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# THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB: THE CONQUERING WEAPON

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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*“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”—Revelation 12:11*

**W**HEREVER evil appears, it is to be fought with by the children of God in the name of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. When evil appeared in an angel, straightway there was war in heaven. Evil in mortal men is to be striven against by all regenerate men. If sin comes to us in the form of an angel of light we must still war with it. If it comes with all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness, we must not parley<sup>1</sup> for a single moment, but begin the battle forthwith, if indeed we belong to the armies of the Lord. Evil is at its very worst in Satan himself: with him we fight. He is no mean<sup>2</sup> adversary. The evil spirits which are under his control are, any one of them, terrible foes; but when Satan himself personally attacks a Christian, any one of us will be hard put to it.

When this dragon blocks our road, we shall need heavenly aid to force our passage. A pitched battle with Apollyon<sup>3</sup> may not often occur, but when it does, you will know it painfully: you will record it in your diary as one of the darkest days you have ever lived; and you eternally praise your God, when you overcome him. But even if Satan were ten times stronger and more crafty than he is, we are bound to wrestle with him: we cannot for a moment hesitate, or offer him terms. Evil in its highest, strongest, and proudest form is to be assailed by the soldier of the Cross, and nothing must end the war but complete victory. Satan is *the* enemy, the enemy of enemies. That prayer of our Lord's, which we usually render, “Deliver us from evil,” has the special significance of “Deliver us from the evil one”; because he is the chief embodiment of evil, and in him evil is intensified, and has come to its high-

<sup>1</sup> **parley** – to speak, talk, or confer, (esp. with an enemy).

<sup>2</sup> **mean** – of little importance or consequence.

<sup>3</sup> **Apollyon** – Satan, as depicted in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

est strength. That man had need have Omnipotence with him who hopes to overcome the enemy of God and man. He would destroy all godly ones if he could; and though he cannot, such is his inveterate<sup>4</sup> hate, that he worries those whom he cannot devour with a malicious eagerness.

In this chapter, the devil is called the “great red dragon.” He is great in capacity, intelligence, energy, and experience. Whether or not he was the chief of all angels before he fell I do not know. Some have thought that he was such, and that when he heard that a man was to sit upon the throne of God, out of very jealousy he rebelled against the Most High. This is also conjecture. But we do know that he was and is an exceedingly great spirit as compared with us. He is a being great in evil: the prince of darkness, having the power of death. He shows his malice against the saints by accusing the brethren day and night before God. In the prophets we have the record of Satan standing to accuse Joshua the servant of God. Satan also accused Job of serving God from mercenary motives: “Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and all that he hath?”

This ever active enemy desires to tempt as well as accuse: he would have us, and sift us as wheat. In calling him the dragon, the Holy Spirit seems to hint at his mysterious power and character. To us a spirit such as he is, must ever be a mystery in his being and working. Satan is a mysterious personage though he is not a mythical one. We can never doubt his existence if we have once come into conflict with him; yet he is to us all the more real because so mysterious. If he were flesh and blood it would be far easier to contend with him; but to fight with this spiritual wickedness in high places is a terrible task. As a dragon he is full of cunning and ferocity. In him force is allied with craft; and if he cannot achieve his purpose at once by power, he waits his time. He deludes, he deceives; in fact, he is said to deceive the whole world. What a power of deception must reside in him, when under his influence the third part of the stars of heaven are made to fall, and myriads of men in all ages have worshipped demons and idols!

He has steeped the minds of men in delusion, so that they cannot see that they should worship none but God, their Maker. He is styled “the old serpent”; and this reminds us how practiced he is in every evil art. He was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. After thousands of years of constant practice in deception he is much too cunning for us. If we think that we can match him by craft we are grievous fools, for he knows vastly more than the wisest of mortals; and if it once comes to a game of policies, he will certainly clear the board, and sweep our tricks into the bag.<sup>5</sup> To this cunning he adds great speed, so that he is quick to assail at any moment, darting down upon us like a hawk upon a poor chick. He is not everywhere present; but it is hard to say where he is not. He cannot be omnipresent; but yet, by that majestic craft of his, he so manages his army of fallen ones that, like a great general, he superintends the whole field of battle, and seems present at every point. No door can shut him out, no height of piety can rise beyond his reach. He meets us in all our weaknesses, and assails us from every point of the compass. He comes upon us unaware, and gives us wounds which are not easily healed.

But yet, dear friends, powerful as this infernal spirit certainly must be, his power is defeated when we are resolved never to be at peace with him. We must never dream of terms or truce with evil. To suppose that we can let him alone, and all will be well, is a deadly error. We must fight or perish: evil will slay us if we do not slay it. Our only safety will lie in a determined, vigorous opposition to sin, whatever shape it assumes, whatever it may threaten, whatever it may promise. The Holy Ghost alone can maintain in us this enmity to sin.

According to the text it is said of the saints, “They overcame him.” We are never to rest until it is said of us also, “They overcame him.” He is a foeman worthy of your steel. Do you refuse the conflict? Do you think of turning back? You have no armour for your back. To cease to fight is to be overcome. You have your choice between the two, either to gird up the loins of your minds for a life-long resistance, or else to be Satan’s slaves for ever. I pray God that you may awake, arise, and give battle to the foe. Resolve once for all that by the grace of God you will be numbered with those who overcome the arch-enemy.

Our text brings before us a very important subject for consideration—*What is the conquering weapon?* With what sword did they fight who have overcome the great red dragon? Listen! “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” Secondly, *how do we use that weapon?* We do as they did who overcame “by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

## I. What Is This Conquering Weapon?

First, *what is this conquering weapon?* They overcame him by “the blood of the Lamb.”

### *The death of the Son of God*

The blood of the Lamb signifies, first, *the death of the Son of God*. The sufferings of Jesus Christ might be set forth by some other figure, but His death on the Cross requires the mention of blood. Our Lord was not only bruised and smitten, but He was put to death. His heart’s blood was made to flow. He of Whom we speak was God over all, blessed for ever; but He condescended to take our manhood into union with His Godhead in a mysterious manner. He was born at Bethlehem a babe, He grew as a child, He ripened into manhood, and lived here among us, eating and drinking, suffering and rejoicing, sleeping and labouring as men do. He died in very deed and of a truth, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa. That death was the grand fact which is set forth by the words “the blood of the Lamb.”

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<sup>4</sup> **inveterate** – firmly established by long continuance.

<sup>5</sup> **game of policies...into the bag** – the allusion is to a novice, who doesn’t know the game and has no skill at it, being completely at the mercy of an expert of the game.

We are to view Jesus as the Lamb of God's passover: not merely separated from others, dedicated to be Israel's memorial, and consecrated to divine service, but as the Lamb *slain*. Remember, that Christ viewed as living, and not as having died, is not a saving Christ. He Himself saith, "I am he that liveth *and was dead*." (Rev 1:18) The moderns cry, "Why not preach more about His life, and less about His death?" I reply, Preach His life as much as you will, but never apart from His death; for it is by His blood that we are redeemed. "We preach Christ." Complete the sentence. "We preach Christ *crucified*," says the apostle. (1Co 1:23) Ah, yes! there is the point. It is the death of the Son of God which is the conquering weapon. Had He not poured forth His soul unto death, even to the death of the Cross—had He not been numbered with the transgressors, and put to a death of shame—we should have had no weapon with which to overcome the dragon prince. By "the blood of the Lamb" we understand the death of the Son of God. Hear it, O men! Because you have sinned, Jesus dies that you may be cleared from your sin. "He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and died that He might redeem us from all unrighteousness. The point is His death, and paradoxically, this death is the vital point of the Gospel. The death of Christ is the death of sin and the defeat of Satan, and hence it is the life of our hope, and the assurance of His victory. Because He poured out His soul unto the death, He divides the spoil with the strong.

### ***Our Lord's death as a substitutionary sacrifice***

Next, by "the blood of the Lamb" we understand *our Lord's death as a substitutionary sacrifice*. Let us be very clear here. It is not said that they overcame the arch-enemy by the blood of Jesus, or the blood of Christ, but by the blood *of the Lamb*; and the words are expressly chosen because, under the figure of a lamb, we have set before us a sacrifice. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed because of His courage for the truth, or out of pure philanthropy, or out of self-denial, conveys no special Gospel to men, and has no peculiar power about it. Truly it is an example worthy to beget martyrs; but it is not the way of salvation for guilty men. If you proclaim the death of the Son of God, but do not show that He died the Just for the unjust to bring us to God, you have not preached the blood of the Lamb. You must make it known that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him," (Isa 53:5) and that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," (Isa 53:6) or you have not declared the meaning of the blood of the Lamb. There is no overcoming sin without a substitutionary sacrifice. The lamb under the old law was brought by the offender to make atonement for his offence, and in his place it was slain: this was the type of Christ taking the sinner's place, bearing the sinner's sin, and suffering in the sinner's stead, and thus vindicating the justice of God, and making it possible for Him to be Just and the Justifier of him that believeth. I understand this to be the conquering weapon—the death of the Son of God set forth as the Propitiation for sin. Sin must be punished: it is punished in Christ's death. Here is the Hope of men.

### ***Our Lord's death effective for the taking away of sin***

Furthermore, I understand by the expression, "The blood of the Lamb," that *our Lord's death was effective for the taking away of sin*. When John the Baptist first pointed to Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) Our Lord Jesus has actually taken away sin by His death. Beloved, we are sure that He had offered an acceptable and effectual propitiation when he said, "It is finished." Either He did put away sin, or He did not. If He did not, how will it ever be put away? If He did, then are believers clear. Altogether apart from anything that we do or are, our glorious Substitute took away our sin, as in the type the scapegoat carried the sin of Israel into the wilderness. In the case of all those for whom our Lord offered Himself as a substitutionary Sacrifice, the justice of God finds no hindrance to its fullest flow: it is consistent with justice that God should bless the redeemed. Near nineteen hundred years ago Jesus paid the dreadful debt of all His elect, and made a full atonement for the whole mass of the iniquities of them that shall believe in Him, thereby removing the whole tremendous load, and casting it by one lift of His pierced hand into the depths of the sea. When Jesus died, an atonement was offered by Him and accepted by the Lord God, so that before the high court of heaven there was a distinct removal of sin from the whole body of which Christ is the head. In the fulness of time each redeemed one individually accepts for himself the great Atonement by an act of personal faith, but the atonement itself was made long before.

I believe this to be one of the edges of the conquering weapon. We are to preach that the Son of God has come in the flesh and died for human sin, and that in dying He did not only make it possible for God to forgive, but He secured forgiveness for all who are in Him. He did not die to make men savable, but to save them. He came not that sin might be put aside at some future time, but to put it away there and then by the sacrifice of Himself; for by His death He "finished transgressions, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Believers may know that when Jesus died they were delivered from the claims of law, and when He rose again their justification was secured. The blood of the Lamb is a real price, which did effectually ransom. The blood of the Lamb is a real cleansing, which did really purge away sin. This we believe and declare; and by this sign we conquer. Christ crucified, Christ the Sacrifice for sin, Christ the effectual Redeemer of men, we will proclaim everywhere, and thus put to rout the powers of darkness.

## **II. How Do We Use It?**

I have shown you the sword; I now come, in the second place, to speak to the question: *how do we use it?* "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

When a man gets a sword, you cannot be quite certain how he will use it. A gentleman has purchased a very expensive sword with a golden hilt and an elaborate scabbard: he hangs it up in his hall, and exhibits it to his friends. Occasionally he draws it out from the sheath, and he says, "Feel how keen is the edge!" The precious blood of Jesus is not meant for us merely to admire and

exhibit. We must not be content to talk about it, and extol it, and do nothing with it; but we are to use it in the great crusade against unholiness and unrighteousness, till it is said of us, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." This precious Blood is to be used for overcoming, and consequently for holy warfare. We dishonour It if we do not use It to that end.

Some, I fear, use the precious blood of Christ only as a quietus<sup>6</sup> to their consciences. They say to themselves, "He made atonement for sin, therefore let me take my rest." This is doing a grievous wrong to the great Sacrifice. I grant you that the blood of Jesus does speak better things than that of Abel, and that It sweetly cries, "Peace! Peace!" within the troubled conscience; but that is not all It does. A man who wants the blood of Jesus for nothing but the mean<sup>7</sup> and selfish reason, that after having been forgiven through it he may say, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry: hear sermons, enjoy the hope of eternal felicity, and do nothing"—such a man blasphemes the precious blood, and makes it an unholy thing. We are to use the glorious mystery of atoning blood as our chief means of overcoming sin and Satan: its power is for holiness. See how the text puts it: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb": these saints used the doctrine of atonement not as a pillow to rest their weariness, but as a weapon to subdue their sin. O my brothers, to some of us atonement by blood is our battle-axe and weapon of war, by which we conquer in our struggle for purity and godliness—a struggle in which we have continued now these many years. By the atoning blood we withstand corruption within and temptation without. This is that weapon which nothing can resist.

Let me show you your battlefield. Our first place of conflict is in the heavenlies, and the second is down below on earth.

### ***Battle with Satan in the heavenlies***

First, then, you, my brothers and sisters who believe in the blood of Jesus, have to do battle with Satan *in the heavenlies*; and there you must overcome him "by the blood of the Lamb." "How?" say you. I will lead you into this subject.

**First, you are to regard Satan this day as being already literally and truly overcome through the death of the Lord Jesus.** Satan is already a vanquished enemy. By faith grasp your Lord's victory as your own, since He triumphed in your nature and on your behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ went up to Calvary, and there fought with the prince of darkness, utterly defeated him, and destroyed his power. He led captivity captive. He bruised the serpent's head. The victory was the victory of all who are in Christ. He is the representative Seed of the woman, and you who are of that seed and are in Christ actually and experimentally, you then and there overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb. Can you get a hold of this truth? Do you not know that you were circumcised in His circumcision, crucified on His Cross, buried with Him in baptism, and therein also risen with Him in His resurrection? He is your Federal Head,<sup>8</sup> and you being members of His body did in Him what He did.

Come, my soul, thou hast conquered Satan by the Lord's victory. Wilt thou not be brave enough to fight a vanquished foe, and trample down the enemy whom thy Lord has already thrust down? Thou needest not be afraid, but say, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1Co 15:57) We have overcome sin, death and hell in the Person and work of our great Lord; and we should be greatly encouraged by that which has been already wrought in our name. Already we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us. If Jesus had not overcome the enemy, certainly we never should have done so; but His personal triumph has secured ours. By faith we rise into the conquering place this day. In the heavenlies we triumph, as also in every place. We rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Michael of the angels, the Redeemer of men; for by Him we see Satan cast out, and all the powers of evil hurled from their places of power and eminence.

**This day I would have you overcome Satan in the heavenlies in another sense: you must overcome him as the accuser.** At times you hear in your heart a voice arousing memory and startling conscience; a voice which seems in heaven to be a remembrance of your guilt. Hark to that deep, croaking voice, boding evil! Satan is urging before the throne of justice all your former sins. Can you hear him? He begins with your childish faults and your youthful follies. Truly a black memory. He does not let one of your wickednesses drop out. Things which you had forgotten he cunningly revives. He knows your secret sins, for he had a hand in most of them. He knows the resistance which you offered to the Gospel, and the way in which you stifled conscience. He knows the sins of darkness, the sins of the bedchamber, the crimes of the inner chambers of imagery. Since you have been a Christian he has marked your wickedness, and asked, in fierce sarcastic tones, "Is this a child of God? Is this an heir of heaven?" He hopes to convict us of hypocrisy or of apostasy.

The foul fiend tells out the wanderings of our hearts, the deadness of our desires in prayer, the filthy thoughts that dropped into our minds when we have been at worship. Alas! we have to confess that we have even tolerated doubts as to eternal verities,<sup>9</sup> and suspicions of the love and faithfulness of God. When the accuser is about his evil business, he does not have to look far for matter of accusation, nor for facts to support it. Do these accusations stagger you? Do you cry, "My God, how can I face Thee? for all this is true, and the iniquities now brought to my remembrance are such as I cannot deny. I have violated Thy law in a thousand ways, and I cannot justify myself." Now is your opportunity for overcoming through the blood of the Lamb. When the accuser has said his say, and aggravated all your transgressions, be not ashamed to step forward and say, "But I have an Advocate as well as an accuser. O Jesus, my Saviour, speak for me!" When He speaks, what does He plead but His own blood? "For all these sins I have made atonement," says He, "all these iniquities were laid on Me in the day of the Lord's anger, and I have taken them away." Breth-

<sup>6</sup> **quietus** – discharge or release.

<sup>7</sup> **mean** – common, base.

<sup>8</sup> **federal head** – one who serves as a representative for a group of people, acting for them in their stead. Adam was federal head for all of mankind when he sinned in the Garden of Eden, and Jesus is the Federal head for all the elect in His death, burial, and resurrection.

<sup>9</sup> **verities** – truths.

ren, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Jesus has borne the penalty due to us: He has discharged for us upon the Cross all our liabilities to the justice of God, and we are free for ever, because our Surety suffered in our place. Where is the accuser now? That dragon voice is silenced by the blood of the Lamb. Nothing else can ever silence the accuser's cruel voice but the voice of the Blood which tells of the infinite God accepting, in our behalf, the Sacrifice which He Himself supplied.

Justice decrees that the sinful shall be clear, because the accepted Substitute has borne his sin in His own body on the tree. Come, brother or sister, the next time thou hast to do with Satan as an accuser in heavenly places, take care that thou defend thyself with no weapon but the Atonement. All comfort drawn from inward feelings or outward works will fall short; but the bleeding wounds of Jesus will plead with full and overwhelming argument, and answer all. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom 8:33-34) Who, then, shall accuse the child of God? Every accuser shall be overcome by the invincible argument of the blood of the Lamb.

**Still further, the believer will have need to overcome the enemy in the heavenly places in reference to access to God.** It may happen that when we are most intent upon communing with God, the adversary hinders us. Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, the living God; but from one cause or another we are unable to draw nigh unto the throne. The heart is heavy, sin is rampant, care is harassing, and Satanic insinuation is busy. You seem shut out from God, and the enemy triumphs over you. You feel very near the world, very near the flesh, and very near the devil: but you mourn your miserable distance from God. You are like a child who cannot reach his father's door because a black dog barks at him from the door. What is the way of access? If the foul fiend will not move out of the way, can we force our passage? By what weapon can we drive away the adversary so as to come to God? Is it not written that we are made nigh by the blood? Is there not a new and living way consecrated for us? Have we not boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus? We are sure of God's love when we see that Christ died for us; we are sure of God's favour when we see how that Atonement has removed our transgressions far from us. We perceive our liberty to come to the Father, and therefore we each one say—

*I will approach Thee—I will force My way through obstacles to Thee  
To Thee for strength will have recourse, To Thee for consolation flee!*

Pleading the propitiation made by the blood of the Lamb, we dare draw nigh to God. Behold, the evil spirit makes way before us. The sacred name of Jesus is one before which he flees. This will drive away his blasphemous suggestions and foul insinuations better than anything that you can invent. The dog of hell knows the dread Name which makes him lie down: we must confront him with the authority, and specially with the atonement of the Lamb of God. He will rage and rave all the more if we send Moses to him; for he derives his power from our breaches of the law, and we cannot silence him unless we bring to him the great Lord Who has kept the law, and made it honourable.

**We next must overcome the enemy in prayer.** Alas! we cannot always pray as we would. Do you never feel, when you are in prayer, as if something choked your utterance—and, what is worse, deadened your heart? Instead of having wings as of an eagle to mount to heaven, a secret evil clips your wings, and you cannot rise. You say within yourself, "I have no faith, and I cannot expect to succeed with God without faith. I seem to have no love; or, if I have any, my heart lies asleep, and I cannot stir myself to plead with God. Oh, that I could come out of my closet, saying, 'VICI! VICI!'—'I have overcome, I have overcome;' but, alas! instead thereof I groan in vain, and come away unrelieved. I have been half dead, cold, and stolid, and I cannot hope that I have prevailed with God in prayer." Whenever you are in this condition fly to the blood of the Lamb as your chief remedy. When you plead this master argument you will arouse yourself, and you will prevail with God. You will feel rest in pleading it, and a sweet assurance of success at the mercy-seat. Try the method at once. This is the way in which you should use this plea. Say, "My God, I am utterly unworthy, and I own it; but, I beseech Thee, hear me for the honour of Thy dear Son. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, I beseech Thee hear me! O Lord, let the blood of Thine Only-begotten prevail with Thee! Canst Thou put aside His groans, His tears, His death, when they speak on my behalf?" If you can thus come to pleading terms with God upon this ground, you must and will prevail. Jesus must be heard in heaven. The voice of His blood is eloquent with God. If you plead the Atoning Sacrifice, you must overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

Thus have I spoken of overcoming in the heavenlies; but I shall have to show you how you must contend against the evil one in a lower sphere, even on this earth. You must first overcome in the heavenly places before the throne; and when you have been thus triumphant with God in prayer, you will have grace to go forth to service and to defeat evil among your fellow-men. How often have I personally found that the battle must first be fought above! We *must overcome* in order to service. Many a score of times of late I should not have ventured into this pulpit had it not been for power at the mercyseat.<sup>10</sup> Those who know the burden of the Lord are often bowed down, and would not be able to bear up at all were it not for having in secret battled with their enemy and won the day. I have been bowed down before the Lord, and in His presence I have pleaded the precious Blood as the reason for obtaining help, and the help has been given. Faith, having once made sure that Jesus is hers, helps herself out of the treasury of God to all that she needs. Satan would deny her, but in the power of the Blood she takes possession of covenant blessings.

You say to yourself, "I am weak, but in the Lord, my God, there is power: I take it to myself. I am hard and cold, but here is tenderness and warmth, and I appropriate it. It pleased the Father that in Jesus should all fulness dwell, and by virtue of His pre-

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<sup>10</sup> **mercyseat** – the covering of the ark of God, which represents His holy presence.

rious blood, I take out of that fulness what I need, and then with help thus obtained I meet the enemy and overcome him." Satan would hinder our getting supplies of grace wherewith to overcome him; but with the blood-mark on our foot we can go anywhere; with the blood-mark on our hand we dare take anything. Having access with confidence, we also take with freedom whatsoever we need, and thus we are provided against all necessities, and armed against all assaults through the atoning Sacrifice. This is the fountain of supply, and the shield of security: this, indeed, is the channel through which we receive strength for victory.

**We overcome the great enemy by laying hold upon the all-sufficiency of God,** when we really feel the power of the precious blood of Christ. Thus, being victorious in the heavenlies, we come down to the pulpit or to the Sunday-school class made strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Having overcome Satan at the throne of grace, we see him like lightning fall from heaven, even before our feeble instrumentality. We speak, and God speaks with us; we long for souls, and God's great heart is yearning with us. We importune men to come, and the Lord also pleads with them to come, so that they no longer resist. Spiritual power of a holy kind rests upon us to overcome the spiritual power of an evil kind which is exerted by Satan, the world, and the flesh. The Lord scatters the power of the enemy, and breaks the spell which holds men captive. Through the blood of the Lamb we become masters of the situation, and the weakest among us is able to work great wonders. Coming forth to the service of God in the power of our victory in heaven gained by pleading the blood of the Lamb, we march on conquering and to conquer, and no power of the enemy is able to stand against us.

### ***Battle with Satan on this earth***

It is time that I now showed you how this same fight is carried on *on earth*. Amongst men in these lower places of conflict saints overcome through the blood of the Lamb *by their testimony to that blood*. Every believer is to bear witness to the atoning Sacrifice and Its power to save. He is to tell out the doctrine; he is to emphasize it by earnest faith in it; and he is to support it and prove it by his experience of the effect of it. You cannot all speak from the pulpit, but you can all speak for Jesus as opportunity is given you. Our main business is to bear witness with the Blood in the power of the Spirit. To this point we can all testify. You cannot go into all manner of deep doctrines or curious points, but you can tell to all those round about you that "There is life in a look at the Crucified One." You can bear witness to the power of the blood of Jesus in your own soul. If you do this, you will overcome men in many ways.

**First, you will arouse them out of apathy.** This age is more indifferent to true religion than almost any other. It is alive enough to error, but to the old faith it turns a deaf ear. Yet I have noticed persons captivated by the truth of substitution who would not listen to anything else. If any discourse can hold men, as the ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, it is the story of divine love, incarnate in the person of Jesus, bleeding and dying for guilty men. Try that story when attention flags. It has a fascination about it. The marvelous history of the Son of God, Who loved His enemies, and died for them—this will arrest them. The history of the Holy One Who stood in the sinners' place, and was in consequence put to shame, and agony, and death—this will touch them. The sight of the bleeding Saviour overcomes obduracy and carelessness.

**The doctrine of the blood of the Lamb prevents or scatters error.** I do not think that by reasoning we often confute<sup>11</sup> error to any practical purpose. We may confute it rhetorically and doctrinally, but men still stick to it. But the doctrine of the precious Blood, when it once gets into the heart, drives error out of it, and sets up the throne of truth. You cannot be clinging to an atoning Sacrifice, and still delight in modern heresies. Those who deny inspiration are sure to get rid of the vicarious<sup>12</sup> atonement, because it will not allow their errors. Let us go on proclaiming the doctrine of the great Sacrifice, and this will kill the vipers of heresy. Let us uplift the Cross, and never mind what other people say. Perhaps we have taken too much notice of them already. Let the dogs bark, it is their nature to. Go on preaching Christ crucified. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!

**We also overcome men in this way, by softening rebellious hearts.** Men stand out against the law of God, and defy the vengeance of God; but the love of God in Christ Jesus disarms them. The Holy Spirit causes men to yield through the softening influence of the Cross. A bleeding Saviour makes men throw down their weapons of rebellion. "If He loves me so," they say, "I cannot do other than love Him in return." We overcome men's obduracy<sup>13</sup> by the blood, shed for many for the remission of sins.

**How wonderfully this same blood of the Lamb overcomes despair.** Have you never seen a man shut up in the iron cage? It has been my painful duty to talk with several of such prisoners. I have seen the captive shake the iron bars, but he could not break them, or break from them. He has implored us to set him free by some means; but we have been powerless. Glory be to God, the Blood is a universal solvent, and It has dissolved the iron-bars of despair, until the poor captive conscience has been able to escape. How sweet for the desponding to sing—

*"I do believe, I will believe, That Jesus died for me!"*

Believing *that*, all doubts, and fears, and despairs, fly away, and the man is at ease.

There is nothing, indeed, dear friends, which the blood of the Lamb will not overcome; for see how it *overcomes vice*, and every form of sin. The world is foul with evil, like a stable which has long been the lair of filthy creatures. What can cleanse it? What but this matchless stream? Satan makes sin seem pleasurable, but the Cross reveals its bitterness. If Jesus died because of sin,

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<sup>11</sup> **confute** – prove to be false or invalid.

<sup>12</sup> **vicarious** – substitutionary; taking the place of another.

<sup>13</sup> **obduracy** – stubborn resistance to moral influence.

men begin to see that sin must be a murderous thing. Even when sin was but imputed to the Saviour, it made Him pour out His soul unto death; it must, then, be a hideous evil to those who are actually and personally guilty of it. If God's rod made Christ sweat great drops of blood, what will His axe do when He executes the capital sentence upon impenitent men! Yes, we overcome the deadly sweetness and destructive pleasurable-ness of sin by the blood of the Lamb.

**This blood overcomes the natural lethargy of men towards obedience; it stimulates them to holiness.** If anything can make a man holy, it is a firm faith in the atoning Sacrifice. When a man knows that Jesus died for him, he feels that he is not his own, but bought with a price, and therefore he must live unto Him that died for him and rose again. In the atonement I see a motive equal to the greatest heroism; yes, a motive which will stimulate to perfect holiness. What manner of persons ought we to be for whom such a Sacrifice has been presented! Now are we quickened into intensity of zeal and devotion. See, dear brothers, how to use the blood of the Lamb in this lower sphere while contending with evil among men.

But I must close with this. It is not merely by testimony that we use this potent truth. **We must support that testimony by our zeal and energy.** We need concentrated, consecrated energy; for it is written, "They loved not their lives unto the death." We shall not overcome Satan if we are fine gentlemen, fond of ease and honour. As long as Christian people must needs enjoy the world, the devil will suffer little at their hands. They that overcame the world in the old days were humble men and woman, generally poor, always despised, who were never ashamed of Christ, who only lived to tell of His love, and died by tens of thousands rather than cease to bear testimony to the blood of the Lamb. They overcame by their heroism; their intense devotion to the cause secured the victory. Their lives to them were as nothing when compared with the honour of their Lord.

**Brethren, if we are to win great victories we must have greater courage.** Some of you hardly dare speak about the blood of Christ in any but the most godly company; and scarcely there. You are very retiring. You love yourselves too much to get into trouble through your religion. Surely you cannot be of that noble band that love not their own lives unto the death! Many dare not hold the old doctrine nowadays because they would be thought narrow and bigoted, and this would be too galling. They call us old fools. It is very likely we are; but we are not ashamed to be fools for Christ's sake, and the truth's sake. We believe in the blood of the Lamb, despite the discoveries of science. We shall never give up the doctrine of atoning sacrifice to please modern culture. What little reputation we have is as dear to us as another man's character is to him; but we will cheerfully let it go in this struggle for the central truth of revelation. It will be sweet to be forgotten and lost sight of, or to be vilified and abused, if the old faith in the substitutionary sacrifice can be kept alive. This much we are resolved on, we will be true to our convictions concerning the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus; for if we give up this, what is there left?

God will not do anything by us if we are false to the Cross. He uses the men who spare not their reputations when these are called for in defence of truth. Oh to be at a white heat! Oh to flame with zeal for Jesus! O my brethren, hold you to the old faith, and say, "As for the respect of men, I can readily forfeit it; but as for the truth of God, that I can never give up." This is the day for men to be men; for, alas! the most are soft, molluscous<sup>14</sup> creatures. Now we need backbones as well as heads. To believe the truth concerning the Lamb of God, and truly to believe it, this is the essential of an overcoming life. Oh for courage, constancy, fixedness, self-denial, willingness to be made nothing of for Christ! God give us to be faithful witnesses to the blood of the Lamb in the midst of this ungodly world!

As for those of you who are not saved, does not this subject give you a hint? Your hope lies in the blood of the Lamb—

*Come, guilty souls, and flee away, Like doves, to Jesus' wounds*

The atoning Sacrifice, which is our glory, is your salvation. Trust in Him Whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin. Begin with this, and you are saved. Every good and holy thing which goes with salvation will follow after; but now, this morning, I pray you accept a present salvation through the blood of the Lamb. "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life."

*Delivered Lord's Day Morning, September 9, 1888, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, London.*



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<sup>14</sup> molluscous – in this context, weak and vulnerable.