

# Christ is Victor

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## “Restitution”

If you have ever taken money dishonestly, you need not pray God to forgive you and fill you with the Holy Spirit until you make restitution. If you have not got the money now to pay back, will to do it, and God accepts the willing mind. Many people are kept in darkness and unrest because they fail to obey God on this point. If the plough has gone deep, if the repentance is true, it will bring forth fruit. What use is there in my coming to God until I am willing, like Zacchaeus, to make it good if I have done any person wrong or have taken anything falsely? [Zacchaeus the tax collector told Jesus he would restore fourfold to any one from whom he had taken anything by false accusation]. Confession and restitution are the steps that lead up to forgiveness.

There was a friend of mine who had come to Christ and was trying to consecrate himself and his wealth to God. He had formerly had transactions with the government, and had taken advantage of them. This came to mind, and his conscience troubled him. At last he drew a [cheque] for the amount he had underpaid and sent it to the Treasury of the government. He told me that he received great blessing after he had done it. That is bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. I believe a great many men are crying to God for light; and many are not getting it because they are not honest. . . .

If you have anything on your conscience, straighten it out at once. If your mind goes back to some transaction with your neighbour in which you cheated him, pay back every dollar at once.

—D. L. Moody

## “When Ma Would Not Give Up”

“Sophie, why don’t you leave him?” begged relatives, friends and neighbours. “He’ll never be anything but a drunken bum.”

Sophie was my mother. The drunken bum was my dad. To us, their children, they will always be “Ma and Pa.”

To the well-meaning pleas of worried friends, Ma always had but one response. “For the children’s sake,” she would say, “I’ll stay with him, and I’m praying every day that he’ll change.”

When Sophie had met John, a dashing young man, it was love at first sight. They were married very soon and began house-keeping in his home town of Niagara Falls, New York. John was a butcher of no mean skill and made plenty of money.

When in about a year a son was born, life seemed very rosy. Then other babies followed in quick succession, eleven children altogether. Ma loved and wanted every one of us. She was a woman who looked most natural when a baby was held close to her heart.

Life for us could have been happy if Pa had not started drinking. He was not a drinking man when he got married, but felt that he had to be a good mixer because of his business and took up social drinking. In a few years he was a confirmed alcoholic, and the family was in a desperate condition by the time I arrived.

It always seemed in those days that winter came too soon and stayed too long, and Pa could seldom be depended upon to have coal in the house for the old pot-bellied stove. Often Ma and some of the older children trudged along the railroad tracks behind our house to pick up the few pieces of coal which had fallen off the coal wagons.

Long after the meagre supper had been eaten and the children tucked under their shabby thin blankets, Ma would sit and wait for the stumbling footsteps indicating that Pa had come home from another drunken carousal. When he was too drunk to push the door open, Ma dragged him in out of the snow and cold. He was a heavy man, but somehow she would manage to undress him and put him to bed. For this there was never a word of appreciation.

Ma was often urged by interested friends, “Sophie, you could have a much better life without him. Why don’t you listen to reason?” But about the time I was born, Ma had a tremendous spiritual experience which undergirded her outward serenity and confidence.

During a great city-wide revival campaign, Ma accepted Christ as her personal Saviour. From that moment, she was convinced that she had found the only thing that would ever change her drunkard husband’s life. But when she talked to him about it, he laughed her to scorn, and out of pure spite, apparently, drank more than ever. For twelve years it seemed that the devil himself took complete control of Pa. Ma was in constant fear that one of us children would be harmed during some of his terrible rages; many times her vigilance and intervention saved us from injury.

After little Minnie choked to death from whooping cough, Pa was soaked in liquor for a solid year, his mind a perpetual intoxicated fog. His own sisters pleaded with Ma to leave with the children before something terrible happened. But Ma’s answer never altered: “I’ve prayed that John’s life will be changed,” she would say, “and God will answer. I’m positive of it.”

One snowy evening late that November, Pa reeled home earlier than usual. Ma was helping in the home of a sick neighbour. Pa very rarely bothered with any of us youngsters, but if he had a favourite it was his little namesake, five-year-old Johnny. That night, Johnny met him at the door with some excited childish prattle about a revival meeting at the Community Hall across the tracks.

“Will you go and take me, too, Pa? Will you?” Johnny coaxed. Pa was drunk enough for anything at that moment.

“Sure, Johnny, let’s go,” he answered. Together they trudged through the snow, past the neighbourhood’s tumble-down shacks and across the tracks. Pa’s steps were unsteady and little Johnny half supported him as they made their way over the slippery sidewalks.

As they neared the small place where the

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gospel services were being held, Pa heard the worshippers singing, “Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow, Lord, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Only then did it dawn on him that his clothes were unkempt, he was unshaven, and very, very drunk.

“Johnny,” he said, glancing down at the eager boy, “Johnny, let’s go home and tomorrow night I’ll get all cleaned up and we’ll come back. Tomorrow night, Johnny.”

Johnny’s happy smile disappeared and he was very near tears.

“No, Pa, no! Let’s go in now,” he begged, tugging hard on Pa’s hand. Too drunk to argue very much, Pa tottered up the steps and opened the door. He tried to tiptoe to a back seat, but his attempts at being quiet were anything but successful. Finally he and Johnny were seated.

When Pa became accustomed to the warmth and the bright lights, he tried to focus his gaze upon the man behind the pulpit. With a startled gasp he began mumbling to himself.

“Bob! My old pal, Bob! It can’t be...”

He remembered the hours he and Bob had spent together in bar-rooms all over the city! Suddenly the preaching stopped. Upon recognizing Pa, the preacher was out of the pulpit and striding down the aisle without a moment’s hesitation to where he and Johnny sat in the back seat.

“John!” exclaimed the preacher, putting his arm around Pa’s shoulders.

“John, you know as well as anybody the kind of life I used to live. But, look! What God has done for me, He can do for you. Come on, John, come with me.”

Pa got to his feet and taking Johnny by the hand, he walked slowly, very unsteadily, to the altar. There he knelt with little Johnny on one side and his friend Bob on the other, and cried out of a heart full of shame and despair, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

Then the miracle happened—the miracle which only God can make happen. When Pa rose from his knees, he was absolutely sober. His mind was as clear as a bell. In the moment of his conversion God forgave all his sins, and in addition, the effects of not only that day’s drinking, but years of drunkenness left him completely. Pa shook hands with a few people with whom he was acquainted, walked unfalteringly to the door, and went out into the night.

“Johnny,” Pa marvelled as he looked up into the heavens, “those stars are brighter than I’ve ever seen them before. They look like diamonds!”

Ma was home when they arrived and hearing the unfamiliar sound of Pa’s steady footsteps, she quickly opened the door. Pa put his arm around her in an unfamiliar gesture of tender-

ness and his voice broke as he said, “Sophie, you’ve got a new husband—from tonight on!”

Before he could tell her about what had happened in the gospel meeting, Ma cried out happily, “God has kept His promise! I knew he wouldn’t fail!”

We did a lot of crying and laughing that night. Then Pa got out a battered Bible his mother had given him many years before and tried to read from the third chapter of John. Pa had not had much schooling and was not a good reader, but with Ma’s help he struggled through the portion of scripture. Then we all knelt, and that night gathered about our first family altar.

The next morning when Pa left the house for work, we couldn’t help peeking out of the windows. Down our street was a tavern. For years Pa had stopped there every morning to get his morning eye-opener, “just a few beers.” Our hearts were barely beating as we watched Pa approach the tavern. Was he hesitating at the door? We all held our breath. Then we saw him glance skyward, as if breathing a prayer for strength; straightening his shoulders with firm steps, Pa walked on past.

Ma knelt right down. “Thank you, Lord,” she said simply. Pa never again drank a drop of liquor.

Pa was determined to learn to read the Bible and night after night Ma sat patiently helping him to master the words and understand the Word of God. Strangely enough, though Pa was never able to read a newspaper or book, he became a very fluent reader of the Bible, and in spite of his lack of formal education became a preacher of some note in that section of our state.

We did move into a better part of town, but never could possess much of this world’s goods. The Depression hit America about that time, but Pa was so overwhelmingly grateful to the Lord for delivering him from his evil life that he fairly outdid himself trying to repay the debt he felt he surely owed. Ma was so happy and urged him to “give until it hurt, and then give until it stops hurting!”

The first thing Pa did was to round up his friends, all “drunks,” and persuade them to go with him to the gospel meetings. Much to his joy, many of them accepted Christ as their Saviour and found a new life before them. Since there was no church in the community, Ma, Pa, and the other converted drunkards and their families bought the Community Hall and asked their friend Bob to pastor the little flock. Today a fine brick church marks the spot where the Community Hall once stood.

Soon Pa had a meat truck and his delivery route took him through the Tuscarora Indian reservation near Niagara Falls. One day an

Indian told him that the little church building on the reservation which had been closed for years was about to be sold at an auction. That night, fearing that this house of God might be bought for a road house or gambling den, Pa couldn’t sleep.

“It isn’t right for us not to do anything about it,” he told Ma.

“Anything God tells you to do, John, you do it,” Ma answered quietly.

Pa went to the auction, and with his own money and some given by friends he purchased the little weather-beaten church building. For twenty-seven years, Pa ministered to the Tuscarora.

One summer, Ma and Pa visited the Practical Bible Training School in Binghamton, N.Y. From then on, Ma prayed that one of her children would some day be a student there. After one sister began, I desired to go too. By this time the Depression had struck in full force, but Ma only said, “The Lord will provide.”

Lovingly she put together a wardrobe for me from some cast-off clothing. All I owned she packed in one suitcase and humorously admonished me to “wear the suitcase when you run out of clothing.”

Today six of us have graduated from Bible school, and some of us are pastor’s wives. John, the little brother who coaxed Pa to go to the gospel service, has been in the ministry for many years. Another sister was a missionary in Africa and then Dean of Women at Western Bible College in California. The second generation is now beginning to enter God’s service.

I can almost hear Ma say lovingly to Pa, now with the Saviour, “John, I’m so glad I stayed with you, for the children’s sake and your sake, and most of all for Jesus’ sake.”

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Is yours also a broken life? Every life out of harmony with God is an unsatisfactory life.

## **Reality Check!**

**HE THAT BELIEVETH  
ON THE SON HATH  
EVERLASTING LIFE:  
AND HE THAT  
BELIEVETH NOT THE  
SON SHALL NOT SEE  
LIFE; BUT THE WRATH  
OF GOD ABIDETH ON  
HIM.**

**JOHN 3:36**

God created us in His image. He made us that we might enjoy Him and all the blessings of life and eternity that He has prepared for us.

No matter what your weakness or problem is, or how hopeless your situation may seem, God is waiting to forgive and lead you in a new life of victory. The new life will extend into joyful everlasting existence with your God and Creator.

The Bible says that we “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and that “the wages of sin is death.” But God sent His only Son from Heaven to save us. He took upon Himself the form of man, born of a virgin. That Man was Jesus Christ, the Son of God and also God. He was sent to this world to live a perfect life among us and be crucified on a cross, that by His death He might suffer for your sins and mine. He became the sin offering for your sins, if you will receive Him.

Jesus’ perfect life and suffering—the sinless One for the sinner—means that God can now offer forgiveness to all who will believe on His Son and receive Him both as Saviour and as Lord. Therefore, the scripture which begins with “the wages of sin is death,” ends with the words “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Dear Friend, the Lord Jesus loves you and welcomes you: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Take Him at His Word and come now saying, “Yes, Lord, I shall turn from my sins and be your disciple because your death upon the Cross is my only hope. Make me your son and give me your peace.” Mean business with God while you say this prayer.

The Spirit of God will now help you to right wrongs which have weighed heavily on your conscience and God Himself will begin to speak to you through His Word, the Bible.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

**—When Ma Would Not Give Up**

## ***“Be Nothing to have Everything”***

“And the earth was without form, and void. . . . And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

When the earth was without form and void, the Spirit of God was able to create form, beauty, and fullness. God commanded that the world should come into being. How exactly it came to be, we do not know. But God said it and it was done. Until a man becomes void and knows that he is without form in his heart, God cannot work on him.

Man must know that he is nothing and worthless. Prayer helps him to come to this knowledge. Before meeting Jesus, a man thinks he is a great person and wants to become still greater.

It is good to come to Jesus to know you are nothing. A man who prays very soon comes to know that he can do nothing by himself. Jesus came to this position: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judg-

ment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).

By yourself you can do nothing. Prayer teaches us to be as nothing before God. Moses said, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” If you think you can do something for God, God can do nothing with you. A true Christian comes to the place of saying, “Lord, I know nothing, I can do nothing. All that I have attempted for You before is nothing.”

A devout lady who was serving God was praying that God should use her. She saw a white hand holding dirty rags and a voice said, “All your work is like filthy rags. Your righteousness and your service are like filthy rags.” If you realise this, then God can take hold of you. God came when all was void and created the world. He created man in His own likeness. He wants to give man His nature.

The world has yet to see the spiritual energy

that can come out of one man. We belong to the broken Christ, whose body was wounded, whose hands and legs were pierced. The Cross will make us feel that we are nothing. As we pray we become smaller and Jesus becomes bigger and bigger till He fills the universe.

Jesus can come into you because He was broken for you. The nothing that you are can blend with Him who is everything. People will see Christ in you. Your touch and words and life will be just like those of Christ.

Into the void came God and created the world. More wonderful than the world is man whom He created. Prayer makes us nothing before God. Into this “nothing” comes God and makes us new creatures who are in the likeness of Christ.

**—N. Daniel**

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## “A Vessel with a Hole”

“And of His [Jesus’] fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16).

Drinking from the bottom of a vessel does not give you satisfaction because there may be too little there to satisfy you. Many of us seem to show that God is a poor person, as if He is only giving drop by drop. How is it that we are not able to see His fullness? We are not able to take of His fullness. A vessel with a hole in its side cannot be filled above that hole. It can never get full because there is a hole. If there is a second hole at the bottom, the water leaks out through that hole also. However much you pour into this vessel, it will soon be empty.

“Of His fulness have all we received.” I do not know how many tricks the devil uses to make holes in us. If you do not block those holes, that fullness will never be seen in us. Some people have a hole at the bottom of the vessel. Pride—spiritual pride—is that hole. Nothing can fill such a vessel. The very fullness of God cannot fill this vessel, as the hole is right at the bottom. All that is poured in will flow out.

How many mercies God has been extending to us! As we enter this New Year, let our hearts be full of gratitude for the innumerable blessings we have received from Him. . . . The hymn writer says, “Count your blessings, name them one by one.” If our hearts are full of praise, Satan cannot come close to us.

Fellowship with the Lord means entering

into His fullness and leaving many things behind. There are things that hamper spiritual progress which must be cast away. Only then are you ready for something more. So St. Paul says, “[F]orgetting those things which are behind.” You can never afford to think of them again. Negative thoughts and useless thoughts are the big holes in your vessel.

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:9-10). “You are complete in Jesus Christ.” There is no question of an imperfect product. You are complete, you are perfect. Are we at least pressing on to perfection?

“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:29). This verse always challenges me. Wherever you go, there must be blessing, not trouble or division, and no idle words, no negative words, about your brother. That is the devil’s work. Nobody should come to worship God who is not happy to greet a brother. That is a terrible thing. The Bible says, “he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

Let us be very careful. Static Christianity, stale Christianity, futuristic obedience, these are all big holes. Everything is drained away and nothing remains—no fullness. Are we getting into the full span of service? Very of-

ten I tell God, “Lord, you know my age. By this time I should have reached spiritual maturity. When will I grow into the full stature of Christ?” We must go to the Lord and pray like this: “Lord, so many years are passing. Where is the fullness?”

Let us not be satisfied with our Christian life. Have you received of His fullness? Or have you already become empty? Whose fullness are you getting? Let us be careful. It is not something we are working out amongst ourselves, but it is His fullness.

What you need is a clean vessel without any hole in it. The rest He will do. And all you have to do is to be clean through His grace and through His Blood. Be clean in your thoughts and dealings. Then the Lord will fill you with His fullness.

—Joshua Daniel

## “Peace in a Damaged Ship”

During a sea voyage from Southampton to New York, the evangelist D. L. Moody was suddenly startled by a crash and shock. The shaft of the vessel had broken, causing serious damage. That first night was a dark experience for the ship’s several hundred passengers. Crowded together in the saloon of the first cabin were Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and skeptics—although Moody doubted if there many skeptics among them at that time.

Sunday morning dawned without help or hope; as night came on, Moody asked permission to hold a service in the saloon. Nearly every passenger attended. Steadying himself by a pillar, Moody read out Psalms 91 and 107:20-31; he prayed that God would still the raging of the sea and bring them to their desired haven. Psalm 91:11 was profoundly touching: “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

Moody had thought himself superior to the fear of death; he had preached on it, been fearless under fire during the Civil War, and visited the sick during a terrible cholera epidemic. But on that sinking ship it was different. He knew that there was no cloud of sin between his soul and Saviour—but what of his beloved ones at home? It almost broke him down. He had to have relief, and that came through prayer.

God heard his cry so that from the depth of his soul, Moody could say, “Thy will be done!” Sweet peace came to his heart. He went to bed, fell asleep, and never slept more soundly than in all his life. “Out of the depths I cried unto my Lord, and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears” (see Psalms 130:1 and 34:4)—that was Moody’s experience.

At about 3 A.M., Moody was roused by his son. A steamer had seen their signals of distress! It undertook to tow the damaged ship 1000 miles to Queenstown. If a storm arose, the cables connecting the two vessels would snap like a thread, but Moody was confident that God would finish what He had begun. The steamer’s captain, a man of prayer, sought God’s help in the task. Though storms were all around, none came near the broken ship. A week after the accident, due to God’s good hand upon them, a joyous thanksgiving service was held in the Queenstown harbour.

—William Revell Moody, *The Life of D. L. Moody*

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