride along to keep me company, Faithfulness?" (That was his pet name for his little daughter; he said it suited her.)

Of course Faith wanted to ride with her father, and so they set out. The call was made and on the return trip, as the car swung through a gap and the old house in the hollow came into view, Faith cried suddenly, "Father, please stop. I am sure I see a light in the house, and oh, I know my lonely little girl is there! Let's not pass by on the other side. Let's try to be good neighbors, as Jesus said."

The doctor slowed his car to a stop. "I declare, Faith, I believe you're right; there does seem to be a faint light inside. I'd better go down and investigate. You stay here in the car."

"No, please let me go too. The little girl won't be so afraid if she sees me."

Her father hesitated a moment and then said, "All right, come on." And with his flashlight, he picked a way down the snowy trail from the road to the house.

Although no snow had fallen for the past two days, no footprints could be seen anywhere. They approached the back of the house, where a flicker

of light could be seen through one window, as though a candle might be burning in a room beyond.

Dr. Wilson waited an instant on the porch to listen and thought he could hear a low murmur of voices within. Then he knocked. After a pause they heard footsteps crossing the bare boards of the kitchen floor, and a child's voice asked timidly, "Who's there?"

"Just some neighbors, come to see you," boomed the doctor's cheerful voice.

"I'm here too, little girl. My name is Faith."

The door was unbolted and opened a crack and Faith saw the same little, frightened face she had seen at the window. A girl about her own age stood holding a lighted candle, the flame of which was, the next moment, extinguished by the draft from the open door.

The child shrank back with a little cry as the beam of the doctor's flashlight was turned on her. But the next instant Faith had her arms around the little girl and was saying, "Don't be afraid. I'm your friend, and we want to be good neighbors to you."

The kitchen was bare and empty and cold. The little girl, who said her name was Anna, led the way into another room and there on a poor bed lay her mother, quite ill. There was little else in the room except a few broken chairs and some old boxes. There was also a stove, but the fire had gone out.

The story which the mother and daughter told revealed the fact that their husband and father was none other than the grandson of old Aaron Speers, the original owner of the place, and son of Aaron Speers the Second—in fact, he was Aaron the Third. He had heard that the old homestead was now empty and deserted, and had decided to come back to Willow Creek and try to make a home there, and to find work in the country by which to support the family.

They had started out in their own car on the journey from another state, but one night while they were sleeping in a lonely inn their car was stolen, and an old horse and a dilapidated, old-fashioned buggy left in its place. They tried in vain to trace the car, and then had come on to the homestead with the horse.

Mr. Speers had heard of some work

a few miles off, so after settling his wife and child in the house and leaving firewood and a few groceries for them, he had ridden off on horseback, promising to be back in a couple of days.

The day after her father left, however, little Anna's mother became ill, and it was now a week since he had gone, yet they had heard no word from him.

Dr. Wilson lost no time in finding firewood and in building a roaring fire in the stove. Then he examined Mrs. Speers and said, "My dear lady, what you need most of all is food, warm blankets and a good nurse—and those we shall have here before you know it."

Tears were in the mother's eyes as she reached up and drew her little daughter down to her, "Oh, Anna, God has heard our prayers and sent these kind friends and neighbors."

Anna then told how she had seen cars and people passing on the road above, and had even run out one evening to try to stop someone and ask him to send a doctor to her mother, but the boy she called to had run away as fast as he could, looking back over his shoulder, as though he had seen a ghost.

Faith begged to stay with Anna while her father drove back to town. It was only a short time before the doctor returned with plenty of warm blankets and nourishing broth and other good food for little Anna and her mother. And, best of all, he brought with him kind "Aunt Mattie", the dear, motherly soul who was always ready to go to the home of any neighbor where there was sickness or sorrow, to comfort and help.

Food, warmth and loving care worked wonders in restoring the sick mother and lonely, frightened child. And people who, just a few days earlier, had hurried by the place in fear and trembling, now felt ashamed and rallied 'round, like good neighbors, with offers of help and gifts to make the house more comfortable.

So it was that, a little later in the week, when Aaron Speers the Third rode back to the old homestead, he found a cheerful, comfortable home, instead of the gloomy deserted-looking house he had left a few days earlier. He, too, had been ill, and unable to return sooner.

As for work, the neighbors discovered that Mr. Speers was just the

man they needed to mend their farm machinery, sewing machines, washers and whatnot, so that he soon had almost more work than he could do.

* * * *

It was one evening, in the following spring, when the sky was pink with the sunset afterglow, that Faith rode around the U-curve with her father and once more looked down on the old house in the hollow. In the once-empty windows were shining panes of glass, and within pretty, white curtains, while bright geraniums smiled from the window-sills. At that moment, Anna Speers ran to the window and waved to her friend, Faith, as the car sped by.

"Oh, Father," sighed Faith, "I am so glad that we did not 'pass by on the other side' that night."

"Yes, little Faithfulness, I think you have taught us something of what Christ meant when He said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and," the doctor added, "our Lord has told us, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me.'"

An Appeal From a Navy Chaplain

WE HAVE received a letter from Chaplain William T. Strong of the United States Navy, containing an appeal which we are happy to pass on to readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN.

I am wondering if you would be able to insert a little notice in a forthcoming GUARDIAN by way of an appeal on behalf of our Navy Library here at Navy 318, of which I am to have general charge, I believe. From a survey of the books on hand, I have discovered that our selection is far from adequate both as to quantity and quality. It has occurred to me that many of the folks back home would be glad to do the following: take just two books from their own library (their personal library, not city!) wrap them up, address them to me, and mail them at the low book rate. We need good books badly—books of fiction (especially western, mystery, and romantic stories), travel, adventure, science, history—in fact anything that offers good mental exercise and diversion. Good reading is splendid for morale among these fellows who are so far from home and living under unbelievably trying conditions. I know that the people back in the States would be delighted to do many things for the men here if they

only knew what to do and how to do it. Here is an opportunity for them to show their interest in these men, and their appreciation for what these fine fellows are doing here. As the Protestant chaplain on this station, I shall be personally deeply appreciative of a generous response. . . . Incidentally, books such as Machen's radio addresses, and other Christian books on the ordinary man's intelligence-level, would be most welcome also.

My work here is proving most interesting, and also encouraging. The attendance has been improving, and the attention and general attitude of the men who have come to the services which it is my privilege to conduct, are gratifying. Join me in the prayer that God's blessing may be on His Word as I proclaim it here.

Books sent in answer to this appeal should be addressed to Chaplain W. T. Strong, USNR, Navy 318, Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California.

Is the Victorious Life Movement Scriptural?

(Concluded from Page 258)

and we find the young prince of preachers taking a positive stand against the whole movement. Said he, "I meet, I say, sometimes with brethren who feel contented with their spiritual condition. They do not ascribe their satisfactory character to themselves, but to the grace of God; but for all that, they do feel that they are what they ought to be, and what others ought to be but are not. They see in themselves a great deal that is good, very much that is commendable, and a large amount of excellence, which they can hold up for the admiration of others. They have reached the 'higher life', and are wonderfully fond of telling us so, and explaining the phenomena of their self-satisfied condition."⁵ "It will be an ill day when our brethren take to bragging and boasting, and call it 'testimony to the higher life'. We trust that holiness will be more than ever the aim of believers, but not the boastful holiness which has deluded some of the excellent of the earth into vain glory, and under which their firmest friends shudder for them!"⁶

If the reader is still in doubt as to Spurgeon's position, he is invited to

⁵ "Onward", a sermon, May 25, 1873.

⁶ Quoted in *The Presbyterian*, Feb. 19, 1876, p. 9.

read the two selections at the beginning of this article. It is my opinion that these two statements are so diametrically opposed that they cannot possibly be construed as two different ways of saying the same thing. Honesty compels us to admit that only one of these men can be right, and if Charles G. Trumbull is right, then Charles Haddon Spurgeon was at best an "ordinary" and "defeated" Christian.

In the next place, it should be noted with respect to the "Victorious Life" movement that it not only runs counter to the teaching of the greatest saints, but it also makes a sharp distinction between accepting Christ as Saviour and surrendering to Him as Lord. All Christians have accepted Christ as their personal Saviour from the guilt and penalty of sin, but not all, say the victorious life leaders, in fact only a few, have "surrendered absolutely to Christ", and have the added deliverance from the power of sin. Now herein are many difficulties for one who studies the Bible. To begin with, the Bible teaches everywhere a present, progressive delivering from the power of sin within us as a definite part of our salvation.

Paul says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). He writes to his Corinthian converts, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Consonant with these words is Peter's exhortation, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

Not only does the Bible plainly teach the progressive nature of the Christian's deliverance from sin but it likewise assures us that this deliverance belongs to all true Christians and does not draw any line of cleavage between those who have surrendered and those who have not, though it does recognize differing degrees of sanctification. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:5, 6). "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus

unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Now, any true Christian, whatever may be the plane of his achievement or stage of his sanctification, can point to such a "we" and say, "That includes me". There is no distinction in the Bible between ordinary Christians and triumphant Christians, as such a view necessitates. Every last one of us may sing of that blood which shall "be of sin the double cure, save me from its guilt and power" because "God hath from the beginning chosen us [all Christians] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13).

To be sure, reference is made to babes in Christ and to carnal Christians, but these are not a distinct type of Christian—they are those who have not yet grown to any fullness of grace. And what Christian does not feel that he is carnal, and alas, so different from the "spirits of just men made perfect"? The truth is, every Christian has gained a victory which he never had in his unregenerate days, and the only difference between Christians is one of degree, not of kind.

Furthermore, and this is important, were it possible to have victory over all known sin (a thing impossible for anyone who knows, as Bishop Berkeley did, what sin really is) still this would be but a deliverance from sinful acts and not from a sinful heart. The victorious life does not claim deliverance from the sinful heart itself, and herein its teachers reveal a misunderstanding of the relation between the internal motive and the overt action; and they likewise reveal a misunderstanding of the method of sanctification which is founded on this relation. They profess to keep the sinner, remaining a sinner, free from actual transgressions. What a poor salvation is this! Does the Holy Ghost make us act like saints, or does He make us saints? He does not take possession of our members and work them—thus despite our sinful hearts producing a series of good acts as our life manifestation. He cures our sinning by curing our sinful hearts; he makes the tree good that the fruit may be good; he cleanses the fount that the stream may flow pure, and that progressively.⁷

⁷ Cf. B. B. Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism*, Vol. II, pp. 579-80.

Another weighty consideration against the victorious life doctrine is that it invests the human will, which is itself perverted, with ultimate authority and freedom to choose whether one will have victory or defeat. Victory depends finally not on Christ at all, but on our free will. Is it not infinitely more reassuring to know, as the Scriptures teach, that one's deliverance from sin does not depend ultimately on his continuous willing to be delivered, but on a Saviour who "worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"? To be sure, every sinner delivered wills to be delivered; but he never would have willed, had not Christ who delivers put it in his heart so to desire, and therefore, in the last analysis, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy", "as he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion". How much better is this than the victorious life "if-religion" that gives God a "chance" to make it possible for us to permit Him to win the victory!

Perhaps the emphasis which, above all others, made me wary of the whole doctrine is to be found in such statements as: "The Victorious Life is the life of overcoming sin by the miraculous fact that the very desire for sin is taken from you: you do not want to do anything you know to be sin";⁸

⁸ *Victory in Christ*, p. 84, by Charles C. Trumbull.

"effortless freedom from sinful impulse";⁹ "victory is not an attainment but an obtainment. It is not something you get by working for it; it is something that is given you as an outright gift";¹⁰ "We don't need to

⁹ *May Christians Lose Sinful Desires?*
¹⁰ *Victory in Christ*, p. 82.

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agonize about it [victory], we don't need to work for it. The more we work and the more we agonize, the more we prevent or postpone what He wants to give us now". We are told not to struggle against sin, but "simply let Christ dispose of it, while we stand by like onlookers".¹¹

How strikingly different is Paul's declaration as he wrote toward the end of his life from a Roman prison to incite in the Philippians more effort toward holiness, casting his own mighty struggles in the figure of a runner who puts forth every effort to win the prize! "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize

¹¹ Cf. B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*, in *loc.*

of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". If Paul could say, "I count not myself to have apprehended", where shall we be found? If the chief of apostles still pressed toward the mark with all his soul, shall we seek for an "effortless", non-agonizing, "free gift"?

Reflect upon him who here speaks. This is the man who most nearly approached the excellencies of his divine Master. Let us therefore put on as he did "the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil". Let us wrestle as he did against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Let us fight with him the good fight of faith, that we may say with him, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith".

KGCU, a powerful station reaching about 75,000 homes in North Dakota alone. He has signed a contract for one year, and requests the prayers of the denomination and the assistance of members in maintaining this broadcast ministry. Bible expositions, a chapter each evening, occupy the program, and it is expected that the sermons will be published at the conclusion of the series. Mr. Balcom predicts that it will take a little over three years to cover the entire Bible. Persons interested in assisting this unique ministry may write to Mr. Balcom at 300 Thirteenth Street South, Bismarck, North Dakota.

At Bancroft, Manchester and Yale, South Dakota, in the fields served by the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof, young people's meetings will be resumed after a month's vacation. One new communicant member was received at Bancroft on reaffirmation of faith, and attendance and interest seem on the upgrade. The church at Manchester is preparing to make necessary repairs to the building purchased in July, and at Yale the church has purchased a supply of paint to be used as soon as title to the property is received. A service flag with seven stars was recently dedicated.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

Presbytery of California

FIRST Church, Long Beach: The Rev. Bruce F. Hunt was the guest preacher on September 12th and on the following day addressed a rousing Machen League rally in the new chapel. . . . On September 8th Miss Velma Fusby and Mr. Louis Knowles were married in Grace Chapel. Both are members of the church, and Mr. Knowles was graduated from Westminster Seminary last May.

First Church, San Francisco: The Rev. Carl A. Ahlfeldt, newly-installed pastor, reports that an average of sixty-five pupils attended two weeks of summer Bible school, and a number of new homes were reached. The work of the school has been continued through an hour of Bible instruction each Tuesday afternoon. . . . The senior Machen League is holding rescue mission meetings on the first Saturday of each month and is also making special efforts, by posters and invitations, to reach service men with the gospel message.

Grace Church, Los Angeles: A successful summer Bible school was conducted for three weeks with an enrollment of eighty-six and an average attendance of sixty-three. More than a hundred attended the closing exercises. On August 8th a large crowd welcomed as guest preacher the former pastor, the Rev. Floyd E.

Hamilton. . . . Eleven young people were delegates to the Blue Ridge Bible Conference.

Westminster Church, Bend, Oregon: Nineteen young people attended the seventh annual Bible conference at Suttle Lake, sponsored by Westminster Church. Principal speaker was the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton. This year restrictions on travel prevented the attendance of delegates from the San Francisco Bay area. . . . The Rev. George W. Marston supplied the pulpit during the vacation of the pastor, the Rev. Glenn R. Coie. . . . On August 29th the Sunday school gave a special offering of \$115.50 to be used for equipment in the projected new church in Portland, Oregon.

Presbytery of the Dakotas

WESTMINSTER Church, Hamill, S. D.: The church has sustained a loss in the recent death of Deacon Abel D. Frater, who had united with the church twenty-two years ago. . . . The pastor, the Rev. Dean W. Adair, was guest preacher at the morning service of Calvary Church, Volga, on August 8th.

The most active radio ministry in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is now being carried on by the Rev. C. A. Balcom of Bismarck, North Dakota. He speaks from 8.30 to 9 P.M. six days a week over station

Presbytery of New Jersey

CALVARY Church, Wildwood: Several thousand tracts published by the denomination's Committee on Christian Education have been distributed on the Wildwood boardwalk this summer in connection with gospel services held in a boardwalk building three nights each week during July and August. . . . Three weeks of summer Bible school were held by the church. . . . Ministers on vacation have been invited to speak at many of the Sunday evening services and at prayer meetings, and to assist in the boardwalk services.

Faith Church, Pittsgrove: During the vacation of the pastor, the Rev. Edward B. Cooper, the pulpit was occupied by the Rev. John H. Skilton and the Rev. Leslie W. Sloat.

Covenant Church, Vineland: Rally Day will be observed on October 3rd, with the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton as guest speaker. . . . During the vacation of the Rev. Everett C. DeVelde the pulpit was supplied by the following ministers: Thomas M. Cooper, Franklin S. Dyrness, Robert Strong and Edward L. Kellogg.

A successful open air ministry in Morristown is reported by the Rev. Donald C. Graham, pastor of Emmanuel Independent Presbyterian Church. Use of poster-size gospel "cartoons" as flannelgraph messages has invariably drawn crowds. The director of music and soloist at Moody Church, Chicago, assisted in recent Sunday services.

Presbytery of New York and New England

COVENANT Church, Rochester: A Tuesday evening Bible class for young people and young married couples was accorded a ready response and sustained interest, so that the class will be continued throughout the winter months. Two week-day Bible classes for children and a young ladies' chorus are in process of formation. The Rev. Peter Pascoe, who has foregone his usual vacation this summer, is giving Saturdays and Mondays to the work of the United States Crop Corps, as a contribution to the progress of the war effort.

Calvary Church, Worcester: The Rev. Professor John Murray was the guest of Calvary Church on August 15th, and preached on "The Sabbath" from the text of I Peter 1:5. On the following two evenings he spoke in conferences of the congregation on the use of the Psalms in worship and the non-use of instrumental music in worship.

Presbytery of Ohio

GRACE Church, Buechel, Kentucky: During the summer the church has been host to two ministers of the denomination. The Rev. George W. Marston held five meetings during a brief stay in July, and Dr. Lawrence B. Gilmore conducted a service on Thursday, August 27th.

Presbytery of Philadelphia

BETHANY Church, Nottingham: A call to the pastorate of the church, extended through the presbytery to the Rev. Henry D. Phillips of Washington, D.C., has been accepted by Mr. Phillips. The Rev. Peter DeRuiter, former pastor of Bethany Church, is now the pastor of the Kydd Memorial Presbyterian Church of Montreal, Canada.

Covenant Church, Pittsburgh: An unusual number of strangers have attended the worship services of the church in recent months. . . . The

Rev. John P. Clelland was a guest preacher in August.

Faith Church, Harrisville: On August 8th and 15th the Rev. John P. Clelland occupied the pulpit in the absence of the pastor, the Rev. Charles G. Schaufele. . . . Mrs. Henry Kiester is the newly-elected president of the Dorcas Missionary Guild.

New Hope Church, Branchton: The annual homecoming service was held on September 5th, with the Rev. Robert L. Atwell, former pastor of the church, as guest preacher. . . . A communicant class of nine members was begun in August. . . . Delegates from the Seneca Hills Bible Conference joined with the young people of Harrisville in a "Seneca Echo Meeting".

Grace Church, Middletown, Delaware: A class for candidates for communicant church membership is being held each Sunday by the pastor, the Rev. LeRoy B. Oliver, using the "Communicant Church Membership Course" by the Rev. George W. Marston published by the Committee on Christian Education. . . . A catechism class for covenant children also meets each week.

Mediator Church, Philadelphia: The Rev. John W. Betzold, pastor of Mediator Church, was the preacher at union worship services held at Knox Church. Both congregations were well represented. . . . A farewell service for the Rev. Clarence W. Duff was held on August 26th and attended by fifty-seven members and friends of the denomination. Mr. Duff expects soon to take up missionary work in Ethiopia. . . . On August 1st the Rev. James W. Price administered the sacrament of baptism to Phyllis Anne Betzold, infant daughter of the pastor and Mrs. Betzold. Mrs. Betzold was also received into communicant church membership.

Presbytery of Wisconsin

GRACE Church, Milwaukee: Since August 15th the church has been holding its Sunday morning worship services in the home of the pastor, the Rev. Richard B. Gaffin, and the evening services in the homes of members. The former meeting place has been rented to a business concern. The congregation is looking for a new location in a section of the city having a large number of unchurched people, and hopes to purchase a suitable lot and build a small chapel.

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