

And this explains the fact, which I am sure has surprised many of you, that there are very few recorded instances of victorious singing; for Israel was so constantly forgetting God and turning back to the old idols, that the victories were few and the shout of triumph was seldom heard. I think there was singing when the uplifted arms of Moses brought the victory over Amalek. I think there was singing when faith shouted beside the walls of Jericho, and the shouting brought them to the ground. I think there was singing when Deborah and Barak stood over the dead body of Sisera.

There are many Psalms of David which are like a full orchestra of praise; but the majority of them, you remember, are penitential cries, a singing by the road, as by the waters of Marah. And so it is, in truth, brethren, that in the Church to-day the lamentations outnumber the praises; that the defeats are more numerous than the triumphs; that there is more singing by slaves, and on Sundays, too, than there is grand singing by conquerors. Open any of our church hymn-books—take this one, it is a good sample—and look through it in your homes to-night, and see how many songs of triumph you can find between these two covers. Why, the majority of the hymns in this book are of a clinging faith, hymns of trust in the midst of the battle, hymns of hope which anticipate victory, hymns of comfort for the dying, and hymns of aspiration after a closer walk with God. There are few shouts of triumph actually experienced. And so I fear that the average Christian partakes but little of victory, and so has not learned to sing its song. It is often said by preachers—and it is a good sample of the preaching by most of us ministers—that we are like warriors fighting for the victory, that share not yet in the shout of them that triumph.

Well, now, friends, what a gloomy prospect this is to any believer—fighting, and never conquering; going into the field and into the conflict with no songs, because there is nothing to sing

about. Thank God, that while we must put Satan under our feet until death brings the battle to an end, we may carry this host and that host that he sends against us; we may perfume each day's experience with our songs of victory as we leave one and another easily besetting sin dead forever on the battle-field. Israel was a long way from Canaan when this song of triumph rose to heaven. Between that shore, strewn with the dead bodies of the Egyptians, and the Jordan, there lay forty years of sinning and repentance, of murmurings and fightings and tears. But the victory, in the very beginning of those forty years, was a glorious reality. It disposed of Pharaoh, who never troubled them again, and the long pilgrimage which followed that hour never, I think, lost wholly the inspiration of that opening song, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

How about *your* songs of victory, believer? Have you ever had occasion to stop in your march of life, perhaps right on Broadway or in your counting-room, and over some conquered sin set up a pillar on which you inscribed these words: "He hath triumphed gloriously"? You and I sing, and we sing wisely, too—

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down;
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou obtain thy crown;—

but we can win the final crown of victory only by successive triumphs every day, and hence songs of victory should rise from the smoke of every day's conflict.

When Pompey, in the year 61 B. C., returned to Rome the conqueror of the known world, the brilliant procession of trophies only, from every land, occupied two days in moving along the *Via Sacra*, and at the head of the procession were carried brazen tables on which were enumerated the long list of the nations he had conquered. But it was by a long succession of victories that he reached the height of glory—victories in Africa, in Europe, in Asia,