

## THE VICTORIOUS LIFE (II.)

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### III

I HAVE now endeavored to comment on some of Dr. Warfield's statements and also to express in general the meaning of the Keswick Movement. I now proceed to call attention to two witnesses to this position. The first of these is the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Moule, whose saintliness, sanctified common sense, and scholarship none who know him will question. It so happens that at the Keswick Convention of July, 1918, the Bishop spoke on the distinctive message of the Convention, and discussed, "What Keswick stands for." After pointing out its basis in the Divine Person and Atoning Work of Christ received by faith for salvation, he went on to say that

"'Keswick' stands distinctively for this—Christ, our righteousness upon Calvary, received by faith, Christ our holiness in the heart that submits to Him and that relies upon Him, and that uses Him (which we say in brief in the watchword 'Holiness by faith')—that is the inmost distinctiveness of the 'Keswick' message upon one side. It does not for an instant say that it exists *for*, though it stands *upon*, the preaching of the truth of pardon; but it does humbly say that it stands as a witness for the oft-forgotten, oft-misunderstood, oft-misapplied, but blessed and living truth, 'Holiness by faith'; Christ our power for internal simplicity and cleansing, as He is received, in submissive trust, as the soul trusts Him and entrusts itself to Him to have His way, to do His work, to act the very springs of thought and will to put out His blessed, loving power, fulfilling the promise, 'I will subdue their iniquities, I will write My laws in their hearts and put them in their minds,' but having first—not last—cast their sins and their iniquities into oblivion at the Cross."

Then followed this reference to Holiness:—

"Holiness may come out in great feats and acts of sacrifice and suffering, and it often does. But in ten thou-

sand thousand instances it just means the sacrifice of self in a little thing, though it may mean a big sacrifice of the self-spirit which asserts itself so desperately — a quiet putting of that down in the name of the Lord Jesus; the delightful discovery that the temper can be sweetened, and that the tongue can be cleaned, of what is evil, what is false, and what is unkind; that the very thoughts can be kept, though they have been all too long and guiltily allowed play on forbidden fields — that they can be kept by this wonderful power of the God who reveals to us holiness by faith.”

This, in turn, naturally led to a statement about faith:—

“Then when we come to *faith*, what does it mean? Not an abstract theory, a metaphysical conception, a something floating in the air of the mind. Faith is nothing without its object; faith is never saving without the right object. Faith means its object taken and used; faith means a trusted Christ. And so it means the renovation and the purification, and the uplift, and the adjustment, and the happy making of character, and of life in the power, through the Holy Spirit, of a trusted Christ. All this ‘Keswick’ seeks to teach, not to terminate in the believer, himself or herself; not that we may wrap ourselves in a robe of spiritual comfort and a subtle self-satisfaction supposed to be satisfaction in Christ; but that we may be vessels for the Master’s use.”

But Bishop Moule went even further, and spoke of what Keswick is in relation to preceding times and other aspects of truth:—

“It [The message “Holiness by Faith”] was brought forward in a way new as to its energy and its definiteness in that long ago, in 1874, and it would be known of the ages before. Saints, scattered about in untold numbers, had lived it, whether they would have stated it or not, before. But the blessing and benefit of this place is that it has helped to make it current coin; and we want to take the coin, and not hoard it, but spend it to the glory of God, to the good of our generation, to the consoling of its sorrows, to the convincing but also to the healing of its sins, to the straightening of its crooked places, and making the rough places smooth, that the King of glory may come in.”

It will interest many to know how the Bishop himself

came in to this experience. The story shall be told in his own words from a booklet on the hymn by Charles Wesley, "Jesus My Strength, My Hope." Here is the Bishop's testimony:—

"I cannot make the quotation without recording my debt to the hymn, a deep and perpetual debt, incurred at a crisis of my own inner life. Years after a definite conversion I made new discoveries of the deceits and treacheries of the heart towards God, and the conflict of conscience and will was a bitter one. In much trouble of spirit, walking in a field close to the house in Scotland where I was a guest, I found myself repeating that hymn, '*Jesus My Strength, My Hope*,' learnt in early childhood, and often sung in my father's Church. It struck me on a sudden that the teaching of the hymn was just this, in essence, that the revolution of spiritual attitude was to be attained — *by getting it from the Lord!* It was to be the *gift* of God to the soul penitent and *submissive* at His feet; a *gift*, given on purpose to be *used* in a happy and disciplined life set free by Him from the bondage of self-will. A light began to shine through my clouds. And that very evening, at a meeting held in a barn on the estate, two addresses, each as 'sober-minded' as possible, one on the sins of Christian lives, the other on the remedy, Christ trusted and submitted to, were very greatly blessed to me. From that day, amidst many failures (all by my own fault), I have found my secret of spiritual progress along the lines of that hymn."

To show the practical bearing of this teaching, which warrants its being described as teaching on and for the Victorious Life, the following incident, told by the Bishop in one of the addresses at Keswick last year, may be fitly given:—

"May I use a very homely illustration from the experience of a friend of former days when I taught young men at Cambridge? I have used it many a time in confirming dear boys and girls in the Diocese of Durham, when my addresses, I think, tend continually more and more to an almost grotesqueness of simplicity, but, when I come to think of it after, I have done little but try to speak 'Keswick' truth to them. I have often told them this incident; it makes boys, particularly listen. There came to

me one day in my study at Ridley Hall a fine young student of mine, a thorough Christian man, and also a very good footballer. He came with a rather melancholy face, unlike himself, and told me he must give football up. I ask him *why*, and he said it was because of his temper. He had a hot temper and he lost it sometimes in the game; and then, of course, they laughed at him — ‘a Christian — and in a passion!’ I said, ‘I don’t think you need give the game up. It is perfectly right for you at your time of life to play, and it does no harm to a Christian man’s influence to play a good game. It is right for you to be on the football field. Where it is right for us to be we may be assured that our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, and in us, as surely as at a prayer-meeting, the Church, aye, at the Table of the Lord.’ In short, I reminded him that he might reckon confidently there upon his Lord’s presence and power. ‘And,’ said I (it was after I had been convinced of ‘Keswick’ truth), ‘do not so much try to keep your temper as instantaneously to ask your Lord to keep it for you, at the moment, in the very rush of the game.’ My friend came back to me a day or two later, with a face quite different. He said, ‘It went off splendidly! I did what you said, and He was true to His word! I said, “Lord, take charge!” and He kept my temper for me. He kept me sweet and pleasant, and I never enjoyed the game so much!’ I think — and I always say this to my young lads in Durham, who always listen keenly to that story — I think that if the Lord can keep the heart in peace in the middle of a game of football, it is difficult to say when He cannot do it. It is difficult to think of any place where it is fit for us to be (we cannot count on Him if we wander where we have no business to be, where we are on the devil’s ground, and need not be there) in which we may not claim, may not use the trusted Christ to give peace to temper, to nerves, to will.”

Now this is what may be called Keswick teaching, or rather, as I would dare to say, this is New Testament Holiness as expressed by one of the best and ablest men of our time. The Bishop’s own personal experience was further emphasized the other day by a brief “In Memoriam” notice of one of the oldest leaders at Keswick, the Rev. Evan H. Hopkins, whose valuable book has already been brought under contribution. This is how the Bishop speaks of Mr.

Hopkins, referring to the same incident already mentioned:—

“ I will not dwell at large on his admirable work, in his many years of strength and activity, as a teacher of unsurpassed luminous force in the Keswick Tent and at kindred gatherings, not to speak of the pulpit—a teacher whose message perfectly combined the call to surrender and faith for inner victory and purity with unshakable fidelity to the truths which gather round justification through the Crucified Christ alone, to the last breath. I would only here gratefully record my own lifelong debt. Never shall I forget the autumn evening in 1884, in a great barn in Scotland, filled with a solemnly listening throng, when Evan Hopkins met a great and profoundly felt need of my soul (awakened into new intensity just then) by an unfolding of the promises of the Word, promises of the liberty found only in surrender, which made an epoch in my life.”

In this connection some recent words of that well-known missionary authority, Dr. Eugene Stock, illustrate and confirm these references to Mr. Hopkins and Bishop Moule. Dr. Stock, also writing an “ In Memoriam ” notice of Mr. Hopkins (in the *London Christian*), gives these reminiscences, which tell their own story:—

“ When his important and delightful book, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life*, was published in 1884, he sent me a copy, and asked me to write a review of it for the *Record*. I felt that I lacked the authority to do that, especially as ‘ Keswick teaching ’ was then still regarded with suspicion by most orthodox Evangelical clergymen. Even Mr. Webb-Peploe (not then Prebendary) was himself not yet accepted as a leader among them. But I went to the Editor of the *Record*, and urged on him the importance of the book being carefully reviewed by a recognized theologian of unquestioned Evangelical principles; and on his asking whom I would suggest, I named Mr. Handley Moule, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge. To him, accordingly, the book was sent; and thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Moule wrote four important articles in successive issues of the *Record*, expressing in a generous Christian spirit much appreciation of the book, yet upon the whole pronouncing against Mr. Hopkins’s teaching. They were,

of course, not signed, in accordance with the practice of those days. A few months later, a letter appeared in the same journal, signed 'The Writer of the Four Papers,' stating that since they appeared he had personally met Mr. Hopkins and others of the 'Keswick School' and that, while not at all moving from the doctrinal position taken up in the articles, he was now convinced that the teaching of these men, and of Mr. Hopkins's book, was not inconsistent with it, and not open to the criticisms then current. 'Never,' he wrote, 'I say it earnestly and deliberately, have I heard teaching more alien from perfectionist error, more justly balanced in its statement of possibilities and limits'; and he added some solemn and significant words as to the effect upon himself personally. Although, for the time, the writer of the articles and of this letter retained his anonymity, the essential fact became known through the appearance for the first time of Mr. Handley Moule as a speaker at Midway in 1885, and at Keswick in 1886; and in 1890 he told the whole story over his own signature in the columns of the *Record*."

I cannot refrain from remarking that a Movement which can obtain the clear and strong adherence of such a loyal Evangelical scholar as Bishop Moule is not to be lightly set aside.

I pass to another of the Keswick leaders, whose masculine thought and vigorous character are familiar and welcome to all who have had the privilege of hearing or meeting him, Prebendary Webb-Peploe. I heard Dr. H. C. Mabie once say that no man had made a deeper impression on the ministers attending Northfield than Mr. Webb-Peploe. This is how he tells the story of the beginning of the Keswick Movement:—

"The requirement is even *now* that we should have the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Saviour, as our life — Col. iii. 4: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' He must be our life. That just constitutes the difference between what was apprehended by the great majority, such as I knew, of Evangelical Christians before the Convention came in 1876, and what we ought to be able to apprehend now. You know that this Convention started in Oxford in the year 1874, and in the spring part of 1875 the Oxford Convention was

followed by the Brighton Convention, and from the Brighton Convention, some two months later, the movement was taken by dear Canon Battersby up to Keswick. We came here under the most extraordinary difficulties, with everything, apparently, against us, particularly the popular opinion of the newspapers, the Christian editors, as they were called, writing to say this was mere empty perfectionism preached by men, without the slightest chance of its being attained. We had other difficulties when we arrived here. We came believing that we were to hear almost entirely throughout the Convention Mr. Pearsall Smith, of America, who had spoken so powerfully at Oxford that every person I have ever met that attended the Oxford Convention, in the autumn of 1874, was lifted from a life of depression, or pain, or shame for perpetual failure, into a life of joy, peace, power, and spiritual prosperity. So that those men and women who came from the Oxford Convention were now glorifying God at every point in the body and in the spirit, which are His."

He also compares or contrasts this Movement with some previous experience:—

"For what purpose are we assembled at the Keswick Convention? Pause for one moment that you may realise or apprehend, every one of you, the great object for which these gatherings are held. I have had the solemn privilege of attending every one of the forty-two that have taken place, except one. Therefore I know a little, from inner study, of what was intended from the very commencement, and what is realised after forty odd years in our present gathering together.

"Very striking it is, indeed, to think of the distinction that was intended from the very commencement to be found between this assembly and some others known in the land. At that time very little was known of the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Very little was known of Him as a present Saviour, moment by moment. Men looked upon Him as a Saviour in regard to the Atonement. Our fathers of the Evangelical school brought us up—speaking of myself and others like me—to realise Christ as the gift of God to pay the debt of humanity, to take unto Himself the whole human race, in order that He might atone for man's sin before God and by the blood of the Lamb offer pardon, peace, and acceptance with God. Blessed be the Lord for that wonderful Gospel that our forefathers of

the Evangelical school so delighted in and so fervently put forward. But, brethren and sisters, there is something more than this. While it is a blessed fact that we trace every gift we can ask for or receive to the Lord Jesus Christ — St. Paul prays that we may be able to apprehend with all saints what is that love found in Jesus — I cannot but fear that a very large number even yet, after more than forty years of this blessed Gospel of a saving, keeping Christ being mentioned, a very large proportion of the Church does not yet know experimentally what it is to be saved by faith, in the deepest and fullest sense of that word."

This is followed by an instance of what the Holiness Movement meant to one man:—

"There was a gentleman living some ten miles from my father's home in Hertfordshire, one of the most earnest Christian clergymen I ever knew, but he was overcome by a nervous temperament, and perpetually failed to be calm and quiet, and every time showed exceedingly painful irritation, but was so humble that he would come to the very person he had offended, and say, 'Can you ever forgive me, my brother? Let us pray for forgiveness!' That was a man who yearned for peace, but could never attain it. He had gone with his wife to a London nerve specialist of the highest note, who told her that his trouble was mental and incurable, and that she would have to bear with it till her husband died. The wife died first. Then the Oxford Convention took place, and my beloved friend, Mr. Grane, was there. About three or five months afterwards he was persuaded to go and see a specialist again in London. The specialist took up his book of cases and looked it through, and then turned to him and said, 'Mr. Grane, I have the joy to tell you that everything is altered; you have not one symptom of disease or danger that I noticed twelve months ago. Have you been to another physician? If so, tell me his name. Have you?' 'Yes, I have.' 'And what is his name? I ought to know it.' 'The Lord Jesus Christ,' my friend replied, and from that moment my brother Grane, whom I loved deeply, was never known to look or speak with the slightest sign of irritation."

I submit, with all deference to Dr. Warfield, yet with perfect confidence, that the convinced acceptance of the Keswick Movement by such a man as Prebendary Webb-



Peploe is impressive enough to make people inquire whether, after all, it does not stand for essential Biblical truth.

## IV

A few conclusions may be submitted for consideration on this whole subject. And, first, in passing, as a personal matter, I cannot refrain from expressing my sincere regret that Dr. Warfield has allowed himself to use certain phrases which do not help but rather hinder the cause which he and we have at heart. He writes more than once of "Mr. Trumbull and his coterie" (pp. 352, 371); of "Mrs. H. W. Smith and her coterie" (p. 358); of Mr. Trumbull inserting an adverb as "a sop to Cerberus" (p. 328); of his always having something "up his sleeve" (p. 355); of an assertion which is said to be "a bathos of inconsequence"; and of Mr. Boardman's *Higher Christian Life* as "a rag-time book" (p. 582). Even though Dr. Warfield feels very strongly the errors of the Movement, I think the matter is too serious, the issues too profound, and, I will venture to add, the men and women too sincere and too much in earnest, for remarks of this kind to be made.

Dr. Warfield seems to imply that this Holiness teaching is comparatively recent, coming either from Mr. Pearsall Smith or about his time; but there are those who, like Dr. Andrew Murray, of holy memory, maintain that the teaching can be found at least as early as Walter Marshall's "Gospel Mystery of Sanctification," which dates from the seventeenth century. Dr. Alexander Whyte speaks of this book as a "profound masterpiece."

It is impossible to avoid raising the question whether, after all, Dr. Warfield may not be mistaken, and whether there are not phases of New Testament truth which are valid and powerful even though they are not accepted by him. In particular, there are New Testament passages which have not been properly faced in any of his articles. Thus, the well-known passage, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14), does not seem to be adequately dealt with,

though it is vital to any proper consideration of the subject of Christian holiness. There are other passages in the New Testament which teach victory as clearly as possible, and yet they do not seem to have entered within the consideration of Dr. Warfield's treatment.

The impression made on me by reading Dr. Warfield is that his teaching provides no real Gospel for the saint, but only for the sinner. To say that God "cures our sinning precisely by curing our sinful nature" (p. 340), when experience in general gives no suggestion of any such "curing"; to speak of Romans vii. as a chapter in which "Divine grace is warring against and not merely counteracting, but eradicating the natural evil of sin" (p. 345), when there is not a single reference in the chapter to the Holy Spirit; to state that God is "eradicating our sinfulness" (pp. 341, 344), and not merely counteracting it, when there is in general no evidence of this in Christian lives — all this tends, in my judgment, to discouragement, disheartenment, and even despair. It is a position which seems to be expressed in these words:—

"Must I go on in sin and sorrow,  
Sunshine to-day and clouds to-morrow?  
First I am sinning, then repenting,  
Now I am stubborn, now relenting."

But, on the other hand, to tell the newly-awakened soul that sanctification is obtainable in the very same way as justification, through faith; that, in spite of the evil nature within, there should and can be continuous victory because of a continuous reckoning of self as dead to sin and living to God (Rom. vi. 11); that sin will not have dominion because the soul is "under grace" (Rom. vi. 14); that the Spirit dwells within in order to prevent the evil nature doing what it would otherwise do (Gal. v. 17); and that in all things the soul can be more than conqueror (Rom. viii. 37) — all this seems calculated to fill the soul with inspiration, joy, hope, and courage, and to enable it to go forward with confidence and expectation, with "a

heart at leisure from itself," until the day comes when, either at death or at the Lord's Coming, there will be absolute deliverance from the very presence of sin. The "complete salvation" which Dr. Warfield mentions never comes in this life, but it will come hereafter. Meanwhile, this Gospel of "sanctification by faith," avoiding the one extreme of eradication, and the other of mere suppression, seems to me the complement and completion of that old-fashioned Evangelical theology of which Princeton is so noteworthy an exponent. It is this that Scottish Presbyterian clergymen and many other Evangelical clergymen from England have found to be their joy, comfort, and strength; and it is this that, notwithstanding Dr. Warfield's severe strictures, his consummate theological knowledge, and his acute perception, makes us more and more certain that in holding it and teaching it we are absolutely loyal to the "old, old story."

But the supreme lack in Dr. Warfield's articles, as I read them, is the absence of any recognition of the fact that the Movement he criticizes and condemns expresses a spiritual experience and not merely a theological theory. I know, of course, that the two are united as cause and effect, that experience should arise out of theology. But when able and clear-minded Christian men bear testimony to an experience which they associate with Christ and His truth, when this testimony comes from scholars and leaders like the Bishop of Durham and others, who are unhesitatingly loyal to the fundamental realities of the supernatural revelation of the New Testament, it seems to me imperative that this experience should be considered and the fact and meaning of it explained. No experience which carries moral and ethical value can be without a basis of some truth; and I should like to see Dr. Warfield, with his great ability, endeavor to discern and state this truth, even though in so doing he should feel it necessary to disentangle from it any theological errors. The Movement, as a whole, the men who teach its truths, and the rich experiences to which testimony is given, call for this thor-

ough investigation. As the matter now stands, Dr. Warfield's criticisms are concerned with theological theory, without any attempt, so far as I can judge, to perceive and appreciate the undoubted spiritual experience underlying the Movement. But when men so sober, so true to Scripture, so loyal to Christ and, I must add, so many of them qualified by scholarship, like Bishop Moule, Drs. Laidlaw, George Wilson, and John Smith of Edinburgh, Dr. Elder Cumming of Glasgow, Prebendary Webb-Peploe, and the late G. H. C. Macgregor, not to mention many more, testify to the possession of an experience which has evidently enriched their lives, molded their characters, illuminated their doctrine, fertilized their energies, and inspired their efforts for Christ, I feel that these teachings are not to be set aside by any purely doctrinal and theoretical criticism.

In closing this article, perhaps I may be permitted to record an incident which bears on the subject. I was once staying with an Evangelical clergyman in England who took a very strong line against Keswick and reflected on it for what he regarded its errors, in the light of what I have called old-fashioned Evangelicalism. I remarked that the name "Keswick" was of little moment to me, and that perhaps I had an advantage over some of my brethren in that I discovered this truth before I knew of such a place or a Convention as Keswick. Then I told him how, after an experience in the spiritual life which may be described as "up and down," I gave myself to prayer and to the New Testament and was led to two passages: first, to Rom. vi. 13, where the word "yield" came home with power, and then to 1 John ii. 28, where the word "abide" similarly impressed me. I saw that the true Christian life meant yielding everything to God and then remaining in that attitude; and there and then I entered into a spiritual experience of light, liberty, joy, and power to which I had been hitherto (through my own fault, I admit) a stranger. And when some months after I took up (what

was then) a monthly magazine, *The Life of Faith*, I recognized at once that this contained the very teaching which had been so greatly blessed to my soul, and I learnt for the first time of the existence of the Keswick Convention. I "drank in" the messages and rejoiced in the confirmation thus afforded of my own personal experiences. And ever since then, amid many failures to realize all that was mine in Christ, yet with an ever-deepening conviction and thankfulness, I have believed and found this Holiness teaching to be the complement of that Evangelical position of Justification by faith which I knew from earliest days. This fundamental reality and its corresponding truth, Sanctification by faith, constitute for me the heart and core of that Gospel which, for sinner and saint, is "the power of God unto salvation."