



The Princeton Theological Review

JULY, 1918

“THE VICTORIOUS LIFE”

It appears to have been early observed that the mills of the gods grind very slowly: and hasty spirits have been only partially reconciled to that fact by the farther observation that they do their work exceedingly well. Men are unable to understand why time should be consumed in divine works. Why should the almighty Maker of the heaven and earth take millions of years to create the world? Why should He bring the human race into being by a method which leaves it ever incomplete? Above all, in His recreation of a lost race, why should He proceed by process? Men are unwilling that either the world or they themselves should be saved by God's secular methods. They demand immediate, tangible results. They ask, Where is the promise of His coming? They ask to be themselves made glorified saints in the twinkling of an eye. God's ways are not their ways, and it is a great trial to them that God will not walk in their ways. They love the storm and the earthquake and the fire. They cannot see the divine in “a sound of gentle stillness,” and adjust themselves with difficulty to the lengthening perspective of God's gracious working. For the world they look every day for the cataclysm in which alone they can recognize God's salvation; and when it ever delays its coming they push it reluctantly forward but a little bit at a time. For themselves they cut the knot and boldly declare complete salvation to be within their reach at their option, or already grasped and enjoyed. It is true, observation scarcely justifies the assertion. But this difficulty is easily removed by adjusting the nature of complete salvation to fit their present attainments. These impatient souls tolerate more readily the idea of an imperfect perfection than the admission of lagging perfecting.

They must at all costs have all that is coming to them at once.

It was John Wesley who infected the modern Protestant world with this notion of "entire instantaneous sanctification." In saying this we are not bringing a railing accusation against him. There was no element of his teaching which afforded him himself greater satisfaction. There is no element of it which is more lauded by his followers, or upon their own possession of which they more felicitate themselves. "The current orthodoxy," they say, "had put limitations on the salvation of Christ." It had limited it "in the degree of its attainment as well as in the persons by whom it is attained." It was the achievement of Wesley to lift these limitations and to make it clear not only that "the salvation of Christ is attainable by all but that it is completely attainable by all."¹ "Knowing exactly what I say, and taking the full responsibility for it, I repeat," John McClintock solemnly asseverates,² in describing the result in the church which Wesley founded, "we are the only church in history, from the apostles' time until now, that has put forward as its very elemental thought—the holiness of the human soul, heart, mind and will." Nothing less than a new epoch in the history of the Church has thus, in the view of Wesley's followers, been introduced. "Historically," writes Olin A. Curtis,³ "Wesley had almost the same epochal relation to the doctrinal emphasis upon holiness that Luther had to the doctrinal emphasis upon justification by faith, or that Athanasius had to the doctrinal emphasis upon the Deity of our Lord." We are merely recognizing, therefore, what is eagerly proclaimed by his followers, when we attribute to Wesley's impulse the wide prevalence in our modern Protestantism of what has come to be known

¹ G. G. Findlay, *Hastings' E.R.E.* VIII. 1916: Art., "Methodism, Doctrine of."

² In an address delivered at the Methodist Centenary Celebration in New York, January 25, 1866, reported in *The Methodist* of Feb. 3rd, 1866 and cited by O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, 1905, p. 372.

³ *The Christian Faith*, 1905, p. 373.

as "holiness teaching." The fact is, however, in any event too plain to be overlooked. As wave after wave of the "holiness movement" has broken over us during the past century, each has brought, no doubt, something distinctive of itself. But a common fundamental character has informed them all, and this common fundamental character has been communicated to them by the Wesleyan doctrine. The essential elements of that doctrine repeat themselves in all these movements, and form their characteristic features. In all of them alike justification and sanctification are divided from one another as two separate gifts of God. In all of them alike sanctification is represented as obtained, just like justification, by an act of simple faith, but not by the same act of faith by which justification is obtained, but by a new and separate act of faith, exercised for this specific purpose. In all of them alike the sanctification which comes on this act of faith, comes immediately on believing, and all at once, and in all of them alike this sanctification, thus received, is complete sanctification. In all of them alike, however, it is added, that this complete sanctification does not bring freedom from all sin; but only, say, freedom from sinning; or only freedom from conscious sinning; or from the commission of "known sins." And in all of them alike this sanctification is not a stable condition into which we enter once for all by faith, but a momentary attainment, which must be maintained moment by moment, and which may readily be lost and often is lost, but may also be repeatedly instantaneously recovered.

The latest of these waves speaks of itself by predilection as "the Victory in Christ" movement, or "the Victorious Life movement."⁴ Mr. Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, the

⁴ We may conjecture—it is only conjecture—that the name is derived from 1 John v. 4. Mr. Trumbull, at the beginning of the tract *Real and Counterfeit Victory*, says, "Victory is a great word in the New Testament." It occurs just six times and in only four passages (Matt. xii. 20, 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55, 57; 1 John v. 4, Rev. xv. 2); and only in 1 John v. 4 *cf.* Rev. xv. 2 in this special sense. It occurs only three times in the Old Testament, all in the literal sense (2 Sam. xix. 2, xxiii. 10, 12.)

accomplished editor of *The Sunday School Times*, has come forward as its chief promoter. We gather⁵ that his conversion to the notions which he is now so eagerly propagating took place in the summer of 1910. It was preceded by deep impressions received from certain sermons preached, unless we mistake his allusions, by President A. H. Strong and Mr. Richard Roberts.⁶ The doctrine which he preaches was not derived, however, from these sermons. Its affinities, as is elsewhere correctly intimated,⁷ are rather with the Keswick teaching; and behind that, of course, there lies the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. R. Pearsall Smith,⁸ while back of all looms the general Wesleyan background. The chief instruments which he employs in the very active propaganda which he is prosecuting for this doctrine are his journal, *The Sunday School Times*, and the mid-summer Conferences which have been held for the past few years at Princeton. Both the one and the other have come to exist largely for its propagation. *The Sunday School Times* is now advertised as "a weekly journal of Bible Study and the Christian Life for adults, in which the truth of the Victorious Life is constantly presented and its problems are fully discussed"; as "an every week interdenominational paper for adults which seeks to share with its world-wide family of readers the riches of salvation and victory which are ours in Christ not only hereafter but here." This means no less than that the propagation of Mr. Trumbull's views on "the Victorious Life" has been deliberately made one of the definite objects of the publication of this journal. It is for this distinct purpose that "the Princeton Confer-

⁵ See especially his tract, entitled, *The Life that Wins*.

⁶ The matter is certain with reference to Mr. Richard Roberts' sermon, and the sermon,—*The Life that is Christ*, on Phil. i. 21—is published by The Sunday School Times Company in tract form. That Dr. Strong was the preacher of the other sermon mentioned rests merely on a conjecture of our own.

⁷ *Victory in Christ*, pp. 6, 10, 239.

⁸ *Victory in Christ*, p. 94. Hannah Whitall Smith's *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* is characterized as "one of the most remarkable settings forth of the victorious life you can find anywhere."

ence" also is carried on. This purpose is written into the articles of agreement by which that Conference is constituted, and it is constantly proclaimed with great explicitness. The aim of the Conference, we are told, is "to lead men and women into a life of closer union with God, victory over sin, and fruit-bearing, through the presentation of the Bible Teaching concerning the life that is Christ."⁹ Or, as it is expressed elsewhere, "to lead Christians into a life of victory through moment by moment faith in Christ." Or, more crisply, "Victory in Christ is what Princeton Conference stands for."¹⁰ Standing for that, it is to be looked on, we are further told, as "a Rescue Mission for Christians," a rescue mission which, it is sharply intimated, is much needed.¹¹

Mr. Trumbull's teachings are most accessible in a series of tracts, the most of which seem to have been reprinted from the columns of *The Sunday School Times*, and may be had from the Sunday School Times Company;¹² and in a series of addresses, into which the substance of these tracts has been incorporated, printed in the volume which bears the title, *Victory in Christ: a Report of Princeton Conference 1916*.¹³ "These addresses," we are told in the advertisement of the book put out by the Sunday School Times Company, "comprise the fullest connected statement of the teachings of the Victorious Life that Mr. Trumbull has ever given in conference work or has published." In

⁹ *Victory in Christ*, pp. 1, 5.

¹⁰ *Victory in Christ*, p. 108.

¹¹ *Victory in Christ*, p. 109.

¹² These tracts include *The Life that Wins, Is Victory Earned or a Gift?*, *What is Your Kind of Christianity?*, *Real and Counterfeit Victory*. We associate with them, *May Christians lose Sinful Desires?*, *The Secret of the Victorious Life*, although these are not explicitly assigned to Mr. Trumbull's own pen.

¹³ Published in 1916 by "The Board of Managers of Princeton Conference," and to be had from "the Secretary of Princeton Conference, 1031 Walnut Street, Philadelphia." Mr. Trumbull's own addresses bear the titles of *Are Ye Ignorant?*, *Real and Counterfeit Victory*, *What is Surrender?*, *The Faith for Victory*, *The Victory as a Gift*, *The Victory Tested*, *Questions and Answers on Victory*.

this statement, it will be observed, Mr. Trumbull is spoken of as the recognized leader of a movement and readers are supposed to be eager to obtain the fullest statement of his teachings. The addresses do not, however, supersede the tracts. Some of the tracts at least have been revised and reissued since the publication of the book. And not only do the tracts contain many details of Mr. Trumbull's experience in which the movement originated that have not been transferred to the volume; but the same subjects are sometimes treated in the two in a somewhat different manner and from a slightly different angle of vision—and, in the tracts, with more freshness and vigor. It is naturally to these teachings of Mr. Trumbull's own that we go (as we are expected to go) first, for information as to the teachings of the Victorious Life movement. Mr. Trumbull has, however, helpers in his task of propagating his doctrines, to whom also we should do well to attend. Mr. Robert C. McQuilkin, who was for some years associate editor of *The Sunday School Times*, for instance, has ably seconded his chief in the columns of that journal. And then there are the speakers whom Mr. Trumbull has gathered around him at the Princeton Conference, and whose addresses are included in the volume called *Victory in Christ*. If these may justly be thought of, so far as they prove to be like-minded with him, as secondary authorities for the ideas he wishes to inculcate, no doubt the books and leaflets which he expressly recommends as "literature on the Victorious Life"—"the best and clearest books on the truth of the life that is Christ, which is presented at Princeton Conference"¹⁴

¹⁴ *Victory in Christ*, pp. 100, 116, and fly-leaf at the back. The books which are thus recommended to us are: *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, by Hannah Whitall Smith (which, p. 94, Mr. Trumbull describes as "one of the most remarkable settings forth of the victorious life you can find anywhere"); James H. McConkey's *The Threefold Secret of the Holy Spirit*; W. H. Griffith Thomas's *Grace and Power*; A. B. Simpson's *The Christ Life*; Frances Ridley Havergal's *Kept for the Master's Use*. The tracts recommended include those mentioned above, and certain others, put up in a packet to be had from Mr. O. R. Heinze, Director of the Christian Life Literature Fund, 600 Perry Building, Philadelphia.

—may be appealed to in the third rank for illustrations of his teaching. On this general basis we purpose to found an attempt to make as clear as possible precisely what these teachings are and what their affinities are in the history of Christian thought. There is a sense in which this is a work of supererogation, just as it would be superfluous to subject each wave of the sea that washes at our feet to a particular chemical analysis to show that it is water and that the water which it is, is bitter. But on the whole it seems as if good purposes would be served by looking at Mr. Trumbull's teachings for the moment very much as if they were an isolated phenomenon and permitting them to speak for themselves.

Mr. Trumbull is accustomed to begin the expositions of his teaching by carefully explaining that justification and sanctification are two separate gifts of God, to be separately obtained, and by separate acts of faith.¹⁵ He thus bases his entire system on Wesley's primary error, the fundamental error by which the whole of Wesley's doctrine of sanctification is vitiated. But he expresses this in any case fatally erroneous representation with a crudity, and presses it to consequences, of which Wesley was incapable. "Jesus, you know," says he,¹⁶ "makes two offers to everyone. He offers to set us free from the *penalty* of our sin. And He offers to set us free from the *power* of our sin. Both of these offers are made on exactly the same terms: we can accept them only by letting Him do it all." "Every Christian," he proceeds, "has accepted the first offer. Many

¹⁵ If sanctification, like justification, is directly "by faith," it is very odd that the Scriptures never connect it directly with faith, as Prof. Thomas Smith tellingly points out in *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, April, 1876, p. 253. J. V. Bartlet, *Hastings' D.B.* IV, 394, says of sanctification, "It, too, begins and ends in faith: St. Paul might well have written ὁ ἅγιος πίστεως ζήσεται." The fact is, however, that Paul never so wrote: nor is any equivalent found anywhere in the New Testament—not even in Acts xv. 9 or Acts xxviii. 18, which are sometimes wrongly quoted in this sense. Compare Bishop J. B. Ryle, *Holiness*, (1877), ed. 5, 1900, p. xiii.

¹⁶ In the tract, *What is Your Kind of Christianity?*

Christians have not accepted the second offer." Or, as it is put in another place,¹⁷ "Every Christian knows and has accepted the first of these two offers," but "many a Christian does not even intelligently know of, and still more Christians have not accepted the second of these two offers." The adverb "intelligently," somewhat oddly inserted into the last clause, is a sop to Cerberus. All Christians of course know that our Lord delivers His people from the power as well as from the penalty of sin; they would not be Christians if they were not entrusting to Him their complete deliverance from both—and more. But few Christians find the meaning in this statement which the writer wishes to attach to it. The interjection of "intelligently" merely betrays the writer's consciousness that he is teaching a novelty, something not ordinarily believed by Christians. This novelty is, of course, the sharp separation that is made between Christ's deliverance of His people from the penalty of sin and His deliverance of them from the power of sin. These things are not merely distinguished as recognizable steps or stages in the process of the one salvation. They are definitely separated as two distinct gifts of grace, of which we may have the one and not the other, which may be—often are—perhaps generally, or almost always are—sought and obtained separately. Of this separation of them from one another, however, not only do the generality of Christians know nothing, but the Scriptures know nothing. Or rather, it is definitely and repeatedly contradicted by the Scriptures. The whole sixth chapter of Romans, for example, was written for no other purpose than to assert and demonstrate that justification and sanctification are indissolubly bound together; that we cannot have the one without having the other; that, to use its own figurative language, dying with Christ and living with Christ are integral elements in one indisintegrable salvation.¹⁸ To

¹⁷ Heading of the leaflet: *Scriptures on the Victorious Life*, expressly commended in *Victory in Christ*, p. 100, note. The general statement is a staple of the literature of the movement.

¹⁸ It only shows the desperation of the case when Mr. Trumbull

wrest these two things apart and make separable gifts of grace of them evinces a confusion in the conception of Christ's salvation which is nothing less than portentous. It forces from us the astonished cry, Is Christ divided? And it compels us to point afresh to the primary truth that we do not obtain the benefits of Christ apart from, but only in and with His Person; and that when we have Him we have all.¹⁹

seeks to break the force of the argument of Rom. vi by emphasizing the "might" in the English Version of Rom. vi. 4: "'We also must?' No, 'might.' That is where your choice comes in. You do not have to walk in newness of life. You do not have to sit in heavenly places with the Father—it is only 'might.' Even to Christians, members of the body of Christ, the acceptance of this proffered privilege depends upon their free will" (*Victory in Christ*, p. 76). Nothing could be worse than this. The attempted weakening of the phrase in vi. 6 "that the body of sin might *be done away*" by resurrecting the etymological sense of the Greek verb, borrowed by Mr. Trumbull from Dr. Griffith Thomas (though it may find support in Sanday-Headlam) is, however, equally bad. It has become traditional in this school: cf. Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Record of a Happy Life*, 1873, p. 149; "The indwelling presence of Christ destroys (or 'renders inert') the body of sin." It is needless to say that the Rev. Harrington C. Lees has led Dr. Thomas astray when (*Grace and Power*, 1916, p. 127) he has induced him to substitute "handicap" for "condemnation" in Romans viii. 1. The word cannot be twisted into that meaning, and Deissmann's discussion gives no possible basis for it. We suppose that stenographers and compositors are responsible for the wonderful philology we find on p. 186 of *Victory in Christ*: "That word compassion is a deep word; *paschor* means to suffer; it is something more than just sympathy; it is the Greek equivalent of that Latin word the paschal lamb, it carries the deep significance of that word." But what are we to make of this from Dr. A. B. Simpson's *Walking in the Spirit*, p. 173: "The very word for love is charity, or *caritas*, and this is derived from the root *charis*, grace. So that the primary idea conveyed by the Bible term for love is, that it is a gift and not a natural quality"? The Victorious Life writers do not impress us on the philological side.

¹⁹ This fundamental fact is admirably presented by H. Bavinck, *Geref. Dogmatiek*, IV, p. 285. It could not be better stated than it is by John H. Livingston, Professor of Theology in the Seminary of the Reformed Dutch Church, in the course of two sermons on *Growth in Grace* delivered in the Collegiate Church, New York, in 1790: "We take Him for our all when first we believe; but what that fully implies, we do not, when first we believe, yet understand. To grow in

This crass separation of sanctification from justification, as if it was merely an additional gift of grace to be sought and obtained for itself—instead of, as it is, an inseparable component part of the one salvation that belongs to all believers—lays the foundation, of course, for that circle of ideas which are summed up in the phrase, “the Second Blessing.” These are far from wholesome.²⁰ Among them may be mentioned, for example, the creation of two different kinds of Christians, a lower and a higher variety. With Mr. Trumbull, these two classes of Christians are “merely saved people” and “real disciples of Christ.” “Thousands of saved people,” he says, are not following after Christ, are not bearing the cross, and therefore are not disciples. A Christian is one who is saved from the penalty of his sin; a disciple is one who, after being saved, becomes a learner, goes on learning more and more about Christ.²¹ This does not seem to be just Christ’s teaching (Mat. xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23). And one asks in amazement, What is the penalty of sin? And what is salvation from it? Is not our sinfulness the penalty above all other

grace is the unfolding of that mystery. It is experimentally to know that Christ is of God made unto us sanctification; that in the Lord we have not only righteousness, but in Him also we have strength. . . .” Cf. also the fine statement by Lyman H. Atwater, *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, July 1877, p. 393: “We receive a full salvation in Christ when we receive Him by faith; but a salvation begun here, and completed only with respect to the soul when we pass by the gate of death to the realms of glory; and with respect to the body when it shall also be raised in glory. . . .” Dr. Atwater illustrates the involution of all its stages in the one salvation—including even those which are completed beyond this life—from Rom. viii. 30.

²⁰ Cf. A. A. Hodge, *The Presbyterian*, April 1, 1876, p. 2:—“It is wholly a false view, never accepted by the Church, that the Christian undergoes two conversions—that he *first* accepts Christ for justification, and *afterwards*, by a separate act, accepts Him for sanctification. Justifying faith is an act of a spiritually quickened soul. It accepts Christ as a Savior from sin—not mere individual condemnation. The removal of guilt is in order to the removal of the pollution and power of sin. The same act of faith, which accepts Christ as Priest, accepts Him as Prophet and King. He cannot be divided. No more, in any act of true faith, can forgiveness be separated from purification.”

²¹ *Victory in Christ*, p. 87.

penalties of sin, and is not holiness just salvation from sin? Are we not to credit Paul when he tells us that "God chose us from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit?" (2 Thess. ii. 13), and in pursuance of this His primal purpose has called us in sanctification (1 Thess. iv. 7); and that therefore, saved by grace through faith, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10)? Mr. Trumbull's distinction, however, is a necessary consequence of separating sanctification from justification, as a distinct blessing subsequently sought and obtained. As an inevitable result of it a most unpleasant note is sounded throughout the whole literature of this movement of what we cannot call anything else than spiritual pretension. These writers are always felicitating themselves upon not being as other men are—"ordinary Christians," "average Christians"; and these "ordinary" or "average" Christians come in for a good deal of little-disguised scorn. We are told by the tract called *Subdued* that not more than one in a thousand of converted men attain to "victory"—that is to say to the status of "disciples." The rest are satisfied to live on a lower plane. "Where others are content with a meagre measure of piety and power, with an ambition merely to be saved as by fire," we read in the tract called *Victory*,—"and you claim your full inheritance in Christ—an overcomer in order to reign with Him—that is *victory*." It is possibly only the language employed here that reminds us of the incident recorded in Mat. xx. 20 ff. But it is not of humility that we especially are made to think as we read.²²

When Mr. Trumbull comes to tell us how *Victory* in

²²Charles Spurgeon was made to think of presumption and spoke accordingly. "It will be an ill day," he said, "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 vainglory, and under which their firmest friends shudder for them." (Quoted in *The Presbyterian*, Feb. 19, 1876.)

Christ is obtained, he refines on the dichotomy of Christians into the merely saved and the victorious, and discovers yet a third class. He speaks at times as if the Victorious life were obtained by a perfectly simple act, just faith—as “mere salvation” is obtained.²³ But it appears, as we read further, that the condition upon which alone it can be attained has a certain complexity. It is indeed a double condition, “surrender and faith, ‘Let go and let God.’”²⁴ And we learn that these two elements are not only distinguishable but separable. We may “let go” and not yet “let God.” Accordingly “the Surrendered Life is not yet the Victorious Life. There is no victory without surrender, but there may be surrender without victory.” “Surrender and victory are not the same,” we read elsewhere.²⁵ “It is possible to be a completely surrendered Christian and a defeated Christian.” There are therefore, it seems, three kinds of Christians: mere Christians—“very respectable church members”²⁶—who have received nothing but freedom from the penalty of sin; “surrendered Christians” who have surrendered themselves wholly to God, but do not in some way or other “let God”; and “Victorious Christians” who have not merely given themselves “unreservedly and completely under the mastery of the Lord Jesus Christ,” but know and remember that “it at once becomes His responsibility, His—I say it reverently—duty, to keep them from the power of sin.”

We confess that we find it difficult to understand how this distinction between “surrender” and “faith,” between

²³ Mr. Trumbull is careful to use the term obtain, not attain, in connection with the Victorious Life. “Victory,” he says, “is not an attainment, it is an obtainment. It is not something you get by working for it, it is something that is given you, as an outright gift” (*Victory in Christ*, p. 82).

²⁴ Tract called *What is Your Kind of Christianity?*

²⁵ Tract called *Real and Counterfeit Victory*, p. 9. So in *Victory in Christ*, p. 100, we are told that many a “surrendered” Christian is “a defeated Christian,” and that “there is no such thing as a victorious life without surrender; but there may be surrender without victory.”

²⁶ *Victory in Christ*, p. 237. p. 94

“let go” and “let God” can be given validity. We are tempted at once to pronounce it only one of the merely verbal distinctions, with no actual content, which seem to impress themselves occasionally on Mr. Trumbull’s thought. Are not the merely negative and positive aspects of what is necessarily a single act erected here into two separate acts?²⁷ Surely “surrender,” utter surrender—if it be surrender to God—is just faith. To “let go,” if it be a distinctively Christian act at all, is certainly to “let God.” It must be confessed, however, that the notion of “surrender,” in all this school of writers, lacks somewhat in clarity. Sometimes it is so described as to reduce it in principle to merely a general attitude of renunciation, of apathetic inactivity, which has no specific reference to God and only supplies to Him an unresisting field in which He may freely work. This idea, the affinities of which are more mystical than Christian, even when it is not explicitly expressed, is felt hovering in the background in much of the exposition of “surrender” that is given us, coloring more or less deeply the conception presented. In proportion as it is present room is left, of course, for active faith following upon or in addition to it; but in that same proportion the possibility of an active faith succeeding or accompanying it is excluded. The soul cannot be in contradictory attitudes—passive and active—at one and the same time. The general drift of Mr. Trumbull’s writing on the subject is to the effect that “surrender” merely opens the way for the divine action which gives “victory.” This divine action which gives victory is in the most confusing way interchanged

²⁷ *Victory in Christ*, p. 235: “Surrender is but half, the negative half: in order to have victory, we must add to our surrender, faith.” Hannah Whitall Smith, *Every-Day Religion*, 1893, p. 40, remarks: “Trusting can hardly be said to be distinct from yielding,” and adds: “It is, in fact, the absolutely necessary correlation [correlative?] to it. . . . Trusting, therefore, simply means that when we have yielded ourselves up unto the Lord, or, in other words, have made ourselves over to Him, we then have perfect confidence that He will manage us and everything concerning us exactly right, and we can quietly leave the whole case and managing in His hands.”

with the conception of faith, under the impression apparently that thus this faith is represented as the gift of God.²⁸ We even have the two simple conditions of the life of victory—"surrender and faith"—explained as meaning that "we must give Christ all there is of ourselves before He can give us all there is of Himself,"²⁹ where Christ's giving us all there is of Himself is identified with "faith." The mediating thought seems to be that "faith" is just "letting Christ do it all,"³⁰—a conception which appears to differ from "surrender" itself only in having a specific reference to Christ or God.

The one thing that is clear about "surrender" is that it is something that we ourselves do: "Surrender is *our* part in Victory";³¹ and that it is the *conditio sine qua non* of the victory of God in us. No matter how the conception varies or what phraseology is chosen to express it, this one thing is presented with unflinching constancy and with the strongest emphasis. Mrs. Pearsall Smith thinks that the term "abandonment" might to some minds express the idea intended better than "consecration" or "surrender"; but she insists that, under whatever designation, what is intended is an act of sheer will, by which we remove out of the way the difficulties which prevent God from blessing us, and render it possible for Him to do it.³² One of the tracts recommended to be read by those seeking the Victorious Life—the copy at our disposal belongs to the 35th thousand—prefers the term "Subdued" and develops the idea

²⁸ *Victory in Christ*, p. 235.

²⁹ P. 26.

³⁰ P. 236.

³¹ *Victory in Christ*, p. 100.

³² *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, new and enlarged edition (1888), pp. 47, 48. "The power to surrender and trust," Mrs. Smith tells us, p. 243, "exists in every human soul, and only needs to be brought into exercise." "To every human being," she says in her tract on *Faith*, "God has given the power to believe"—just as he has given him a hand; and "I must use, by the force of my wish, the power He has already given me." Compare the remarks on this statement by Henry A. Boardman, *The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification*, 1877, pp. 58 ff.

under that conception. "We must be perfectly subdued in every part of our nature to God's will and the disposition of His mind," before God can use us for good things. The synonyms employed are such as these: "this complete condition of teachable subjugation to God's Spirit"; "absolutely conquered by the Holy Ghost." It might be supposed that under a terminology of this sort, a conception would be presented which did some justice to the divine initiative. But no: it seems that even under this terminology the decisive act is still to be our own. God the Holy Spirit does not subdue us to Himself. He is dependent on us for the subduing; we must ourselves subdue, subjugate, conquer ourselves to Him, and the exhortation is actually given: "Let us get subdued in every way in everything," "so subdued that we can keep still in God and see Him work out the great bright thoughts of His eternal mind in our lives"—from which it appears that on our act of subduing ourselves to God there follows a quietism, when He takes the reins. If we will only put ourselves in connection with the electric current, then the current will flow through us and work its effects. The part of the individual is to make the connection; and that is his indispensable part. Only after that, can God work: and after that God only works. This is the fundamental teaching of the whole school. We advert to it here, however, only incidentally: we shall return to it later.

What it is of most importance to call attention to here is the most fatal defect in Mr. Trumbull's doctrine of salvation. This is the neglect to provide any deliverance for "the corruption of man's heart." Writers of this school are never weary of representing "ordinary Christians" as ignorant of the fulness of the salvation which is in Christ. "They have learned only," says W. E. Boardman, in a typical statement,³³ "that their sins are forgiven through faith in the atonement of Jesus. They have not yet learned that Jesus through faith in His name is the deliverer

³³ *The Higher Christian Life*, 1859, p. 266.

from the power of sin, as well as from its penalty." Where they have met with these extraordinary "ordinary Christians" we have no power to conjecture. They are not the ordinary Christians with whom we are familiar. It certainly is not the ordinary Christian teaching that the salvation of Christ is exhausted in its objective benefits. We have already pointed out that, on the contrary, it is the ordinary Christian teaching that Christ is received at once for both justification and sanctification and cannot be received for the one without bringing with it the other. As Henry A. Boardman points out in perfectly simple terms:³⁴ "It is not possible that a justified sinner should be left, even for a moment, in a condition of spiritual death. . . . By one and the same act of faith, the soul takes Christ as its righteousness and its sanctification; as the ground of its hope, and the source of its new life; as the Author not only, but the Finisher of its faith; as the spring of its vitality and growth, as really as the vine alone sustains its branches, or the head the members." Whenever one-sidedness in the conception of Christ's salvation has shown itself in the history of Christian teaching, the tendency has been apt to be to emphasize its subjective at the expense of its objective side, rather than the objective at the expense of the subjective. A few fanatical Moravians, a few followers of that great preacher Friedrich Kohlbrügge, stand out almost alone as inclined to sum up salvation in its objective benefits. When men have lauded justification as the *articulus stantis ecclesiae*—as "the beginning, and middle, and end of salvation,"—it has not been because they denied or depreciated the other elements which go to make up a complete salvation; but because they, rightly, see them all indetachably bound up with justification and drawn inevitably in its train. It is not the "ordinary Christians" who hold to a fatally deficient conception of salvation, but the advocates of the "Victorious Life"; and strange to say, the fatal deficiency of their conception of salvation lies on the

³⁴ As cited, p. 31.

subjective side. They teach a purely external salvation. All that they provide for is deliverance from the external penalties of sin and from the necessity of actually sinning.

In Mr. Trumbull's scheme of salvation deliverance from corruption has no place.³⁵ The heart remains corrupt and so, no man can say, "I am without sin."³⁶ It is within the power of any Christian, however, if he chooses, to say "I am without sinning." Yes, "immediately and completely." Reiterated emphasis is laid on this. God offers us as "an outright gift," to be received by faith alone, "freedom immediately and completely from all the power of known sin," "immediate and complete freedom from the power of your known sins." This is "just as miraculous," we are told, "as the miracle of regeneration," and "just as exclusively the Lord's work." This remark confuses us vastly, from many points of view: for example, from this—regeneration is a change of our nature, but here is no change of nature at all. We remain corrupt sinners still: only we no longer commit sins—that is, "known sins." Not that we cannot commit sins: we can. And indeed we gather we generally do: Mr. Trumbull says he himself has committed them. Despite the miracle wrought in us, we can never say, "I can never commit sin again." We can always sin again if we choose. "I am not speaking," Mr. Trumbull asseverates, "of any mistaken idea of sinless perfection. It

³⁵ In *Victory in Christ*, p. 98 Mr. Trumbull employs the phrase "this death of our sinful nature"; but he does not mean by it that our sinful nature is eradicated, but what would be more correctly expressed by "we die to our sinful nature." He is speaking with Gal. ii. 20 (see p. 86) in mind. Our sinful nature remains in us and we should always remember it lest we should become proud. "Away on toward the end of life Paul emphasized the fact that he was the chief of sinners. You must realize that in yourself you are just the same old worthless self—as Billy Sunday has said, so black that you could make a black mark on a piece of anthracite (p. 121, 2)." This is what we all remain at heart, though saved from "the power of sin," that is from all sinning.

³⁶ We are following in this exposition the tract, *What is Your Kind of Christianity?* The parallel passage to exactly the same effect in *Victory in Christ*, p. 117 f. should be compared.

is not possible for anyone to have such a transaction with Christ, as to enable him to say either, 'I am without sin,' or 'I can never sin again.' We are not saved from sin but from sinning, and we can be saved from sinning only moment by moment, by reexercising moment by moment the faith by which we "let Christ" free us immediately and completely from all known sin. This freedom though immediate and complete is momentary: it lasts only for the single moment in which it is received, and its renewal for the next moment is wholly dependent on our renewal of the faith which obtains it.

At this point, however, Mr. Trumbull says the most startling thing he says throughout the whole discussion. It is his constant representation that this faith by which immediate and complete freedom from all the power of known sin (alas! that he always says "known sin") is obtained and re-obtained is our own contribution to our salvation. He can even say crisply³⁷ that "Christ plus our receiving" is the formula for the "hope of victory." And in his system this must needs be the case: until we exercise faith we stand outside all the saving influences of God—for are we not free agents, not to be compelled even to be saved? Here, however, he actually says in a happy lapse from his habitual and necessary teaching, though it, too, is unhappily but a momentary lapse: "But He Himself will give us that faith, and will continue that faith in us moment by moment." Why, if that be true,—why, most assuredly it is possible,—nay, it is certain, and beyond all prevention—to have such a transaction with Christ that we can never sin again. For if Christ gives us the faith by which we receive immediate and complete freedom from the power—that is the commission—of all known sin; and if Christ not only gives this faith once but continues it to us moment by moment, why, this, too, is taken out of our hands. and of course we cannot sin; Christ sees to that by Himself giving us, apart from any action precedent on our part. mo-

³⁷ Tract on *Is Victory Earned or a Gift?*

³⁸ *The Higher Christian Life*, 1859, p. 266.

ment by moment, the faith which secures immediate and complete freedom from all the power of known sin. If we ask in wonder how we are to account for Mr. Trumbull's lapse here from the very *cor cordis* of his doctrine—his contention in season, out of season, for the supreme autocracy of the human will—the next sentence reveals it to us: "We can and must, as Frances Ridley Havergal has so truly said, 'entrust unto Him our trust.'" He has been reading Miss Havergal, and Miss Havergal is as fundamentally evangelical in the main current of her thought as Mr. Trumbull is fundamentally unevangelical in the main current of his. And he has taken over a phrase from her which is perfectly in place in the general context of her thought, but utterly out of place in the general context of his thought—which indeed throws the whole fabric of his teaching into confusion. Miss Havergal means in the excellent passage to which allusion is made,³⁸ to tell her readers that we are wholly in God's hands, that it is He and He alone who saves us, and that everything that enters into our salvation—our very faith by which we are united to our Savior,—is from Him and Him only. Mr. Trumbull cannot mean this; his teaching is very explicit that we do our own believing in our own power, while God and Christ stand helplessly by until we choose to open the door for them to work in and on us; we cannot entrust to Him a trust which we must exercise as the condition precedent of His acting upon us at all. We merely note here that Mr.

³⁸ *Kept for the Master's Use*, p. 20. "If Christ's keeping depends upon our trusting, and our continuing to trust depends upon ourselves, we are in no better or safer position than before, and shall only be landed in a great series of disappointments. The old story, something for the sinner to do, crops up again here, only with the ground shifted from 'works' to trust. Said a friend to me, 'I see now. I did trust Jesus to do everything for me, but I thought this trusting was something that I had got to do.' . . . We can no more trust and keep on trusting than we can do anything else of ourselves." This is in direct contradiction to Mr. Trumbull's fundamental dogma—that Christ can act on us, in every instance of blessing, only on our opening the way for Him to do so, by an act of our own free determination.

Trumbull, who manages to teach together, as we shall shortly see, autosoterism and quietism, also manages to inject an evangelical phrase into his autosoteric system,—and pass on.

It is a fatally inadequate conception of salvation which so focusses attention on deliverance from the penalty of sin and from continued acts of sin, as to permit to fall out of sight deliverance from sin itself—that corruption of heart which makes us sinners. Laying onesided stress on deliverance from acts of sin,—especially when these acts of sin are confined by definition to “deliberate transgressions of known law”—is too poverty-stricken a conception of salvation to satisfy any Christian heart. Christians know that their Lord has come into the world to save them from sin in all its aspects, its penalty, its corruption and its power: they trust Him for this complete salvation: and they know that they receive it from Him in its fulness. Mr. Trumbull and his associates have no doubt been betrayed into neglect or denial of our deliverance from the central thing—“the corruption of man’s heart”—by a certain prudence. They are set upon the assertion of the possibility and duty for Christians of a life free from sinning. Grant them that, and they are willing to allow that their unsinning Christians remain sinners at heart. They do not appear to see that thus they yield the whole case. An astonishing misapprehension of the relation of action to motive underlies their point of view; and a still more astonishing misapprehension of the method of sanctification which is founded on this relation. To keep a sinner, remaining a sinner, free from actually sinning, would be but a poor salvation; and in point of fact that is not the way the Holy Spirit operates in saving the soul. He does not “take possession of our will and work it,”—thus, despite our sinful hearts, producing a series of good acts as our life-manifestation and thereby falsifying our real nature in its manifestation. He cures our sinning precisely by curing our sinful nature; He makes the tree good that the fruit may

be good. It is, in other words, precisely by eradicating our sinfulness—"the corruption of our hearts"—that He delivers us from sinning. The very element in salvation which Mr. Trumbull neglects, is therefore, in point of fact, the radical element of the saving process, and the indispensable precondition of that element in salvation which he elects to emphasize to its neglect. We cannot be saved from sinning except as we are saved from sin; and the degree in which we are saved from sinning is the index of the degree in which we have been saved from sin. Here too, as in every other sphere of activity, the *operari* follows and must follow the *esse*: a thing must be before it can act, and it can act only as it is. To imagine that we can be saved from the power of sin without the eradication of the corruption in which the power of sin has its seat, is to imagine that an evil tree can be compelled to bring forth good fruit—or that it would be worth while to compel it to do so—which is the precise thing that our Lord denies. What Mr. Trumbull in point of fact teaches is exactly what Hannah Whitall Smith ridicules in a vivid figure which she uses in a less felicitous connection: that what Christ does is just to tie good fruit to the branches of a bad tree and cry, Behold how great is my salvation!³⁹

It is astonishing that nevertheless even Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas falls in to some extent with this representation. Dr. Thomas does not forget, indeed, that we are to be delivered from the corruption of sin—ultimately. When he wishes to bring into view the whole deliverance which we have in Christ, he enumerates the elements of it thus: "Deliverance from the guilt of sin, deliverance from the penalty of sin, deliverance from the bondage of sin, and deliverance hereafter from the very presence of sin."⁴⁰ The insertion of the word "hereafter" into the last clause tells the story. We must wait for the "hereafter" to be delivered from the "presence of sin"—that is to say from the cor-

³⁹ For example, *Every-Day Religion*, 1893, p. 165.

⁴⁰ *Grace and Power*, 1916, p. 62.

ruption of our hearts—but meanwhile we may very well live as if sin were not present: its presence in us need not in any way affect our life-manifestation. Dr. Thomas enters the formal discussion of the matter,⁴¹ apparently, as a mediator in “the old question, ‘suppression or eradication,’ ”⁴² on this side or the other of which Perfectionists have been accustomed to array themselves as they faced the problem of the sin that dwells in us. He comes forward with a new formula, by which, supposedly, he hopes that he may conciliate the parties to the dispute. “Suppression,” he declares, says too little, “eradication” says too much; let us say, “counteraction,” he suggests, and then we shall have the right word. Does “counteraction,” however, come between “eradication” and “suppression,” saying less than the one and more than the other? Does it not say less than either? Whether the “sinful principle” in us be “eradicated” or “suppressed,” it is put out of action: if it be merely “counteracted,” it not only remains but remains active, and enters as a co-factor into all effects. The illustration which Dr. Thomas himself uses, to make his meaning clear, is what he speaks of as the counteraction of gravitation by volition. In the same way, he says, “the lower law of sin and death is forever counteracted by the presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts.” Of course volition does not directly counteract gravitation: we cannot by a mere volition rise at will upwards from the earth. What volition is able to do is to set another physical force in operation in the direction opposed to the pull or push of gravitation: and if this new physical force pulls or pushes more powerfully in a direction opposite to that in which gravitation pulls or pushes,—why, the effect will be in the direction of the action of the new force, and will be determined by the amount of its superiority to the force of gravity. We throw a ball into the air. We have not suppressed gravity. It

⁴¹ *Grace and Power*, Ch. VII, pp. 131 ff; also printed in tract form under the title of *Must Christians Sin?*

⁴² The phrase is taken from O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 390.

pulls the ball all the time. We only counteract its effect in the exact measure in which the force we apply exceeds the pull of gravity. If Dr. Thomas intends this illustration to be applied fully, it appears to imply that the "principle of sin" operates in all our acts with full power, and therefore conditions all our acts: only, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is stronger than indwelling sin, and therefore the effect produced is determined by Him. We do not sin, not because the principle of sin in us is suppressed or eradicated, but because it is counteracted. If this be Dr. Thomas' meaning, one would think that he ought to declare not, as he does declare, that Christians need not sin, but that they cannot sin—not even to the least, tiny degree. If the Holy Spirit who is the infinite God dwells in them for the express purpose of counteracting the principle of sin in them; and if He operates invariably, in every action of the Christian; it would seem to be clearly impossible that the principle of sin should ever be traceable in the effect at all. The ball that we throw into the air will rise only a certain distance and ever more and more slowly until, its initial impulse being overcome by the deadly pull of gravity, it turns and falls back to earth. If, however, it was propelled by an infinite force, the pull of gravity, though always present, could have no determining effect on its movement. On this theory of counteraction Dr. Thomas should teach therefore not that Christians need not sin, but that they cannot sin—as indeed the passages in 1 John on which he immediately depends in his exposition of his view would also compel him, on his system of interpretation, to teach.

From the point of view of Scripture, however, this theory of counteraction is quite inadequate. It renders it impossible for the Christian to sin—and the Scriptures do not teach that: but it leaves the "principle of sin" in him unaltered and in full activity, and most emphatically the Scriptures do not teach that such is the condition of the Christian in this world. It surely would be better to be freed from the "principle of sin" in us than merely from its ef-

fects on our actions. And this is in fact what the Scriptures provide for. What they teach, indeed, is just "eradication." They propose to free us from sinning by freeing us from the "principle of sin." Of course, they teach that the Spirit dwells within us. But they teach that the Spirit dwells within us in order to affect us, not merely our acts; in order to eradicate our sinfulness and not merely to counteract its effects. The Scriptures' way of cleansing the stream is to cleanse the fountain; they are not content to attack the stream of our activities, they attack directly the heart out of which the issues of life flow. But they give us no promise that the fountain will be completely cleansed all at once, and therefore no promise that the stream will flow perfectly purely from the beginning. We are not denying that the Spirit leads us in all our acts, as well as purifies our hearts. But we are denying that His whole work in us, or His whole immediate work in us, or His fundamental work in us, terminates on our activities and can be summed up in the word "counteraction." Counteraction there is; and suppression there is; but most fundamentally of all there is eradication; and all these work one and the self-same Spirit. We are not forgetful that Dr. Thomas teaches an ultimate eradication; and we would not be unwilling to read his recognition of it "with a benevolent eye" and understand him as teaching, not that the eradication is not going on now, but only that the eradication which is going on now is not completed until "hereafter." That would be Scriptural. But we fear Dr. Thomas will not permit us so to read him. And, if we mistake not, this difference in point of view between him and the Scriptures is in part, the source of his misconception and misprision of the seventh chapter of Romans. That chapter depicts for us the process of the eradication of the old nature. Dr. Thomas reads it statically and sees in it merely a "deadly warfare between the two natures"; which, he affirms,⁴³ "does not represent the normal Chris-

⁴³ Pp. 93 ff. On the ill-treatment which the Seventh Chapter of

tian life of sanctification." He even permits himself to say, "There is no Divine grace in that chapter; only man's nature struggling to be good and holy by law." What is really in the chapter is Divine grace warring against, and not merely counteracting but eradicating, the natural evil of sin. To Paul the presence of the conflict there depicted is the guarantee of victory. The three things which we must insist on if we would share Paul's view are: first, that to grace always belongs the initiative,—it is grace that works the change: secondly, that to grace always belongs the victory,—grace is infinite power: and thirdly, that the working of grace is by process, and therefore reveals itself at any given point of observation as conflict. In so far as Dr. Thomas's representation obscures any one of these things it falls away from the teaching of the New Testament. Grace assuredly "means a new life, a Divine life, which lifts us above the natural, and is nothing else than the life of Christ Himself in His people." It is, in substance, as sanctifying grace, the occupation of our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and the undertaking by Him, not only of their renewal, but of their control. It is they alone who are "led" by the Spirit who are sons of God. But the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is not confined to the direction of our activities. Dr. Thomas says truly⁴⁴ that grace does not merely "educate the natural heart." But he errs when he says that "grace does not improve the old nature, but overcomes it." He errs when he teaches only that "it promises hereafter to extirpate it," but meanwhile, only "counteracts its tendencies." It is progressively extirpating it now, and that is the fundamental fact in supernatural sanctification. The sanctifying action of the Spirit terminates on us, not merely on our activities; under it not only our actions but we are made holy. Only, this takes

Romans has received in general from the members of this school see some interesting remarks by H. A. Boardman as cited, chapter VII, pp. 98 ff.

⁴⁴ Pp. 93.

time; and therefore at no point short of its completion are either our acts or we "perfect."

If we wish to observe to what lengths the notion may be carried, that the "old man" in us is unaffected by the intruding Spirit, we have only to turn to Mr. Robert C. McQuilkin's somewhat incoherent tract on *God's Way of Victory over Sin*. This tract has for its professed object the inculcation of what it expresses in its subordinate title in the words: "If it isn't easy, it isn't good." That is to say, its primary purpose is to show that it is easy, not hard, to be "good," and that it is therefore wrong to say that "it's awful hard to be good." It is easy to be good because it is not we who have to be good but the Holy Spirit is ready to be good for us, and all we have to do is just to let Him. We have called the tract incoherent because, with this as its primary concern, it yet tells us, as it draws near its close, that "the Spirit-led life is not an easy life," that, on the contrary, "it is the hardest life in all this sin-cursed world." Are we not to apply to the Spirit-led life, then, the maxim, "If it isn't easy, it isn't good"? The specialty of this tract, however,—and the reason we advert to it here—is the crudity with which, after a fashion more familiar to us among "the Brethren," it divides the Christian man into two ineradicably antagonistic "natures," the "fallen nature" and the "new nature." It is not only hard for a fallen man to be good, we are told, but impossible. This is not altered by his "new birth." The "new birth" does not change his "fallen nature." It only puts into him, by its side, a "new nature." Henceforth he has two natures in him, one of which can only sin, and the other of which cannot sin. The man himself—whatever the man himself, apart from his two natures, may be; he is apparently conceived as bare will—sits up between these two natures and turns over the lever as he lists, to give the one nature or the other momentary control. The two natures, we are told, have absolutely no effect on one another. "The carnal nature in the Christian is utterly evil, and is never mixed

with any good." "The new nature has no effect whatever upon the carnal nature. It is utterly distinct from it and cannot mingle with it, any more than God can have sin in His nature." It does not "change the character of the evil that the carnal nature is capable of." Apparently the carnal nature of man is never in any way changed or modified; from all that appears it remains in him forever and forever just badness and unalloyed badness. At least nothing is said to relieve that situation. Salvation does not consist in its eradication. It consists in the dominance in the life of "the new nature" existing by its side. This "new nature" is identified, now, with the indwelling Spirit. It is sometimes spoken of, no doubt, as a "the God-begotten nature"; but it is more frequently and properly treated as just the indwelling Spirit Himself, and it is because it is the indwelling Spirit Himself that it cannot sin. "It is impossible for the Spirit of God to be anything but good and well-pleasing to God." "The sinless and invincible Spirit of God has taken up His dwelling in us," we read further, "and has made it possible for us to permit Him to win the victories over the temptations that assail." It is disappointing to learn from this statement that when "the invincible Spirit of God" takes up His dwelling in us, all that He does is "to make it possible for us to permit Him" (an odd clause that!) to win victories for us. He is not "in full control" of us, it seems. It would indeed be truer to say, that He is only at our disposal. Everything is after all in our own control. "A Christian possessed of the indwelling Spirit of God," we read with sad eyes, "may choose to walk after the flesh." That is no doubt because he is possessed of rather than by the Spirit of God. At any rate it belongs ineradicably to "the Christian" to turn on the old carnal nature, or the new Spiritual nature, as he may choose, and let it act for him. Who this "Christian" is who possesses this power it is a little puzzling to make out. He cannot be the old carnal nature, for that old carnal nature cannot do anything good—and presumably, therefore,

would never turn on the Spirit in control. He cannot be the new Spiritual nature, for this new Spiritual nature cannot do anything evil—and this “Christian” “may choose to walk after the flesh.” Is he possibly some third nature? We hope not, because two absolutely antagonistic and non-communicating natures seem enough to be in one man. The only alternative seems, however, to be that he is no nature at all—just a nonentity: and then we do not see how he can turn on anything. Mr. McQuilkin is not wholly unaware of the difficulty to thought of the notion he is presenting. “That a Christian should possess two natures,” he writes, “one wholly evil and incapable of doing good, the other wholly good and incapable of doing evil, is a mystery, and no words of man’s wisdom can explain how these two natures exist in one personality.” That surely is true.

It has already incidentally become clear how Mr. Trumbull and his associates think of the Victorious Life. It is not lived by the Christian, but by Christ in and through the Christian. Immediately upon our “letting go and letting God,” God in Christ takes charge of our lives and lives them for us. The conception is that of a true substitution of the Christ within us for ourselves, as the agent in what are apparently our own activities. It involves therefore a complete quietism on our part, and nothing is more insisted upon than that we must cease from all effort in the matter of good works. The sole condition of Christ’s thus undertaking for us is that we should leave it absolutely to Him. A very fair compressed statement of the whole theory is given in one or two pages in *Victory in Christ*.⁴⁵ There we are told that there are two conditions of “the life of victory.” They are declared to be “simple” and are described as “surrender and faith.” They are proper conditions; that is to say, they must precede the victorious life,—without them there can be no victorious life—but on their occurrence the victorious life follows as a strict consequence, immediately and in its completeness. “Surrender”

⁴⁵ P. 27.

is defined as "the uttermost giving up of all that we have and all that we are to the mastery of Jesus." It is elsewhere called accepting Christ not only as our Savior (that has been done in justifying faith) but also as our Lord. It is putting ourselves wholly at His disposal. It is said that Christ can do nothing for us until this is done. His taking charge of our life can only be by our permission. But "as soon as we have made this complete and unconditional surrender," "Christ instantly" "accepts the whole responsibility of living in us in His fulness." This is the Christ in us, living in us, and living through us, of other passages. What He accomplishes in us by thus living in us is expressed as working "the miracle-victory over the power of all known sin, of producing in us all the fruit of the Spirit." This statement appears to declare a negative and a positive effect; negatively, He frees us from all "known sin"; positively, He produces in us "all the fruit of the Spirit." Thus a true perfection of life is produced. How we open the way for Him to do this is more exactly explained as "by telling Him that we *know* He *is* doing it." If this bears the appearance of a contradiction—for how can His undertaking to do it be conditioned on our recognition that He is already doing it?—the difficulty is met by explaining that the basis of our knowledge that He *is* doing it is the bare promise. It is not introspection or experience. "We know this, not by any changed feeling, nor by any evidence, or any proof, or any manifestation of any sort." We must rest on the bare Word. Christ says He *will* do it if we let Him; we, therefore know that He is doing it when we 'let go and let God'; and if we tell Him so, He will undertake the doing of it then and there"—a statement in which there still seems to reside a certain confusion between the present and future tenses. We may let that pass, however. What is certainly taught is that Christ wishes, of course, to take charge of our lives, but cannot do it until we let Him. But when we absolutely trust Him to do it—"that is the step of faith that Christ instantly honors

and blesses with the very fulness of His life."⁴⁶ "We must remember," of course, "that everything must depend upon *Christ* and *His* work, in the matter of victory." But this, only "after we have surrendered ourselves to Him."⁴⁷ That He does the work on which everything depends, itself depends, that is, absolutely on us. Thus everything ultimately is in our hands. Christ is an absolutely indispensable instrument; an instrument without which the results could not be obtained; we must use Him if we are to perfect our lives. But He is only an instrument which we use. He can do nothing of Himself; it is only as we use Him that He can work on or in us.

The manner in which we must use Him, however, is to submit ourselves entirely to Him. He can do nothing unless we call Him in to do it; but neither can He do anything when we call Him in to do it unless we put the case absolutely in His hands.⁴⁸ He will undertake nothing unless He has it all, and the "all" must be taken absolutely. The condition of the victorious life is that we must do nothing, absolutely nothing, except submit ourselves to Christ. Any attempt to do anything further not only does not help on the work of our perfecting; it absolutely hinders it. "Just remember this," says Mr. Trumbull in the tract on *Real and Counterfeit Victory*: "any victory over the power of any sin whatever in your life, that you have got by working for it is counterfeit. Any victory that you have to get by trying for it is counterfeit. If you have to work for your victory it is not the real thing; it is not the thing that God offers you." The notion is still further developed in the tract on *Is Victory Earned or a Gift?* What is affirmed here is that "victory is an outright gift of God,"

⁴⁶ P. 28.

⁴⁷ P. 29.

⁴⁸ Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, p. 48, illustrates from physicians who require patients to put themselves wholly in their care: "For of course," said one, "I could do nothing for him unless he would put his whole case into my hands without any reserves. . ."

by which is meant that we can do nothing whatever to realize it. We do do something to secure it; something so necessary that unless we do it we cannot have it,⁴⁹ though Mr. Trumbull will not allow that even what we do to secure it, the "surrendering" ourselves to Christ, is an "effort"; it is just an "act of the will," he says. But certainly no "efforts" are in place in the realization of our victory over sin: we must not try not to sin.⁵⁰ "Our efforts," he explains,—that is, our efforts not to commit sin,—“can not only never play any part in our victory over the power of sin, but they can and do effectively prevent such victory.” He is speaking, let us bear in mind, to men who have already received deliverance from the penalty of sin; they are Christian men. Now, he says, they must not try not to commit sin. All they must—all they can—do, is by an "act of the will" (which is no effort) to accept absolute freedom from the power of sin,—that is, in his definition, from committing sins—as a free gift. If they try at all not to commit sins, that is the same as to attempt to coöperate with Christ in freeing them from the power of sin; it involves therefore a demand that Christ should recognize that they have had some part to play in freeing themselves from the power of sin—and Christ can never recognize that; and accordingly if we try to refrain from sinning the only result is that we prevent Christ from saving us,—in that case, "Christ cannot save us from the power of sin." We are then, "to use our will to accept the gift of victory"—which we remember is no effort—but "we are not to make an effort"—any effort at all—"to win the victory." "We don't need to agonize about it; we don't need to work for

⁴⁹ This, it will be observed, is the exact reversal of the Scriptural doctrine, which is to the effect that we can do nothing to secure, but much to realize the life in Christ.

⁵⁰ Paul's view was different, and therefore he continually exhorts us to efforts to realize our holiness, as for example in 2 Cor. 7:1 where he urges us precisely to purify ourselves and thus to bring our holiness to its completion. W. B. Pope, *Compendium* III, p. 39, points out that "the word indicates an end to which effort is ever converging."

it. The more we work, and the more we agonize, the more we prevent or postpone what He wants to give us now."

This is of course express quietism. Mr. Trumbull is not content to teach that we cannot cease from sinning in the power of our own will, even of our renewed will, alone; but must be dependent for our every victory over sin upon the indwelling Spirit and His gracious operations. He goes on to teach that, therefore, we must make no effort to cease from sinning, but leave it wholly to God the Spirit Himself to deliver us from sinning. He is not content to trust our conquest of sin to God in whose might alone we can conquer in this warfare. He insists that, therefore, we must refuse to fight the good fight of faith and decline to have any part in the working out of our own salvation. This, we say, is quietism; and because it is quietism, it may easily run over into antinomianism. All history teaches us how dreadfully easy it is to persuade ourselves that, if we have received as a sheer gift from Christ absolute freedom from sinning and need not concern ourselves farther about it,—then, of course, the things we do (whatever they are) cannot be sins. Mr. Trumbull, of course, like all of his coterie, has already taken this step⁵¹ so far as to deny that anything he does can have the guilt of sin, unless he knows it to be sin: only "recognized sins" are sins to him. All experience teaches us that it is terribly easy not to recognize sins when we see them; not to "know" sins to which we chance to be prone, to be sins.⁵² Here, too, constant

⁵¹ "What we maintain," writes Lyman H. Atwater, as cited, p. 403 "is that its advocates really take Antinomian ground; that they in one form or another lower the standard of perfect holiness below the only perfect and immovable standard of goodness—i.e. the divine law—to some vague and indeterminate level, depending on and varying with the subjective states of each person who supposes himself to be perfect."

⁵² "One of Satan's devices," says Mrs. Alice E. McClure near the beginning of her tract, *An American Girl's Struggle and Surrender* (p. 4) "is to get us to think that sin is not sin." It is a sentence well worth the consideration of those who wish to confine sins to "known sins." Mrs. McClure in general manifests more sense of sin than most of her school (cf. pp. 13, 23, 31). But alas! even she knows

vigilance is the price of safety. And therefore we find so good a Perfectionist as W. B. Pope rebuking the "too prevalent separation between the sanctification of Christian privilege as a free gift and the ethical means appointed for its attainment,"⁵³ and carefully explaining the two aspects in which sanctification must be looked at,⁵⁴ and emphasizing "effort" as entering into its very essence. "On the one hand," he says truly, "it is a state of rest: 'filled with the Spirit,' the Christian can say, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' On the other, it is a state in which the soul is safe only in the highest exercise of the severest works. To its safety, its sedulity is required."

How far this Quietistic Perfectionism may be pressed, may be observed from the tract, *May Christians Lose Sinful Desires?* What is contended for in this tract is not merely "instantaneous and complete deliverance from the power of sin," in the sense of from the commission of sin, but "effortless freedom from sinful impulse." We not only do not sin, and do not sin without any effort on our part not to sin, having "victory by freedom rather than victory by fight"; we do not even have any impulse to sin. We not only are not mastered by sinful passions; we do not even "feel any desire to yield to them"; "their very appeal to us can be broken and broken completely." "Effortless freedom" from all "sinful impulses"—this is the type of perfectionism that is taught; and this is a distinctly quietistic type of perfectionism. What we are to do and what we can do, is "to enter upon the very life of God: to be as He is, even in this world (1 John iv. 17)":⁵⁵ not

only an "if" religion. She even speaks repeatedly of giving God a "chance" and permits herself this broad generalization: "Christianity is the only religion in which supremacy is given to the individual's co-operation" (*Victory in Christ*, p. 167, 168). This is not Paul's view, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus," "It is *not* of him that willeth." The gospel of salvation by co-operation is not Christ's gospel.

⁵³ *A Compendium of Christian Theology*, III, p. 5.

⁵⁴ P. 59.

⁵⁵ In *Victory in Christ*, p. 110, Mr. Trumbull declares that 1 John iv. 17 is "perhaps the most daring word in the whole Bible"—as he

to struggle or fight against temptation but "simply let Christ dispose of it, while we stand by like onlookers." It seems that we are still to be tempted, even though we are to be as God is in this world. This much is conceded to our humanity, though it is conceded arbitrarily. We are assured that we shall be tempted, and elsewhere we are told that our temptations even increase in violence. But we are to be "as God is" in having as our habitual experience His own freedom from the desire to sin under these temptations. "The simple fact is," we are told, "that whenever a life that trusts Christ as Savior is completely surrendered to Christ as Master, Christ is ready then to take complete control of that life, and at once to fill it with Himself. . . . When we surrender and trust completely we die to self and Christ can and does literally replace our self with Himself. Thus it is no longer we that live but Christ liveth in us in His Person, literally fills our whole being with Himself in actual, personal presence; and He does

might well declare it to be if it meant what he cites it in this tract as meaning. But he himself cannot so take it, and therefore at this place in *Victory in Christ* he introduces his own arbitrary limitation upon it: "That is," he says, "the same freedom for us from the power of *known sin* as God has." On the next page (p. 111) he cites the passage again but takes it on this occasion (rightly) as referring to Christ, not God. The passage is a stock passage with the perfectionists in this sense, referred sometimes to God, sometimes to Christ. Thus O. A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, 1905, p. 386: "We are prepared for the day of judgment by having the love of God made perfect in us; and this perfection of love can be achieved in this life—'because as He is, even so are we in this world.'" So W. B. Pope, *Compendium*, III, p. 55: "The only time our love is spoken of as literally perfect, it is connected with the supreme Pattern, 'because as He is, so are we in this world.'" The passage is in any case a very difficult one: but this perfectionist interpretation of it is certainly not the right one. The reference is to Christ, not God, and apparently to standing, not condition: what it probably teaches is that we shall stand before the judgment seat not in our own but in Christ's right. In the *Account of the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness held at Oxford, Aug. 29 to Sept. 7, 1874*, p. 91, it is cited, apparently by R. Pearsall Smith, in its right sense:—"We have learned that 'as Christ is so are we in this world,' and God sees us not as we are in ourselves but as we stand in the beloved." "The light which shows the evil also shows the blood."

this not as a figure of speech, but just as literally as that we fill our clothes with ourselves." If this be the state of the case, why of course we cannot sin, or feel any impulse to sin; Christ has supplanted us as the actor in all our actions. There is indeed no "we" left; our place has been taken by Christ, and "Christ does not have to struggle against any appeal that sin makes to Him." Any temptation that may assault us is of course "defeated by Christ before it has time to draw us into a fight"—if there is any "us" left to be drawn into a fight.

What is our astonishment then to learn that it is nevertheless in our power—the power of the "us" which has been superseded by Christ as the agent in all our acts—to defeat Christ's purpose for us here. "The only thing that can prevent Him," we read,—prevent Him from saving us from sinning and from doing it without our fighting against sin at all—"is either our distrust of His power, or our withdrawal of our complete surrender." When we surrender, Christ "does literally replace our self with Himself." And yet—we can still "distrust his power," "withdraw our complete surrender!" We seem forced to the conclusion that it is Christ (who is now the only agent) that distrusts His own power and withdraws our complete surrender, and we should not have thought that possible. But then we must remember that Mr. Trumbull has something always up his sleeve which is in his view more powerful than Christ, and which not even Christ can either suppress or supplant—something which, even though we have died to self and it is no longer we that live but Christ alone lives in us, can yet assert itself at any moment it chooses and cast Christ from the throne and assume it itself—the human will. We can only say that for ourselves we have not so learned either Christ or the human will.

There is another phrase which Mr. Trumbull uses in connection with the destruction of sinful desire in us that surprises us almost as much as this one, though from another point of view. "The victorious life,"⁵⁶ he tells us.

⁵⁶ *Victory in Christ*, p. 84.

“is the life of overcoming sin by the miraculous fact that the desire for sin is taken from you: you do not wish to do anything that you know to be sin.” This is indeed a miraculous fact—with the limitation that is put on it. For with this limitation it seems psychologically inexplicable. We can understand what is meant when it is said that the impulse to sinful acts is eradicated; but scarcely, when what is said is that the impulse to acts known to be sinful is eradicated. What has our knowledge of the moral character of the acts to do with a native impulse pushing towards them? Here is anger, for instance,—Mr. Trumbull is rather fond of using it as an illustration. We can understand what is meant when it is said that all impulse to anger is removed. And we can understand that as soon as we come to realize how wrong anger is, we should strive against the impulse to it. But how can the discovery that anger is wrong all at once remove all native tendency to angry ebullition? This would be equivalent to saying that it is not the impulse to anger that is removed but all tendency to abstract lawlessness: and that seems something different. The appearance is created that on this teaching the whole of the moral reaction is reduced to the one category of loyalty to law; and that seems scarcely tenable. Clearly the eradication of a constitutional propension pushing towards a specific action cannot be directly dependent on obtaining knowledge of the moral character of that action. The eradication of all impulses to sinful acts is at least intelligible. The conditioning of their eradication on our knowledge of the sinfulness of these acts seems scarcely so. But this by the way.

The overstrained mystical doctrine of the Christ within us on which Mr. Trumbull's quietism is founded, will not have escaped the reader. The crassness of the language in which he can express this doctrine may be noted perhaps as well as elsewhere in the tract called *The Life that Wins*.⁵⁷ He begins its exposition, as all his fellows begin it, by declaring that such New Testament expressions as “Christ

⁵⁷ This tract has been revised as late as Feb. 1917.

in you and you in Christ, Christ our life, and abiding in Christ," "are literal, actual, blessed fact, and not figures of speech." But what these expressions literally say does not suffice him. He presses on to such an unmeasured declaration as this: "At last I realized that Jesus Christ was actually and literally within me; and even more than that: that He had constituted Himself my very being . . . my body, mind, soul, and spirit. . . . My body was His, my mind His, my spirit His; and that not merely His, but literally a part of Him . . . Jesus had constituted Himself my life—not as a figure of speech, remember, but as a literal, actual fact, as literal as the fact that a certain tree has been made into this desk on which my hand rests."⁵⁸ If this amazing language is anything more than somewhat loose rhetoric, it asserts that our individuality has been abolished and Christ has taken its place. We are told that He has "constituted Himself our very being"; and, that we may not fail to give this assertion full validity, our being is analyzed into its parts and we are told that Christ has constituted Himself "our body, mind, soul and spirit." All these things become not only His, "but literally a part of Him"; He has become them as literally as the tree which has been sawn into boards of which a desk is made has been made into that desk. Clearly "we" no longer exist; we have passed away and Christ has been substituted for us: we and He are not one and another—there is but one left and that one is Christ. Accordingly Mr. Trumbull says: "I need never ask Him to help me again, as though He was one and I another, but rather simply [ask Him] to do His works, His will, in me and with me and through me." The question no doubt obtrudes itself how "we" can ask "Him" anything, when there is no longer one and another in the case. There is in fact only one agent left, whether to ask or to be asked, and that is Christ. Surely He who has constituted Himself my very being, my body, mind, soul, and spirit, does not now turn around and ask Himself to do

⁵⁸ Pp. 13, 14.

His work, His will in me, and with me, and through me. Nor does He need to do these things, for surely they are things He cannot well help doing. And so the inference is sharply drawn: "When our life is not only Christ's, but Christ, our life will be a winning life; for He cannot fail."⁵⁹ Our only wonder is that Mr. Trumbull felt it necessary to say this: of course, if we have passed away and Christ has taken our place and He is the only agent in what we absurdly call our acts, all—all, we say—that is done by "us" is really done by Him, and must represent Him fully and not "us" at all. That lies in the very nature of the case.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Trumbull is alone in proclaiming this somewhat unintelligible mysticism. It is common to the whole school which he represents. When Henry A. Boardman, a half century ago, was commenting on it, as taught by Hannah Whitall Smith and her coterie,⁶⁰ he remarked on the onesidedness of their representation. It is purely arbitrary, he intimates, to lay such stress on Christ becoming to us righteousness and sanctification in such a sense as that His righteousness and holiness are infused into us, and to say nothing of His becoming to us wisdom, say, which is coupled with the others in the same verse (1 Cor. i. 30), in such a manner "that we become also perfectly wise with His wisdom." "You have precisely the same authority," he says, "for claiming to be *perfect in wisdom*, in accepting Christ, that you have for claiming to be perfect in sanctification." It will have been seen that Mr. Trumbull does not lay himself open to this criticism. He declares boldly that Christ has constituted Himself not only our soul and spirit, but also our mind, and even our body; and the inevitable consequence must be drawn that we must therefore be perfect in every one of these spheres of life.

If Mr. Trumbull does not follow out all these inferences for us, Dr. A. B. Simpson does; and that in writ-

⁵⁹ P. 17.

⁶⁰ *The "Higher Life" Doctrine of Sanctification*, 1877, p. 90.

ings which are recommended by Mr. Trumbull as among "the best and clearest" "on the truth of the life that is Christ, which is presented at Princeton Conference."⁶¹ Take the tract, for example, called *Himself*, which is an address delivered at Bethshan, London.⁶² The fundamental idea of this tract is that we may have not only gifts from Christ, but Himself; and to have Christ Himself is better than to have all His Help, all His Blessings, all His Gifts. When that has been said, however, the reins are thrown on the neck of fancy and it is permitted to run away with the idea. To have Christ is to have Him in such a sense, we are told, that whatever Christ is becomes quite literally ours. Not only does Christ's righteousness become our righteousness, and Christ's holiness our holiness, and Christ's wisdom our wisdom, and Christ's strength our strength, but Christ's spirit becomes our spirit, Christ's mind our mind, Christ's body our body. As Dr. Simpson was speaking on this occasion at Bethshan he very naturally laid his stress on Christ's body becoming our body,—in such a sort, that, having Christ, we have bodily wholeness, not merely freedom from disease, but perfect bodily whole-

⁶¹ *Victory in Christ*, pp. 100, 104, last fly leaf.

⁶² The same doctrine that is taught in this tract is taught also, though more briefly, in Dr. Simpson's *The Christ Life*, which is explicitly mentioned among the best books on the subject of the Victorious Life. Bethshan is the Faith-Cure Establishment founded in London by Miss Baxter and Miss Murray in connection with W. E. Boardman, and Boardman taught the same extravagant mysticism as Simpson:—"He is the *Life*, the *All* of life for *body* as well as for *soul*, *complete*. In Him dwelleth all fulness; we are filled full in Him. . . . Fulness, absolute fulness of life dwells in Him alone; and in us only as He dwells in us by faith. Fulness of life is fulness of health. Disease is incompatible with fulness of life. His presence in us, welcomed by faith as our fulness of life, and so of health, is really the expulsive power that rebukes and dispels disease. The same is true of strength. . . . Our completeness in Him cannot be actualized until our faith welcomes Him in whom dwells the *All-fulness*, as our Fulness of life and health in the body, as well as in the soul. . . . And the prominent work of the Spirit is just this—to uplift us unto Christ, and unfold *Him* in all His fulness, the Fulness of God in us." (*Life and Labors of the Rev. W. E. Boardman*, by Mrs. Boardman, 1886, American Ed. 1887, pp. 231-3).

ness,—for is not Christ's body whole? But he sweeps his hand over all the strings. He has taken Christ for his mind, for his memory, for his will also; and we learn that he therefore no longer makes mistakes, no longer forgets things, and no longer is irresolute or stubborn at the wrong places. "Christ in him" has become the real agent in all his mental and moral activities. Even his faith is not his own, but Christ's. This is especially puzzling, because he tells us elsewhere that we must "take" Christ for all these things or else we do not get them, and that this "taking" is our own act, Christ becoming our life only subsequently and consequently to it. Here he tells us, however, that not even faith must come between us and Jesus. Once he thought he should have "to work up the faith," and so he "labored to get the faith." But that did not work. "And then God seemed to speak to me so sweetly, saying, 'Never mind, my child, *you* have nothing. But *I* am perfect Power, I am perfect Love, I am your Faith, I am your Life. I am the preparation for the blessing; and then I am the Blessing too. I am all within and all without, and all forever.'" And then he exclaims; "It is just having 'the Faith of God' (Mark xi. 22 margin). 'And the life I now live in the flesh, I live' not by faith *in* the Son of God, but 'by the faith *of* the Son of God' (Gal. ii. 20). That is it. It is not *your* faith. You have no faith in you, any more than you have life or anything else in you. . . . You have to take His faith as well as His life and healing, and have simply to say, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' . . . It is simply Christ, Christ alone."⁶³ Christ thus does our

⁶³Pp. 9, 10. Similarly, Hannah Whitall Smith, *Every-Day Religion*. 1893, p. 153, makes Mark xi. 22 mean: "We are commanded to have the same sort of faith that God has." "Romans iv. 15 describes," she says, "the sort of faith God has." "He creates things by merely calling them as though they were." "How much of this creative power of faith his children share in, I am not prepared to say" she modestly adds. "But," she continues, "that we are called to share far more of it than we have ever yet laid hold of, I feel very sure." All this from a simple objective genitive! One would like to see them try their system of interpretation on Col. ii. 12.

very believing for us, and we live not by faith in Him but by His faith in us. We have, indeed, "to take His faith," just as we have to take His life, and we do not quite understand what this "taking" is, if it is not already faith. As now, however, we take His faith and it becomes our faith, so we "take" His body and it becomes our body, and—as His body is now our body we are in a bodily sense, of course, whole. Dr. Simpson actually teaches this. You can "receive Christ" for your body's welfare as well as for your soul's; and when you do this, His body becomes your body. "His spirit is all that your spirit needs, and He just gives us *Himself*. His body possesses all that your body needs. He has a heart beating with the strength that your heart needs: He has organs and functions redundant with life, not for Himself but for humanity. He does not need strength for Himself. The energy which enabled Him to rise and ascend from the tomb, above all the forces of nature, was not for Himself. That marvelous body belongs to your body. You are a member of His body. Your heart has a right to draw from His heart all that it needs. Your physical life has a right to draw from His physical life its support and strength, and so it is not you, but it is just the precious life of the Son of God." "Will you take Him thus to-day," he therefore pleads. And he promises: "And then you will be not merely healed, but you will have a new life for all you need, and a flood of life that will sweep disease away, and then remain a fountain of life for all your future need." Dr. Simpson knows, for he has tried it. He gives an affecting account of how, learning the little secret of "Christ in you," he took Him for His bodily health too—and got not merely relief from suffering, not merely "simple healing," but Christ "so gave Himself that he lost the painful consciousness of physical organs." This is what "letting go and letting Christ" means, when it is taken "literally."

There is indeed one dogma which takes precedence in Mr. Trumbull's mind to the dogma of the "Christ within

us." This is the dogma of the inalienable ability of the human will to do at any time and under any circumstances precisely what in its unmotivated caprice it chances to turn to. To this dogma accordingly he cheerfully sacrifices his fervently asserted dogma of the "Christ within us" while in the very act of elaborating it. With a bathos of inconsequence which would be incredible did it not stare us full in the face, he actually inserts into the assertion that Christ has "constituted Himself my very being . . . my body, mind, soul and spirit," at the place indicated by the points, this bewildering parenthesis: "(save only my power to resist Him)". How, in the name of all that is rational, can I retain a power to resist Him when I retain no body or mind or soul or spirit of my own; when I no longer exist as a distinguishable entity, but Christ has become me as literally as the tree which furnishes the wood of which a desk has been made has become that desk? Where is the seat of this power to resist Him? And how can it act—successfully act—against the only agent that acts at all? Following out his inconsequent dogma of a "power to resist Christ" remaining in the "being" which Christ has constituted Himself, however, Mr. Trumbull proceeds to beg us not to think that he is "suggesting any mistaken unbalanced theory that, when a man receives Christ as the fullness of his life, he cannot sin again."⁶⁴ How can we help thinking just that when we have been told that Christ has constituted Himself our very being, our body, mind, soul and spirit; and, seizing the reins, has become the sole agent in all our activities,—He who "cannot fail"? Can Christ, who has thus become our very life, living thus in us, sin through us? And if He cannot sin through us, how can "we" sin, when it is no longer we who live, but He that lives in us? To say that "the 'life that is Christ' still leaves us our free-will and with that free-will we can resist Christ" is to deny *simpliciter* that Christ in us has "constituted Himself my very being . . . my body, mind, soul

⁶⁴ P. 15.

and spirit"; that my body, mind, will—"will" is expressly mentioned—and spirit have become "not merely His but part of Him." And when it is once said that "the 'life that is Christ' still leaves us our free-will" and that "with that free-will we can resist Christ," it is already denied *simpliciter* what is at once added—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." How can he who is free from even the desire of sin possibly resist Christ? Is not resisting Christ sin? And if resisting Christ is sin, how can he who may at any time resist Christ be said to be free from all necessity of fighting against sin? Must he not fight against the impulse, the temptation, to resist Christ—even though in some mysterious sense, though retaining a liability to resist Christ, he has no "desire of sin"? And how can we talk of retaining the power to resist Christ if we "have learned that this freedom," from the power and even the desire of sin, "this more than conquering, is sustained in unbroken continuance as I simply recognize that Christ is my cleansing, reigning life?"⁶⁵

Obviously, Mr. Trumbull cannot maintain both these dogmas—the dogma of the substitution of Christ for us as the agent in all our activities, and the dogma of the possession by us of an ineradicable power to resist Christ. They destroy one another, and one must give way before the other. It is not difficult to determine which is the more deeply rooted in Mr. Trumbull's thinking. It is clear that his dogma of free-will is the foundation stone of all his thought, and that before it all else must give way. This is the account to give, indeed, of its emergence in this connection. He cannot refrain from throwing in a caveat in its favor, even when engaged in elaborating its contradictory—a dogma of the sole agency of Christ in all the activities of the surrendered Christian. In the light of Scripture, however, the one dogma, equally with the other, is

⁶⁵ P. 16.

wholly untenable. The Scriptures have a doctrine of free-will and they have a doctrine of Christ within us. But the doctrine of Scripture on neither of these matters has anything in common with the exaggerated dogma on it which Mr. Trumbull announces. It happens that the Scriptural doctrine on both matters may be suggested by a single Scriptural phrase, which may stand for us as their symbol: make the tree good that its fruit may be good also. Christ dwells within us not for the purpose of sinking our being into His being, nor of substituting Himself for us as the agent in our activities; much less of seizing our wills and operating them for us in contradiction to our own immanent mind; but to operate directly upon us, to make us good, that our works, freely done by us, may under His continual leading, be good also. Our wills, being the expression of our hearts, continually more and more dying to sin and more and more living to holiness, under the renewing action of the Christ dwelling within us by his Spirit, can never from the beginning of His gracious renewal of them resist Christ fatally, and will progressively resist Him less and less until, our hearts having been made through and through good, our wills will do only righteousness.

Mr. Trumbull's attempt to perform the impossible feat of uniting in one system an express autosoterism and an equally express quietism naturally brings him into endless self-contradictions. He writes in *The Sunday School Times* as follows:⁶⁶ "Christ is living the victorious life today; and Christ is your life. Therefore stop trying. Let Him do it all. Your effort or trying had nothing to do with the salvation which you have in Christ: in exactly the same way your effort and trying can have nothing to do with the complete victory which Christ alone has achieved for you and can steadily achieve in you." That is express quietism, and we must not permit that fact to be obscured to us by our instinctive sympathy with the element of truth

⁶⁶ Tract on *Is Victory Earned or a Gift?*

in quietism here thrown into observation—the purity of its supernaturalism in the mode of salvation. Now Mr. Trumbull having proclaimed this Quietistic Gospel, he is very naturally taken to task for it from the autosoteric point of view. How does he meet the assault? Why, by turning right around and asserting with equal emphasis the Autosoteric Gospel! “It is true,” he writes, “that God can save no man unless that man does his part towards salvation. But what is man’s part? It is to receive the salvation that God offers him in Christ. . . . God forces salvation on no one; and God has revealed to us in His Word that many reject salvation. Our wills are free to act; their action is the accepting or the rejecting of the ‘free gift of God . . . eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’” This is very bad. It is not only that it stands in direct contradiction with what was formerly said. It does that. There, we were to let Christ “do it all”; here we are to do a part ourselves. The formula there was, “Christ only”; the formula here is “Christ, plus my receiving.” An unhappy attempt is, indeed, made to interpret the act of receiving as no act: “But this act of the will, by which we voluntarily and deliberately decide to take what God offers us, is not what was meant, in that editorial on Victory, by ‘effort.’” And yet this voluntary and deliberate act of the will is “man’s part” “toward salvation”—and such a part that there is no salvation except by its procurement. And surely it cannot be pretended that a voluntary and deliberate decision, a decision on which our salvation absolutely depends, to take what God offers, requires no effort, and is accomplished without trying,—especially by a dead man; a man into whose heart Christ, who is our life, has not come, into whose heart, Christ, who is our only life, cannot come unless and until the man does this, his part, toward salvation, and does it, of course, since Christ his only life has not and cannot come to him until he does this his part—apart from Him and without His help. This would be as much as to say that Christ’s call to Lazarus must needs have been

ineffective until dead Lazarus, by a voluntary and deliberate act of his will, decided to take what God offered him in that call. What is most important to observe about Mr. Trumbull's new statement therefore is not that it is directly contradictory to his former one,—which it essays to explain—but that, very happily, it is not at all true. It is not true that "God can save no man unless that man does his part toward salvation." Man has no part to do toward salvation: and, if he had, he could not do it,—his very characteristic as a sinner is that he is helpless, that he is "lost." He is very active indeed in the process of his salvation, for this activity is of the substance of his salvation: he works out his own salvation, but only as God works in him the willing and the doing according to His own good pleasure. It is not true that "God forces salvation on no man." It would be truer to say that no man is saved on whom God does not force salvation,—though the language would not be exact. It is not true that the "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" which is the "free gift of God" is merely put at our option and "our wills are free" to accept or reject it. Our wills are free enough, but they are hopelessly biased to its rejection and will certainly reject it so long as it is only an "offer." But it is not true that God's free gift of eternal life to His people is only an "offer": it is a "gift"—and what God gives He does not merely place at our disposal to be accepted or rejected as we may chance to choose, but "gives," makes ours, as He gave life to Lazarus and wholeness to the man with the withered hand. It was not in the power of Lazarus to reject,—it was not in his power to accept—the gift of life which Christ gave him; nor is it in the power of dead souls to reject life—or to "accept" it—when God "gives" it to them. The God in whom we trust is a God who quickens the dead and commands the things that are not as though they were.

It would be impossible that so extreme a doctrine of the autocracy of the human will as Mr. Trumbull holds, should not affect his doctrine of perfection. It does affect it,

modifying and limiting it in more ways than one. It is doubtless to his doctrine of the will that it is ultimately to be traced, for example, that perfection is conceived by him as limited to deliverance from the commission of "known sins." This conception is rooted in the externalizing view of sin which finds it in the stream of acts rather than in the agent himself, and homologates the definition of sin which confines it to the deliberate violation of known law. It is a conception of perfection quite out of gear with Mr. Trumbull's mystical notion of the Christ within us and its consequent quietism. If Christ has indeed taken over our living for us and become Himself the principle of our actions, the formula that we are delivered from the commission of "known sins" loses all meaning. Known to whom? To us, who are no longer the agents in our activities? Or to Christ, who has taken all "the responsibility" for our activities? Surely there are no sins which Christ does not know to be sins. Or are we to suppose that Christ carefully adjusts Himself in the government of our lives to the measure of the knowledge of sin which we possessed—each of us—before He took us over; and will not work through us on a higher plane than that? That Mr. Trumbull, nevertheless, in expounding his doctrine of perfection, clings to this formula,—“freedom from the whole power of every known sin,” “freedom from all our desires for every known sin at once,”⁶⁷ “it is the privilege of every Christian to live every day of his life without breaking the laws of God in known sin, either in thought, word or deed,”⁶⁸ our victory “is as complete now in relation to every known sin as it ever can be; it meets all our needs and breaks the whole power of our sin”⁶⁹—can be accounted for only by the strength of the hold which his Pelagianizing doctrine of the will has on him. His Pelagianizing doctrine of the will is the primary element in his thought and every-

⁶⁷ *Victory in Christ*, p. 110.

⁶⁸ *Victory in Christ*, p. 17.

⁶⁹ P. 117.

thing else must be adjusted to it—even his doctrine of perfection.

It is no doubt from the same source also that the influences flow which prevent him from teaching a stable perfection. On his doctrine of the Christ within us he ought to teach a stable perfection. And he makes use of expressions here and there which seem to imply that the perfection which Christ's indwelling in us brings us must last. The essence of his teaching here in fact is that when we by faith entrust our lives to Christ He undertakes for us; that after that condition is fulfilled we are to be passive—to struggle and fight no more—to leave it to Christ, and He will do the rest. He has taught us, indeed, that "it is Christ's responsibility to bring me into, and keep me in, victory, after I have surrendered to Him absolutely."⁷⁰ But this is not the most fundamental line of his teaching. That compels him to say, "Yet we have the responsibility, too," and that is but a weak expression of his real meaning. Not only is our reception of the Victorious Life conditioned on an act of our own, performed in the power of our own free will,⁷¹ but our retention of it after it has been received is conditioned on acts of our own, ever repeated acts of faith, performed in our own free will. Thus after all, struggle, not quiescence, becomes the mark of the Christian, though the struggle is not to refrain from sinning, but to maintain, or rather continually to renew, the faith on which everything hangs. For Christ gives us but a moment by moment keeping, conditioned on a moment by moment faith on our part. Mr. Trumbull cannot call to his aid here—as he attempts to do—a true saying of Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman's, which he quotes, to the effect that "the great thing is, not how much I love God, but how much God loves me" or the true exhortation of Frances Ridley Havergal already mentioned, to the effect that we are to "entrust to Him our trust."⁷² These remarks come out of a quite

⁷⁰ P. 237.

⁷¹ Cf. pp. 5, 19, 26, 73, 75, 77, 115.

⁷² P. 117.

different fundamental attitude from his own: a fundamental attitude which suspends our salvation utterly on God and therefore rests wholly on His love for us and expects faith itself only from His hands. Mr. Trumbull on the contrary suspends our salvation on our own will—"there is where free will comes in"; and demands action of our own free determination as the condition precedent of all God's benefits. "Christ never accomplishes spiritual results except through the person's will. . . . Christ does not give a spiritual blessing to a person apart from that one's will."⁷³ What he actually teaches therefore is—just as John Wesley taught—an intrinsically fallible perfection, a perfection out of which it is possible for us to fall—out of which, in point of fact, we may fall any minute—if we should not even say every minute. But we can equally readily get it back at once by merely "claiming" the promise again; and then "go on in Him just as if it had never happened." "For your failure did not weaken Jesus Christ. He is just as strong after the worst failure of your life as He was before."⁷⁴ Alas! that we cannot forget that He was not strong enough before to keep us from falling,—despite His own assurance that He is (Jude 24): and alas! that, having had experience of His failure, we can no more confidently entrust ourselves to Him! What Mr. Trumbull really means to say is that we should "turn always from our past, from our failure or victory, to Himself, moment by moment looking to Him." That at all events, is good

⁷³ P. 238. Mr. Trumbull goes on to say: "In sleep the will is quiescent or irresponsible. Christ forces no spiritual blessing upon a person whose will is not responding. If you go to sleep victorious you will wake up victorious; if you go to sleep defeated you will wake up defeated." To deny that God can work in us while we are asleep is the strongest possible way of saying that our wills are the decisive factors in every case. Fortunately Dr. Griffith Thomas has a better teaching (p. 162):—"God is at work when you and I are asleep; God is continually at work in us though we know it not. We must not limit his work to our consciousness of him." Here are two doctrines of God and two doctrines of man which stand as far apart as darkness and light: they are polar in their antithesis.

⁷⁴ P. 118.

advice. But Mr. Trumbull adds, strangely enough in this context, that we "will find that He is permanent, always able and always faithful." Is He, on Mr. Trumbull's teaching, able and faithful to keep us from falling? No: what Mr. Trumbull teaches is that we always have the power in our own free will to fall, and always have the power in the same free will to return: it all depends on our free will and *not* on His keeping. The condition of our salvation is a continually repeated, or maintained, will on our part to be saved; and the actual doctrine taught is that our life of holiness—such holiness as consists in freedom from the commission of "known sin"—depends on this continually repeated or maintained will, a moment by moment faith, exercised in our own strength. It is not of grace but of will that we are saved; it is not of God that shows mercy but of him that runs. If there is nothing else, there is free-will which can always separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Of course Mr. Trumbull cries out in horror that it is not Christ that has failed: it is our trust in Christ that has failed: that "the only thing that can get us out of victory, when we have surrendered to Christ, is to cease to trust Him wholly."⁷⁵ But that only shows that our dependence must be in our trust, not in Christ. Christ cannot keep us in trust: but our trust can keep us in Christ. Our trust can fail—and Christ cannot or will not prevent it: our only recourse is to renew it ourselves. That fortunately we are told we can do. We can fall out of our trust apparently very easily; but happily, when that happens, we can get it back again just as easily. Life is a web, woven by the shuttle plying in and out—as it does in other webs. The under strand is sin: the upper perfection: and so we weave it day by day. "No one, of course, is having the victorious life *while* he is being defeated; but he may have had it just before, and he may have it just after his defeat. The victorious life is always a matter of the present moment. It

⁷⁵P. 238.

is always only a moment by moment victory, depending on a moment by moment faith. No one can take victory for a season." We *can* have it continuously; but then,—that is only *if*—if we have faith continuously. And—whether we have faith continuously—that is "up to us."

This is as express a Pelagianism as Pelagius' own. It is not the same Pelagianism as Pelagius' own. It substitutes faith for Pelagius' works and it draws on God for all saving operations. These things give it a certain specious appearance of Evangelicalism and it is doubtless in this specious appearance of Evangelicalism that the appeal of this system lies for devout men. But they do not the less make it pure Pelagianism. The antithesis to the Pelagian works is not faith, but grace; and grace is a thing that cannot be commanded by the fulfilment of conditions—*ex vi verbi* it is gratuitous. It is a poorer Pelagianism than Pelagius' own to substitute faith for works as a condition securing God's favor: especially if the favor of God which is secured brings with it cessation of moral endeavor on our part. That merely betrays the little regard we have for righteousness and it may even be but to open the door to antinomianism. And it is something far worse than Pelagianism, something the affinities of which are with magic rather than religion, which supposes that the activities of God can be commanded by acts of men, even if these acts be acts of faith. It is the essence of magic as distinguished from religion that it places supernatural powers at the disposal of men for working effects of their own choosing. It cannot be overlooked that the whole tendency of the teaching of Mr. Trumbull and his coterie is to place God at the disposal of man, and to encourage man to use Him in order to obtain results which he cannot attain for himself. This is of course to stand things on their head, and in doing so to degrade God into merely the instrument which man employs to secure his objects.

The whole representation of the relations of man and God which is given us by Mr. Trumbull and his associates

is to the effect that God is released for action at man's option. So much stress is laid on the freedom of man that no freedom is left for God at all. The analogy of a material force is most unpleasantly suggested. We happily have not met in Mr. Trumbull's expositions with such an express development of this analogy as is given for example by Dr. A. T. Pierson who, in his little book on *The Keswick Movement*, speaks constantly of God as a reservoir of grace on which we draw, and even permits to himself such an objectionable phrase as "Holy Ghost power,"—which, we are informed, is at our disposal.⁷⁶ But the fundamental conception is the same. God stands always helplessly by until man calls Him into action by opening a channel into which His energies may flow. It sounds dreadfully like turning on the steam or the electricity. This representation is employed not only with reference to the great matters of salvation and sanctification in which God's operations are "secured" (or released) by our faith, but also with reference to every blessing bestowed by Him. We are not only constantly exhorted to "claim" blessings, but the enjoyment of these blessings is with wearying iteration suspended on our "claiming" them. It is expressly declared that God cannot bless us in any way until we open the way for His action by an act of our own will. Everywhere and always the initiative belongs to man; everywhere and always God's action is suspended upon man's will. We wish to make no concealment of the distress with which this mode of representation afflicts us. When Erasmus even distantly approached it and spoke of "securing" the grace of God by "some little thing" retained to human powers, Luther told him flatly that he was outpelagianizing Pelagius. Man does not "secure" the grace of God: the grace of God "secures" the activities of man—in every sphere and in every detail, of these activities. It is nothing less than degrading to God to suppose Him thus subject to the control of man and unable to move except as man permits Him

⁷⁶ *The Keswick Movement*, 1903, p. 84.

to do so, or to produce any effects except as He is turned into the channels of their working at man's option. We shall not, however, dwell on this matter at length, although it is the most fundamental and most objectionable element in Mr. Trumbull's teaching.

We have now run through the constitutive elements of Mr. Trumbull's system of teaching. For, it is very distinctly a system of teaching. This system of teaching is not new in the sense that it breaks out an entirely new path. It is, as Mr. Trumbull himself very properly apprehends it, essentially a continuation of the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith, as prolonged in the Keswick movement. In this sense it is merely the latest form in which the general system of teaching represented a half-century ago by Mr. and Mrs. Smith has been presented to us. This latest form is not the best form of this system. Mr. Trumbull's mode of conceiving and presenting this general system of teaching shows a tendency not only to throw up into emphasis, but to push to extremes, the elements in it which are least tenable. We do not say that Mr. Trumbull has injected these untenable elements into this system of teaching. That would imply that they were not present in it until it came into his hands. They have on the contrary been present in it from the beginning. That, its origin in the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith secured for it. But Mr. Trumbull has "brought them out" and given them new point and new sharpness of statement, or perhaps we should better say, new baldness. Above all, he has definitely placed the system on an openly Pelagian basis. Not again, as if express Pelagian conceptions have not always lain at the basis of this system. But he has given this Pelagianism complete dominance in the system, and that in a particularly objectionable form of statement. Perhaps we may sum it all up in one word by saying that in Mr. Trumbull's hands this objectionable system of teaching has run fairly to seed.

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.