THE ACTUAL TRIUMPHS OF JESUS AND THE POSSIBLE TRIUMPHS OF BELIEVERS.

A Sermon preached by Rev. B. N. Nobles, before the Western Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, convened at Nictaux June 15, 1896, and published by request of the body.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne."—REV. iii. 21.

There is no one of us who has not been, at some time in his life, under such physical conditions as made it impossible for the mind to perform its ordinary functions. Memory was unable to retain and recollect as before, reasoning faculties were unable to think and judge as before—in a word the faculties at large were handicapped by these physical disabilities. In such an experience we have a hint of the limitations to which the Son of God was subjected in the incarnation, for the Scriptures intimate that the Eternal Word voluntarily surrendered some of the attributes and prerogatives of Deity such as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc., when he took unto himself the nature of men. St. Paul in speaking of this sacrifice says, "who (i. e. Christ) being *originally* in the form of God thought it not a prize to be grasped and held fast to be on equality with God but *emptied* himself and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men"—instead of remaining in the form of God. Hence Jesus was helpless and dependent like other babes which nurse at mothers' breasts. As a child he did not remember former glory but simply possessed a child's knowledge and capacity and power. St. Luke says "he increased in wisdom and stature." So he grew to manhood, learned his trade, helped support the family, lived an irreproachable life, and when he began to be about thirty years of age entered upon his public ministry through submission to baptism at the hands of John, when the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Though at the age of twelve years the consciousness of his special mission and divine kinship had been awakened within him, still it seems not to have been until after this descent of the Spirit, that those larger communications and impartations began, which constituted until the attributes and prerogatives, surrendered in his incarnation in the babe of Bethlehem, were all restored. For you will remember it was not until late in life that he said "as the Father hath life in himself so hath he *given* to the Son to have life in himself." "Wherescever two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst." "Lo, I am with you always"—"all power *is given* unto me in heaven and on earth"—I say, not until late in life did he make these assertions by which he gives assurance that the attributes and prerogatives he had surrendered had been, or were just about to be, fully restored to him. Now this divine one, who emptied himself of these attributes in taking unto himself our nature and who in process of time had them all given back, is he who spake these words of our text in which he declares the actual triumphs of himself and the possible triumphs of believers.

In speaking of the actual triumphs of Jesus it is natural that we begin with his earthly ministry and his triumph over Satan. St. Matthew records it, that after his baptism Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. It was doubtless a desperate conflict—all the more so because so soon after the descent of the Spirit and before the divine attributes had been fully restored. For forty days the battle went on. What was the nature of the temptations of these days we are not told—only three of the last days being particularised. But Jesus triumphed. He seems never to have parleyed with Satan or hesitated a moment, but in the strength of his holy manhood he vanquished his enemy. So also in his subsequent encounters with the adversary, he maintained his integrity and overcame.

Next we see him showing his sovereignty over nature and his superiority to men. He changes water into wine, he creates bread for the multitude, he heals incurables and casts out demons, he walks on the sea and the waters refuse to engulf him, he commands the winds and the waves and they obey him, he raises the dead, gives light to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. The Scribes and Pharisees who sought accusation against him, he silences and puts to shame; the soldiers sent to arrest him, are prostrated to the earth by peculiar power emanating from him; his fellowtownspeople of Nazareth, enraged at his plain preaching lead him forth to cast him over the precipice but he quietly walks through their midst and away. And have you not read how where men came with their smooth words to woo him from his purpose Jesus stood firm nor deviated from the divine plan in his life? Thus did he proceed, triumphing over the forces of nature and showing himself superior to men.

Nor should I fail of calling attention to our Lord's triumph over human nature as it was found in himself. I do not suppose the human nature of our Lord was depraved as ours is, but assuredly he possessed the sensibilities, the instincts, the sensitiveness, the liabilities natural to unfallen man. Yet, when subjected to his various trials, he yielded not but showed himself to be his sovereign. Probably his greatest conflicts with human nature were when facing Calvary. No sin could be laid to his charge yet was he to suffer as an evildoer. How natural for his sensitive nature to recoil from the sufferings of crucifixion! In his distress he cries, "Father save me from this hour." But he is not vanquished, for in the same breath you hear him saying, "yet for this cause came I unto this hour—Father glorify thy name"—and human nature, triumphed over, sinks back in submission. Later again it rises to protest. The scene is in Gethsemane. Listen, "Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me." But in an instant he recovers himself and adds "nevertheless not my will but thine be done"—so he triumphs and human nature again sinks back submissive.

And now the day of his crucifixion has come. From the third until the ninth hour he suffered on the cross. Oh what anguish of soul! What agony from tortured body did our Lord endure for those six hours! If ever the powers of darkness made desperate onslaught they did that day, tempting him to give up the task to which he had set himself and come down from the cross, but he wavers not. Though his tormentors are among those whose good he seeks, yet he pities them and prays "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Constant to his purpose, he endures until the cry "It is finished" declares his triumph in death. Then Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take down the body and lay it in the new tomb; but the grave could not hold him so on the morning of the third day, according to the Scriptures Christ arose, verifying his word spoken weeks before "I have power to lay down my life and power to take it again." Thus did he triumph in his resurrection.

But what are all the triumphs of his earthly ministry compared with those of his heavenly? Think of the multitudes saved—saved from the guilt of their sin—saved from punishment of their sin—saved, may we hope? from the memory of their sin, all through the triumphs of grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who made them to overcome. Think of the marvellous spread of the gospel and the manifold conquests of the church which is his body pervaded by his Spirit. About 500 was the number of the disciples when our Lord closed his earthly ministry, but since then how has his cause prospered in spite of all opposing against! He has gone forth conquering and to conquer. No weapon formed against him has prospered—his disciples have been upheld—his truth has prevailed—nation after nation has opened her gates to the glorious gospel, either of their own accord or under the rod of him who shall rule the heathen with a rod of iron and break them in pieces as a potters vessel, until now the word is having free course and being glorified in the amelioration of the condition of men at large and the salvation of such as believe the word. Verily, if in any thing the triumph of Jesus is seen, it is seen in the spread of the gospel and in the social and religious institutions of christian nations—their philanthropic and missionary enterprises their industrial reforms and scientific discoveries and inventions, all of which are alone found where the gospel is preached and Jesus worshipped.

Nor have his triumphs yet ended. Not until his dominion shall be from sea to sea—not until the heathen, already being given, shall have been given him for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession—not until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ shall his triumphs cease. Nor shall they then. He must reign until he hath put all enemies beneath his feet. Every foe must be subdued and every knee must bow. His people must be delivered from all evil—their bodies redeemed from destruction—and they enter upon the inheritance prepared for them in the foundation of the world. Nay, and they will not end with the consummation of these purposes of his, for will he not throughout eternal ages go on triumphing after some fashion, though it be not over enemies to his rule and government. But I must forbear speaking at greater length on this subject of Christ's triumphs, that I may call your attention to some of the triumphs possible to believers—v. 21.

To say nothing of the possible triumphs of individual believers over the powers of darkness which set themselves in battle array against the saints and which I believe may be overcome and vanquished, I remark that marvellous triumphs over the forces of nature lie within the range of possibility to the believer. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me," and Jesus says, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "All things are possible to him who believeth." Do you not recollect how it is written that Jesus gave to his disciples such power that like him they cast out demons, healed the sick, made the lame to walk and even raised the dead. Moreover is it not written that in his last instructions he said, "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up vipers; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Yet there are some sufficiently presumptuous to cast this forth as an intrusion into Holy Writ while others, not so presumptuous, will attempt to explain away these glorious truths in order to accommodate the passage to the present attainments of believers, forgetful that the church is far beneath her privileges and possibilities. Brethren, depend upon it, wondrous possibilities of triumph along these lines will be within reach of us when we come under the conditions. Paul could shake off a poisonous viper and feel no ill! Moffat, the South African missionary, could drink of a fountain poisoned by the natives and survive! Carey and Judson so triumphed over unhealthy climate that they spent nearly a lifetime in India engaged in their work for God! What answer to prayer had Dr. Bilas Rand who like Enoch walked with God! What marvels of healing were performed by Dr. Cullis and Dr. Gordon! Indeed do we ourselves know nothing of such occasional triumphs in our own experience, when the very forces of nature seemed obedient to our will and desire which we had made known to God? Brethren, I am not burning strange fire upon this altar this morning. I am not asking a place in your heart for something new, I am pleading for a larger place in your hearts for something old—old as the New Testament teaching. I thoroughly believe it, that if believers rose to their privileges and possibilities the world would stand aghast at the triumphs they would gain over the forces of nature, for God, who withholdeth no good thing from such as walk uprightly, waiteth to put himself at our service.

Again I remark that sovereignty over men is among the possibilities of the believer. I believe that such possibilities of triumph over the world of humanity lie within the reach of the church, that if attained, would make the saints dominant throughout christendom in a few years, and soon throughout the world. Think of the great sums of money which, unsolicited, have been laid at the feet of such men as Spurgeon, Muller and others for their gracious works of charity, philanthropy and religion! What save the Holy Spirit compelled these gifts in answer to the prayer of faith? What if the 42,000 Baptist church members in these Maritime provinces were men and women full of faith and the Holy Ghost like Stephen of old? Think you not that evilly disposed persons would be compelled to submission to the Lord? I am convinced, that, if the saints would come under the conditions of triumph, they could rule throughout the length and breadth of this land. The other day my eye fell upon the statements that "in the American Republic there are 4½ millions adult male members of the Protestant churches." That means 4½ million *voters* who are Protestant church members. In Canada possibly another million are found. What could such a force, charged with the spirit and power of Almighty God, do? Nay, what could they not do? Bribery and corruption could be throttled, political sinners banished, vice, immorality and intemperance driven to hiding places where speedy death would overtake them and righteousness prevail. Oh that the church of Jesus Christ could be aroused to see her opportunity and embrace her privileges, but alas, who is sufficient for the task of arousing?

Of one thing however, I am certain, and that is that believers shall never hold dominion over the world of humanity until they hold dominion over themselves as individuals, for this is also among the possible triumps to believers. It is a shame for one's fallen, deshy nature to rule his nobler spirit. The lusts and appetites and passions and evil tendencies of men ought to be subdued. It is a shame for men and women, especially men and women who bear the name of christians to be slaves to these things and yet do not the facts compel us to the judgment that members whose names are upon our church roles are governed by the flesh in one way or another? There are persons who are ruled by the appetite for strong drink or tobacco, or by unholy craving for money or power or display, or by an unruly temper or an unbridled tongue, who should be masters and mistresses, instead of the slaves which they are. Shame that such cannot rise to the throne! There are persons naturally lazy and indolent, and they will live in dirt and poverty, slaves to a constitutionally sluggish, lazy body of flesh and blood, when they ought to rise to the throne and bring the body into subjection. There are persons naturally mean and selfish who will let their mean, selfish nature so rule them that meanness and selfishness is the sum of their doing when they should be large-hearted and generous. There are persons naturally unprincipled and inclined to dishonesty and they will let their thievish, covetous, avaricious, dishonest nature so rule them that they will cheat and lie and equivocate and sneak about and feel uncomfortable, when they might be what they should be—worthy and respected. It is a lamentable fact that there are many who are ruled by their depraved instincts and desires when they should be sovereign, for it is the privilege of man's nobler self to rule. Especially is this so with the Saints. They assuredly should rise and, overcome. Hear ye the word of the Apostle, "Let not sin rule in your mortal body." Brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus, be ye sovereigns and not slaves.

In conclusion, permit me to call attention to the means by which Jesus gained his triumphs and by which believers may gain theirs. To him the Holy Spirit was given without measure. Let believers see to it that they have the Holy Spirit and his power. Would you go forth and conquer? Then see to it that you are endued with power and filled with the Spirit. Recognize the angels of the Lord that camp about you. Whether or not Jesus had need of them, it is a fact that the Holy Spirit and the angels ministered to him. We need all available help. Let us recognize the angels, hovering round and expect their help in our conflicts. Let us also familiarize ourselves with the Word of God that we may have it at hand for our defence. It is the Spirit's sword. Then let us exercise large faith and implicitly obey the will of God so far as it is made known. The victories of faith are many and to obey is better than sacrifice. Finally love, oh, the power of love! the mighty loving kindness! would you conquer? then love.

These were the means by which Jesus won his victories, and when believers, individually and collectively, possess these means and make use of them, the triumphs possible to believers shall become actual and the consequent sovereignty of which our text makes mention shall be assured. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my father in his throne."

COLLEGE OF READING.

BY REV. ARTHUR C. KEMPTON.

What pastor has not lamented that the rank and file of his people know so little about the affairs of the kingdom, both as concerns the present life and the life beyond? What pastor has not longed that the people's ideals of life might be higher? The writer is pastor of a church of 500 members, composed most entirely of laboring people, in a city well nicknamed "the Sawdust City," a city of mills and men. During the first year of his pastorate he was astonished to find how contracted was the intellectual and spiritual horizon of the majority of his members. Before the year had passed, however, he ceased to wonder at the narrowness of his people. Its secret had been discovered; their homes were sadly lacking in character-building literature. They were plentifully besprinkled with secular papers, magazines were scattered here and there, a few good books were hidden on remote shelves; but it was only too evident that there was a famine of intellectual and spiritual food.

Stalwart giants are not raised from mush. We have a city library of thousands of volumes; but 90 per cent of the books taken from it (affection, and inferior fiction at that. What was to be done? The people were feeding upon husks; how was the pastor to introduce them to the literature of the kingdom where there is "bread enough and to spare?"

The following is a record of his attempt to solve this problem, an attempt not uncrowned with success. He began at the very source of character, the Bible. A "Bible Reader's Club" was formed. There was no organization, no meetings, no fees. All who signed the following agreement were enrolled as members:

"I agree to read one chapter of the Bible each day for the next six months, no matter where I may be, nor how tired, nor how late the hour, sickness alone preventing." Soon there were 400 members to this club. The readings were announced three months in advance in the church paper, and announced again each Sunday from the pulpit.

Following this, large Christian Culture classes were formed. A Christian workers' class met weekly for two winters, the first being devoted to the subject, "How to Win Souls," the second to "What Baptists Believe." During all these months no effort was spared to make every sermon a spiritual and intellectual tonic. As a result of it all, a strong band of christian workers grew up, able and anxious to work for Christ. But the circle was small and far from perfect. How shall it be indefinitely enlarged, and its crooked curves rounded out into the perfect circle of character?

As a final effort to solve this problem, the pastor has recently formed the

LIBRARY OF BEST BOOKS.

The library of best books is composed of about 150 volumes of the cream of literature. These books are hand picked fruit from the tree of knowledge. The single purpose was to make a christian, character building library, with emphasis on the word christian. Good books alone were chosen; goodish books were avoided; good-for-nothing books were ignored. Books alone were chosen for all classes, all ages, all temperaments. Great attention was given to books for young men and women. Many a character has been marred or made by reading a single book. Dry, dusty, bookish books were studiously avoided. No book was welcome that did not give good promise of interesting and benefiting some one. Such authors as the following were selected: Gordon, Cuyler, Ian Maclaren, Torrey, Farrar, Bok, Paton, Pierson, Moody, Ruskin, Smiles, Bunyan, Drummond, Diaz, Strong, Marden, Murray, Meyer, Vincent, Mabie, Phelps, Wallace, Stowe, Willard, Taylor, Spurgeon, Prentice, Smith, Vedder, Crockett, Goldsmith, Hughes, Alcott, Wiggin, Saunders, a'Kempis, Finney, Turnbull, Rile and Stalker. Books like these are not often found in ordinary homes. Neither cost nor care was spared in making the selection. This library is opened at the close of our meetings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Books are free to all, though secured at the pastor's expense. A librarian keeps careful record, and guides in the selection of books.

THE COLLEGE OF READING

was formed as a novel method of encouraging liberal reading of these books. A pamphlet explaining it was printed and distributed. The pastor is "president" of this "college." The various authors in the library are the "faculty of instruction." All applicants for admission must first read five books and present the list to the president. The president will then examine them orally upon some book from the list. If able to converse intelligently upon this book the applicant is admitted to the "Freshman Class." Fifteen books admit one to the "Sophomore Class," twenty-five, to the "Junior Class;" thirty-five to the "Senior Class," and fifty books graduate the student. Each graduate receives a diploma suitable for framing, giving due credit for the work done and certifying that he is a graduate of the College of Reading.

The results of this work have been gratifying. The reading has averaged thirty-five books per week. Great interest in favor of "best books" has been aroused. Many are entering the classes. Every prayer-meeting bears testimony to the good the library is doing. Horizons are widening; ideals are rising. The future, even more than the present, will show the results of this work. These books are silent servants of the higher life, and will lead scores and hundreds to nobler living. This experience is given to the public in the hope that other churches may be benefitted by it also. "Give attention to reading" is one of the neglected injunctions of the holy Word.—Standard.

Eau Claire, Wis.

FOR FULLER LIFE.

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears;
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is but a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly, my life is void and brief,
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see;
Yet rise it shall—the sap of spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul,
Or cordial in the searching cold.
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for him, my king:
O Jesus, drink of me.

—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

Above all things do not worry. If God tells you that you are in the right path, though you stumble you shall not fall if you but trust Him.

When He takes your work away and bids you no longer to do good and obedient things, but only to be good and obedient, surely that is not the death of faith. That may be faith's transfiguration. —Phillip Brooks.

Rededication and prayer are the indispensible background to any Christian work worth the doing. And without them Christian living fails of acquiring that depth without which Christian doing is sure to be superficial and ineffective.—H. C. Turnbull.

Heaven is. Already its atmosphere touches this lower firmament; already the heavenly minded breathe its air. The same love throbs in their hearts that stirs in the souls of those who have passed on beyond all mortal hindrances. A little while, and the realities in which they both live will be fully unveiled.

GOD'S ANSWER.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

"Where is healing for my sorrows?
So I cried in my distress.
"I agree to read one chapter of the Bible
Each day for the next six months, no
matter where I may be, nor how tired,
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Drummond, Diaz, Strong, Marden, Murray,
Meyer, Vincent, Mabie, Phelps, Wallace,
Stowe, Willard, Taylor, Spurgeon,
Prentice, Smith, Vedder, Crockett, Goldsmith,
Hughes, Alcott, Wiggin, Saunders,
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"Sophomore Class," twenty-five, to the
"Junior Class;" thirty-five to the "Senior
Class," and fifty books graduate the student.
Each graduate receives a diploma
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The love of the Spirit visits the lowliest and least, comforting all wretchedness with an assurance that suffices for life and death. It is love that recognizes love. Without love one cannot comprehend the love of God. The more loving the soul is, the more strong the sense of divine affection.—Moscomdar.

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