

OVERCOMING FAITH.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world," says the Apostle St. John, "even our faith." Even so, faith is our victory whereby we overcome the prince of this world. Faith sets the stronger Lion of the Tribe of Judah against this roaring lion of the bottomless pit; *that* delivering lion against *this* devouring lion. When the soul is surrounded with enemies on all hands, so that there is no way of escape, faith flies above them and carries up the soul to take refuge in Christ, and it is there safe.

That is the power of faith; it sets a soul in Christ, and there it looks down upon all temptations as waves at the bottom of the rock, breaking themselves into foam. When the floods of temptation rise and gather, so great and so many that the soul is even ready to be swallowed up, then it says, "Lord Jesus, thou art my strength, I look to thee for deliverance; now appear for my deliverance"; and thus it overcomes; the guilt of sin is answered by his blood, the power of sin is conquered by his Spirit, and afflictions that arise are nothing compared to these; his love and gracious presence make them sweet and easy.

Although, then, thou seest thyself the most witless and weak, and findest thyself nothing but a prey to the powers of darkness, yet know, that by believing, the wisdom and strength of Christ are thine; thou art and oughtest to find thyself all weakness, but he is all strength – mightiness itself. Learn to apply this victory, and so it is thine; be strong in him and the power of his might. But thou wilt say, "I am often foiled, yea, I cannot find that I prevail at all against mine enemies; but they still prevail against me." Yet rely on him; he can turn the chase in an instant. Still cleave to him. When the whole powers of thy soul are as it were scattered and routed, rally them by believing. Draw thou but into the standard of Jesus Christ, and the day shall be thine, for victory follows that standard, and cannot be severed from it. Yea, though thou find the smart of divers strokes, yet think that often a wounded soldier

hath won the day; believe, and it shall be so with thee. And remember, that thy defeat, through the wisdom and love of thy God, may be ordered to advance the victory – to put courage and noble energy into thee against thine enemies – to humble thee, and drive thee from thine own imagined strength to make use of his strength. And be not hasty; think not at the very first to conquer. Many a hard conflict must thou resolve upon, and often shalt thou be brought very low, almost to a desperate point, to thy sense past recovery; then it is time to step in, even in the midst of their prevailing. Let God but arise, and his enemies shall be scattered. Thus the Church hath found it in her greatest extremities; and thus likewise the believing soul.

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